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First Session

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

First Session

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[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Welcome back.

Let us pray. Grant that we the members of our province's Legislature fulfill our office with honesty and integrity. May our first concern be for the good of all of our people. Let us be guided by these principles in our deliberations this day. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

Mr. Blackett: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly the consul general of France, Mr. Alexandre Garcia. Mr. Garcia is joining us today from Vancouver on his first official visit to the province of Alberta. Although it's his first official visit, Mr. Garcia has been here before. Some 16 years ago the first place that he visited when he came to Canada was Edmonton.

I had the pleasure of hosting a lunch earlier for the consul general, where I highlighted the importance of Alberta's francophone community. One in 10 Albertans is of French descent, and more than a quarter of a million Albertans are bilingual. Mr. Speaker, French investment in Alberta is also significant. Total, for example, is one of the largest international investors in Alberta's energy sector. Alberta is very proud of our francophone community as well as our relationship with France. I would now ask the consul general to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature a great group of 64 visitors and students from the Bertha Kennedy Catholic school in St. Albert. They are accompanied by teachers and group leaders Debra Kaplar, Marilyn Ogronick, Scott Raypold, and Judy Woodlock; and parent helpers Kat Brandon, Lucy Avison, and Carol McLaughlin. They are I believe seated in both our public and members' galleries, and I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, entering the floor of the House this afternoon, I did notice in our public gallery a face familiar to this Legislature that I would like to also introduce. Mr. Len Bracko is an alderman with the city of St. Albert and serves the residents of our fine community very, very well. He is also a past member, of course, as you will recall, of this Legislative Assembly. He is seated in our public gallery, and I would ask that he rise and be recognized as well.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Olson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly today a group of 22 very bright and energetic students and their parents from the Camrose Christian home educators in my constitu-

ency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose. They're led by Mrs. Joan Bishop. The group is here to see democracy in action, and I'm sure we're all going to be on our best behaviour for them. I'd like to wish them a great experience here today. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you the Sadowski family from my constituency of Calgary-West. Unlike my colleague from Wetaskiwin-Camrose I am not going to promise them democracy in action. They are here as part of their home-schooling. I would like to introduce parents Janelle and John and their children Jonah, Cassandra, and Caitlin. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House three very special Albertans from my constituency. Seated in the members' gallery are my wife, Sherry, my daughter, Jodie, and my son-in-law, Don Johnson. If you look closely at my daughter Jodie, you may also see my grandson on the way. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Berger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly five very active members of the Cows and Fish program in southern Alberta. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise as I call their names: Norine Ambrose, Anne Stevick, Barry Adams, Lorne Fitch, and Dennis Lastuka. I would ask the Assembly to please give them a warm welcome for their participation here today.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. Jim Ragsdale. Jim is a very active member of the Edmonton community and is particularly active in his church group and, specifically, the Edmonton-Decore board. I must say that Jim has always had the courage to put his great ideas on the table for all members and all the community to appreciate. I'd like to have Jim stand now and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Webber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly four gentlemen from Pearl Exploration out of Calgary who came up here today to meet with me to talk about the enhanced oil recovery/heavy oil project that they have in Mooney. I don't see them in the members' gallery, so I assume they're up in the public gallery. They're here to see today's proceedings: Mr. Brad Loepky, Mr. Ron Davison, Mr. Dean Tucker, and Mr. John Carnegie. I thank them for their very technical presentation, and I ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Weadick: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two very special people from Lethbridge. They both work in my constituency office and are wonderful community members who are involved in all kinds of stuff. I'd like to introduce Lorne Darlington and Alice Takács. If they would please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. The first is of two individuals who are sitting in the public gallery. Mary Woodbury is a long-time friend and constituent of the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre. She was born in Ontario, but she chose Edmonton and has been here since the 1970s. Mary is also a bestselling children's book author and has been shortlisted for a number of awards. With Mary today is a very special guest, Dianne Linden. Dianne also lives in Edmonton. She is an accomplished writer of children's stories which are set in Edmonton. Dianne was recently nominated for a Governor General's literature award. I would ask them both to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

My second introduction is some of our wonderful, very hard-working, very patient, filled with a sense of humour staff from the Alberta Liberal caucus. They are here today, led by our chief of staff, Judy Wilson. They are in the gallery today to honour the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview and to thank him for the five and half years of service to Albertans as the Leader of the Official Opposition. I would ask them to rise. Please join me in welcoming them and in thanking the leader.

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two groups of students from the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers along with their instructors and class volunteers. The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is a community agency that seeks to assist immigrants and refugees coming to the Edmonton area in achieving full participation in the community, contributing their experiences and skills to strengthen and enrich the lives of all Canadians. Both the community ESL class and the language instruction for newcomers class present today are made up of students who are Canadian citizens, recent immigrants and refugees, some landed immigrants, and temporary foreign workers. I would now ask that the Mennonite centre students, instructors, and volunteers seated in the public gallery rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Nyambura Belcourt. Ms Belcourt became a Canadian citizen in 1980 and since her arrival has become one of Edmonton's leading promoters of multiculturalism. She is the executive director of the Edmonton Multicultural Society, a board member of the Asia Pacific accord of Canada, and serves on the boards of various local and international

agencies. With her today is Farouq Foad, who came to Canada from Jordan and became a Canadian citizen in 2005. Mr. Foad and Ms Belcourt are seated in the public gallery. I would now ask that they both rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development.

Land-use Framework

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to report to this Assembly that this morning we released the final text of Alberta's land-use framework. With this release Alberta is turning a corner. We've already turned an economic and demographic corner, from a primarily rural society to a primarily an urban one, from a primarily agricultural economy to one that is commercial and industrial. These new conditions pose new challenges that call for new policies. Today we are also turning a policy corner and are entering a new policy era of land stewardship.

This stewardship perspective recognizes that while there are more and more people doing more and more activities in Alberta, our land base is finite. This stewardship perspective recognizes that Alberta's clean air and water, our fertile lands and forests, our natural beauty and abundant wildlife are a legacy that we inherited from previous generations and that we have a moral obligation to pass on in as good or better condition to those that come after us.

I would like to recognize and thank the many individuals and groups that have contributed to the building of this policy. They are too numerous to name, but I'd especially like to recognize the two deputy ministers of Sustainable Resource Development, who have shepherded this through the last two and a half years, Mr. Brad Pickering and Eric McGhan, and my assistant deputy minister Mr. Morris Seiferling, who spent more hours, days, and weeks on this than the rest of us put together. I'd also like to recognize the other ADMs and staff in Sustainable Resource Development and their counterparts in all the other departments that worked on this.

I'd also like to recognize the work of the four stakeholder groups who met numerous times to provide constructive criticism and helpful advice, the aboriginal groups who participated in the consultation process, and the thousands and thousands of Albertans who sent in advice and constructive criticism in e-mails, letters, and on our website questionnaire.

Finally, I'd like to thank my cabinet and caucus colleagues for their useful advice and support for this initiative. The land-use framework has been a team project from the start and is better for it.

Mr. Speaker, the land-use framework is not about stopping growth. It's about smart growth. We recognize that the best environmental regimes in the world are mainly found in the most affluent societies in the world. Good environmental policy is not cheap. So it is appropriate to close with a quotation from one of the earliest and greatest leaders of the conservation movement in North America, American President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was the first President to put conservation on America's national agenda. I note that in 1902 he met with the Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and out of that meeting eventually came the first international peace park, the Waterton-Glacier park, part of which, of course, is in our wonderful province.

Roosevelt had a message for Americans in 1901. He told them:

Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with that perspective. With the land-use framework we are not building this great province of ours for a day. Our challenge and our opportunity is to build something that will last through the ages. That's what this government, this caucus, and this Premier are all about.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to congratulate the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development for delivering the long-awaited, much-needed provincial land-use framework. We've all recognized that Alberta has tremendous potential in terms of natural resources. We are geographically blessed; however, with this blessing came a profound responsibility. We know without a doubt that our current approach to development has meant an ecological footprint that cannot be maintained and a compromised future if business as usual were maintained.

Albertans cherish the natural beauty and quality of life of our great province as much as we enjoy the wealth generated by our resources. These two values must be reconciled, and today an important step forward on this was taken. Let's be absolutely clear: in order to guarantee a high quality of life for all Albertans and to maintain a highly healthy and sustainable environment, planning must occur in a co-ordinated and strategic fashion. Planning decisions must integrate the economic, environment, and social spheres of life, including an enforcement mechanism to ensure that these principles of genuine progress are measured and realized.

There is work to be done and challenges ahead, and we will work constructively to this end. For instance, in the oil sands we can move quickly, given the current slowdown in pace, and put mechanisms into place to ensure that planning is proceeding on cumulative impacts, threshold measures, and a comprehensive approach if we move quickly. We can also protect our eastern slopes from the impacts of drilling and pipelines, logging, and other activities by putting interim policies into place until this framework is implemented if we have strong leadership.

I challenge the hon. minister to consider these challenges and work quickly to move ahead with the development of legislation and terms of reference for regional plans and an accountability mechanism. No jurisdiction has needed a land-use framework more than Alberta. This is a vital step. Now let's work together to get it done right. Future generations depend on what we do now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request that the Assembly be asked for its unanimous consent for the leader of the third party to respond.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we'll have to have two questions with respect to unanimous consent. Standing Order 7(1.1) says, "At 1:50 p.m., the Assembly shall proceed to Oral Question Period with the balance of the daily routine to follow." So there'll be two questions. First of all, the question is: is any member opposed to allowing the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood to participate in this Ministerial Statements segment?

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Is any member opposed to our going beyond the 1:50 starting time for question period to allow the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood to participate?

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

1:50

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Assembly for that consent.

The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development is right when he says that Alberta has already turned a corner. This land, known for beautiful rolling foothills, scenic mountain landscapes, pristine rivers and lakes, grain fields, and small family farms, is now scarred by pollution, urban sprawl, and rising CO₂ emissions. We have been calling on this government to make a plan and put it into action for years, and today I'm glad to see that plan.

Now is the time for action. The economy is moving at a slower pace, and it's time to mark protected areas, ensure that our air and water are clean and that our wildlife is healthy. We need to protect sensitive areas and address pollution because this is a problem that will plague future generations. We need action now in order to preserve what is left.

We've seen some great-sounding policies from this government in the past, but where they failed Albertans is in their implementation. The minister said that we have an obligation to pass on our precious natural resources – air, water, beauty, and wildlife – to the next generation. I think we owe them even more than that. We should be creating a green energy plan so that future generations can have jobs that work to support our environment and the economy at the same time. It's time to make this transition.

In the south we have tremendous opportunities for wind and solar energy, but we should not sacrifice the north in the process. Let's say no to nuclear power. Let's move towards dry tailings technology, set clear standards for industry that require corporations to reclaim as they extract, and then let's ensure that waste is never again dumped in our lakes and rivers. Let's also ensure that urban development is limited to urban municipalities.

I sincerely hope that this government will move quickly to follow through on planning and begin implementing the policies they have outlined and that they will consider taking them even further. We can do the responsible thing for us and for future generations, and we must.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Support for School Nutrition Programs

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. One responsibility of government is to assist citizens who are in genuine need. Hospitals help people who are seriously ill. There's a program for victims of crime. There are programs for farmers who suffer losses from crop failure, pests, drought, or disease. But for schoolchildren who go hungry in this province – and there are thousands of them – there is no particular support. To the Premier: on what basis does this government refuse to fund meal programs in schools where children are at high risk of hunger?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, part of quality of life, of course, is as a government to provide opportunities for families. Part of that is through reasonable taxation rates, programs that are supported by the taxpayer to support children in need, families in need. Given the wide range of programs we have in the government to support families and, indeed, support children, I feel we're doing a good job. But there is always a need to do more, and we're looking at every opportunity in how we can assist families in need in this province.

Dr. Taft: Great. I'm encouraged, Mr. Speaker.

Ministers get angry with the opposition when we say that the government has no program for children who go to school hungry through no fault of their own. But as far as we and the people with these children know, our statements are correct. Schools have to pull money from classroom budgets or charity to feed these kids. Again to the Premier: is it this government's position that it's acceptable for schools to take money intended for classroom activities to spend it on food for hungry children?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether he said from classroom activity, which is going to visit the zoo or some other classroom activity, or from classroom instruction. If it's from classroom instruction, then the school cannot do that. From other activities I guess the principal and teachers make those choices. But I also want to remind Albertans that as a government we changed policy substantially last year and increased the tax credit for charitable giving considerably, allowing families or people to contribute to charitable causes if they so choose.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Treasurer said, "There are more dollars . . . supporting people who need income supports, hungry children than there are in any other budget in Canada." A report that says the opposite has actually already been tabled in this Assembly. Alberta is, in fact, the only province that provides no funding intended to feed hungry schoolchildren. To the Treasurer. We checked, and today in Edmonton alone there are an estimated 2,000 students at high risk of hunger who will get no support. Can the Treasurer tell the Assembly which provincial program they can turn to?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, I'm confused a little bit about the title. As Minister of Finance and Enterprise I understand the question directed to me. I can reflect in the absence of the Minister of Children and Youth Services on the amounts of money that we have made in partnership with the Edmonton Community Foundation, the kinds of programs that were co-operative funding approaches to assist, the kinds of support for the child health benefit, also funding that enabled us to do programs in support of children with diabetes, so several other programs. I was speaking about the collective total of a government that has a children's services ministry that provides additional support and programming that is not existing in any other place in Canada.

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

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hungry schoolchildren in Alberta do not get support from this government. This government released a document titled Poverty and Health in Edmonton just a few days ago. It reports, this government's own report, that 21 per cent of all children in Edmonton live in poverty and that "one of the most pressing and immediate needs . . . for those in poverty is the lack of food." To the minister of health: does this minister accept

that for the thousands of little children in Alberta whose bodies and minds are developing and growing, hunger is a health issue?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta is in a very fortunate position in that we have a province that looks after each other. I would have to check, but my recollection from a previous portfolio is that the Alberta government is responsible for one school board in the province, and that is the Northland school division. I do believe that the Alberta government provides a school lunch program in the Northland school division.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Thank you. My next question is to the Solicitor General. The evidence is overwhelming that hungry schoolchildren don't learn skills like reading and arithmetic nearly as well as when they are fed. As of today – we checked – in Edmonton alone 10 schools where children are at high risk of hunger have no school meal program because charity and school board budgets can't cope, and this government turns a blind eye. Does the Solicitor General see the benefits of school meal programs in keeping kids off the street, in school, and out of gangs?

The Speaker: The hon. Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. If it's personal opinion, it's not part of the question period. Go ahead.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Speaker. My personal view on this particular issue is that I believe everybody in this House recognizes that children are certainly more capable of learning if they come to school with a full stomach. That being said, as has already been indicated a number of times in this House over the last couple of days, this government does have programs and policies to ensure that our children are looked after.

Dr. Taft: Not true, Mr. Speaker.

This government spends at a rate far higher than other provinces. It has money for golf courses, for drag racing strips, huge amounts for horse racing. It provides premium cars for its senior executives. Will the President of the Treasury Board change this government's spending priorities so that hungry schoolchildren go to the head of the line and school meal programs get priority above horse racing, golf courses, and fancy cars?

Mr. Snelgrove: You know, Mr. Speaker, the change that's going to be the most beneficial is the one the opposition party is making quite soon to have real leadership from that party.

The Speaker: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Health System Restructuring

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the key responsibilities for the new permanent CEO of Alberta Health Services according to the advertisement for the job is to implement cost-cutting measures in health care through new proposed legislation. My first question is to the Premier. What is the proposed new legislation that would impose cost-cutting measures on Alberta health care?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member is coming from, but as I said yesterday, we are going to be working

with Albertans, we are going to be working with other Premiers, other Canadians to make sure that we have a sustainable health system. Given the charade that's happening in Ottawa as I speak now, the threat to Canada's economy and the threat to provincial economies, the matter of providing health care services in this country is becoming an increasingly important matter because without new wealth generation we won't be able to afford the programs that we have today.

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier and this government want to work with private hospitals. Now, how is the cost-cutting going to be achieved? Is it going to be through delisting insured services, closing urban or rural hospitals, eliminating beds? Tell us the truth. How are you going to control these costs?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the only people that are talking about privatization in health care are the opposition, so obviously they must have a plan in mind. Maybe their buddies in Ottawa, that are putting this coalition together, have a plan for further privatization of health care across the country. I don't know. But they're the ones that are talking about it, not us.

Mr. MacDonald: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: given that the minister of health stated on Monday that his new health care scheme is not about cost-cutting, how can the government explain the inconsistency between the responsibilities that are given to the new permanent CEO – and this is a posting on the Internet; you can have a look at it as well as anyone else – and the minister's statements? Why the contradiction?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the minister of health made the statement. I'll ask him to respond.

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the particular article in front of me that the member is referring to. I haven't been here long, but I've been here long enough to not take his word for what he happens to read in the middle of the night.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that if the member wants to suggest that we can continue in this province to have ongoing funding annually in double-digit increases, then I want him to stand up and say so. What we are attempting to find are efficiencies in the system, and that's exactly what we've been talking about.

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

Bitumen Exports

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. While the world braces for a recession and tries to protect jobs, this government is happy to give away raw resources and the jobs that go along with them. Upgraders and extraction projects are being cancelled and delayed, but the Keystone pipeline is moving ahead, and it's moving 435,000 barrels of bitumen from Alberta to Illinois and Oklahoma, taking tens of thousands of jobs with it. Now, given that this project was approved by this government's federal cousins in Ottawa, will this Premier stand up to the Harper government and demand that they end the approval of projects that cost Alberta workers their jobs?

Mr. Stelmach: Well, I would hope that this hon. member calls his

buddy in Ottawa, the one that's trying to put this coalition government together, and changes his opinion because his opinion was to shut down the oil sands. If you shut down the oil sands, there's no bitumen to ship.

Mr. Mason: That's the Premier's fantasy, Mr. Speaker. The actual fact is that his buddy in Ottawa has approved the Alberta Clipper project, that's going to take 800,000 barrels of bitumen every day and send it to Wisconsin and tens of thousands of jobs with it. It's his buddy in Ottawa that's costing Alberta workers their jobs. Will he stand up to this federal government while it's still there and stand up for Alberta workers?

Mr. Stelmach: I obviously touched a little nerve. As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and a few weeks ago, there are a number of factors at play here. One is that we need stability in Ottawa so that we can come together with the United States and Mexico on the North American carbon footprint policy. The second is that we have to look at and see how we can get the huge escalation of costs down that were so prevalent in the province. The third, of course, most importantly, is to bring some certainty in terms of our federal government because I can tell you that this little issue in Ottawa is driving more investment out of this country than we've seen before.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that this Tory government and the Tory government in Ottawa have gotten their heads together and come up with a plan to export our raw materials from this province unprocessed and taking tens of thousands of jobs with them. I'm asking the Premier if he will stand up and ask the federal government to stop approving projects that export Alberta workers' jobs.

Mr. Stelmach: Actually, if the hon. member would do a little bit more research, he would know that a pipeline can carry more processed product, meaning higher value for the company that's proposing the project, as opposed to shipping bitumen. Shipping processed product will give the company much more profit in terms of tolling because you can actually ship higher value product. This is the situation we're in today, as I said, with the three very important points that we're working through. I hope that by tonight or tomorrow cooler heads will prevail, we'll have some certainty, we'll have an opportunity for the Prime Minister to deliver a budget in January, and then we can make some long-term decisions for Canada.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Land-use Framework

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, as we heard, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development released the final land-use framework after a six-month consultation on the draft document. My question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Can he tell us what the major changes are between this final framework and the draft released in May?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are four major changes, all of them based on advice we got through further

consultation with Albertans and stakeholder groups. The first one is that we've added a new principle to the goals of the land-use framework, which is efficiency of land use to minimize the footprint of human development. The second is that we've added a new region, the Red Deer River region, and we've also named all the regions after the watersheds on which they're based so that Albertans will have a sense of place. The fourth one is new legislation.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is to the same minister. Why did the government create a seventh region for Red Deer?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, again, this came on the advice of many stakeholders and office-holders in central and southern Alberta. The original southern area stretched from Ponoka county all the way to the Montana and Saskatchewan borders. It was decided that the large population, the diversity of landscapes, and the different needs and types of communities recommended that it would be more efficient and more appropriate to have two rather than one land-use region in southern and central Alberta.

Mr. Elniski: My second supplemental is to the same minister. With the lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan regional plans started, when can the other five regions expect to start their plans?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, we expect to announce both the regional advisory committees and the terms of reference in the coming months and to put them to work next year. The advisory councils for the other five regions will be appointed in 2009 and 2010. We expect all the plans to be completed by 2012.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, followed by the hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Farm Worker Safety

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The farming and ranching exemption regulation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act is a curious document. It excludes all farming and ranching operations from occupational health and safety except "the operation of greenhouses, mushroom farms, nurseries, or sod farms." My question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Why are workers at mushroom and sod farms covered by occupational health and safety but not workers, say, at corporate feedlots?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is the only province that excludes farms and ranches from having to comply with that, and there's a fine line in terms of where we make that distinction. As soon as there's any type of processing on a particular site, then they do fall under occupational health and safety. If there is no processing – with mushrooms there's packaging that occurs, those kinds of things on that particular farm; that does not necessarily happen on livestock farms – from a primary production point of view those would not fall under the guidelines.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. That was interesting. It's true that family farms are distinct from other workplaces in

their day-to-day operations. However, it's also the case that corporate farms are quite distinct from family farms. Workers at these corporate farms, unless they're mushroom farms, face the same dangers in work conditions as workers in other industries, yet they continue to be unprotected by OH and S. To the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: will the minister recognize the distinction between family and corporate farms and extend workplace health and safety legislation to those working on corporate farms?

2:10

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker – and I will address you today – that the hon. member has gotten the perfect answer, and he calls it interesting. It was exactly the perfect answer from the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The truth of the matter is, you know, that safety is a personal commitment between employers and employees. They must work together to create a safe workplace. Mr. Speaker, farm employers have the option to purchase workmen's compensation insurance for their employees. That's always been there.

Dr. Taft: Every time – and it's far too often – that a worker is injured or killed on a corporate farm, their families and friends and most Albertans are left wondering why they were not given the same rights and protections as all other workers in this province. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: will this minister offer equal rights and protection to those working on corporate farms by including them under the province's workplace health and safety legislation? Just do it.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Farmers, as the hon. minister of agriculture indicated, have the option of getting WCB coverage for their employees. I want to say that the government at this stage would not make any changes to our legislation without ensuring that all interested parties – and I emphasize: all interested parties – have a chance to express their concerns and their opinions on this.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Land-use Framework (continued)

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Could the minister explain how the government plans to implement the land-use framework?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We intend to announce the membership of the advisory committees and the terms of reference for those committees in the coming months, with both of those regional plans being completed in 2010. We have a Land-use Secretariat already at work. The Land-use Secretariat will work with the regional advisory committees and mediate local input with provincial leadership. Finally, legislation is being developed to provide the legal authority and foundation for this process.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is to the same minister. Can he explain how the framework will affect Alberta communities, especially those in the rural areas, and how the local decision-making process will begin?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe that we've struck the right balance between provincial leadership and local decision-making. Once a regional plan is approved by cabinet, the municipal and other land-use plans will have to comply with it. However, this does not mean a strong, heavy-handed, centralized bureaucracy in Edmonton. The regional plans will provide the policy direction, but actual land-use decisions will still be made by the local decision-makers that make them today.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is to the same minister. What exactly is the role of the regional advisory councils in developing the plans for the respective regions?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The regional advisory councils are the key for input of local priorities and local values, working with the Land-use Secretariat. Obviously, the people from the local communities have the local knowledge that will be valuable in forming these plans. They'll work with the secretariat to develop the plans. The plans then go to cabinet for approval. Once these plans are approved, however, the regional advisory councils' work comes to an end, and they will be disbanded.

The Speaker: Hon. members, just an update to something I said in the House the other day. BlackBerry's are not permitted in this Assembly.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Sustainable Resource Development minister. There's no question that Alberta needs a long-term vision and goals to guide decisions dealing with growth. The long-awaited land-use framework provides guidance and principles, but details and specifics about implementation are missing in the terms of reference for regional plans. To the minister. We don't have a timeline for the actual implementation. Can the minister tell us if, in the interim, development will occur unabated, or will there be sensible guidelines in place to ensure smart development?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, we've had this conversation several times already in this Assembly. The world does not have an on-off switch, as the hon. member opposite seems to imagine. I've said before that they may think governments are good at stopping and starting the economy, but they're not, particularly parties on the other side. I'd say given the new economic circumstances that now is not the time to begin playing games with the economy.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A key theme of this strategy is the efficient use of land to reduce the human footprint, but there are clearly some serious challenges, namely the priorities of the

Department of Energy. Can the minister tell us how he will reconcile the competing goals of reducing the footprint and maximizing resource extraction?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report to the Assembly that there's been close co-operation and a sharing of views and cross-referencing of the forthcoming energy strategy with the land-use strategy and with the forthcoming oil sands strategy. There's been very good integration of those three different policy documents. This is the first one out, but what's being put in place is a process which will integrate those other policies, the priorities they set at the regional level.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The framework states that the local planning decisions must comply with provincial policy direction and regional interests. Can the minister tell us what mechanism he will employ to ensure compliance? Will he consider putting in place regional managers to ensure that regional objectives are realized?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer to that is no. We don't envision another layer of bureaucracy, costing time and money, to enforce this. We envision that all of the requirements of the regional plans will fall under existing jurisdictions – whether it's water and air under Environment, energy under ERCB, and forestry under SRD – and that the obligations placed on municipal districts, compliance with those, can be dealt with under the existing enforcement structure.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The draft land-use framework was developed during a time of rapid economic growth in Alberta. With the current economic reality we have seen some large projects postponed. My question is to the hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. How will this framework balance environmental and social goals when the priority needs to be the economy?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question. I don't think it's an either/or choice. We are committed to balancing responsible and sustainable development with environmental protection. Alberta's long-term future economically is still bright despite the current difficulties. As I said before, we're trying to put in place principles and a framework that are good for decades, if not centuries, not just what's good for tomorrow.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister explain to Albertans why the government didn't wait until two other major strategies, the energy strategy and the oil sands strategy, were released before releasing the land-use framework?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as the hon. member's question indicates, members on this side have been very busy for the past 12 months working on long-term strategies for energy, for water, for air, for aboriginals, and for parks. What the land-use framework does is create an instrument to take those different policies as they come – and the others will be out shortly – and give a vehicle for implementing them on a regional basis, which has not been there before. It will mark an important step forward in this province's history.

Mr. Amery: To the same minister, Mr. Speaker: could the minister also explain to Albertans how the land-use framework ties in with the recently renewed Water for Life strategy?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say that the most innovative aspect of the land-use framework is the fact that the seven regions are based on watersheds, and that is in recognition of the fact that obviously the quality and quantity of water are affected by what happens on the watersheds around them. This new approach will allow us to co-ordinate land-use and water policy in a way that hasn't occurred before. I would suggest to the Assembly that Alberta, actually, is not just a North American leader but a world leader in taking this integrated approach to economic development and environmental protection.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

2:20 Crowsnest Pass Forest Health

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions also are for the Sustainable Resource Development minister. One thing that Albertans and large numbers of Canadians cherish about our province is the beauty of the natural landscape, its pure aesthetic quality. The Crowsnest Pass area, the lowest mountain pass elevation between Mexico and Jasper, is host to a unique forest community, tree species that occur nowhere else in Alberta, the western red cedar and the western white pine, now threatened by proposed clear-cutting. Many people are upset in this pristine, unique landscape. To the minister: has your department done an inventory of these unique Alberta species?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, the greatest threat to the Crowsnest Pass and the rest of the eastern slopes is not forestry but the pine beetles coming in from British Columbia. The choice isn't between a green mountain and a clear-cut mountain; it's a red, or dying, or a grey mountain, which is what you see in British Columbia now. Our forestry plans do recognize the important status of the two types of trees that the member refers to. When the initial work is being done, it's indicated where they are, and the policy is to leave them standing.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Sustainable Resource Development ministry grants approval to Spray Lakes for clear-cutting, will they ensure that the approved plan is modified to include a buffer to ensure watershed protection for Allison Creek, an internationally recognized trout fishery?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I have to inform myself about the

specifics of Allison Creek, but I can assure the member opposite that buffers are required in all of our forestry plans, and this would be no exception. I'll check on that specific and get back to him.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister consider reviewing the approach in this special area to ensure that all the unique plant and animal species have been characterized and their protection assured?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I think that we have policies in place that do that already. Our biodiversity monitoring program measures that on a province-wide basis. We also have a status of species report done every five years, and every forestry plan has to identify fisheries and wildlife concerns that are in that area.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Health System Restructuring (continued)

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the weekend the health minister said, when talking about public health care, that he was, quote, hopeful that if people don't have the money to spend on Jolt and booze and everything else, maybe they won't become quite as addicted. End quote. We know that there's a direct link between poverty and poorer health. In fact, a report released last week by the superboard says exactly that. To the minister of health: how could the minister possibly be so out of touch to suggest that earning less money is a good thing for the health of Albertans?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't recall the member being there when I was making my comments. Effectively, what I was asked was: in an economic downturn is it likely that people are going to have less money to spend on things like alcohol and drugs? My answer was: in all likelihood.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the same speech the health minister was quoted as suggesting that Albertans who have less money will also have lowered expectations for what health care should be publicly funded. This sounds to me like a setup for delisting. When government delists a service, the private sector steps in. Publicly funded health care becomes privately funded health care. To the same minister: will you assure this House today that your government will not delist any services that are currently publicly funded?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, that bogeyman that left Edmonton-Gold Bar has moved over to Edmonton-Strathcona now. I would say that probably one-half of the letters that I sign out of my office are to Albertans who are asking why certain things aren't covered by health care – drugs, as an example, equipment – and what I was suggesting was that the expectations of Albertans in a time when we have large surpluses is that somehow the government can pay for everything. I'm hopeful that without the large surpluses those expectations will be lowered.

Ms Notley: So we have no clear answer, then.

The superboard report says that lower income Albertans are more likely to suffer chronic diseases, cancer, and injuries. Taking money out of the pockets of working people puts up barriers to care and

increases health inequalities. To the minister: will the minister admit that he's wrong, that the health of Albertans is in jeopardy as the economy slumps, and that the government needs to do more to protect public health instead of planning to do less?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Health Services Board will be a very integral part of delivering on a number of the initiatives that we've announced recently. We released our Vision 2020 a couple of days ago, and that'll set the blueprint for the delivery of health care equitably across the province. We have other initiatives that'll be coming forward that will very much, hopefully, increase access to the system that we've become so accustomed to.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Green Power

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Contrary to popular belief outside this province climate change is a very important issue to Albertans. Many of my constituents are trying to make better environmental choices in their homes, like purchasing green power. My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Is government setting an environmental example for Albertans within our own buildings?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that it's important for government to set a good example, and we're committed to reducing environmental impact in our government buildings and our building infrastructure. Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, since 2005 this very Chamber has illuminated the discussion and the debate with wind power. In fact, Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of our government's needs for power in this province are covered by green energy. That's the equivalent to over 200,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to taking over 42,000 vehicles off the road, replacing them with 118,000 hybrids.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that the hon. minister was referring to wind from turbines.

Again to the same minister. Ninety per cent green power is impressive and commendable, but it does beg the question: why not use 100 per cent green power?

Mr. Hayden: Mr. Speaker, all of the sites that can be served with green power in Alberta are being served with green power. The remaining 10 per cent results from areas where certified green power is, in fact, not available. We know that there's room for improvement, and we will always work that way.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister, maybe just to clarify: where does the government's source of green power come from?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our green power comes from certified renewable sources of power, such as wind and

biomass. We receive our green power in the south from wind generation and in the north by biomass in the Grande Prairie area. In addition, for the last several years we've also used solar power in Pincher Creek and will continue to use more.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon, the 10 per cent reduction you're looking for: look up. At least 40 per cent of the bulbs are in an inoperable position, so we must be saving something.

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

Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Currently in Alberta people with disabilities needing affordable, accessible housing often wait years, not months, for a home. In Calgary alone there are over 200 people waiting for accessible housing, three-quarters of whom are also on Calgary's affordable housing list, some 3,000 people long. To the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs: given these economic times, what assurances can the minister give people with disabilities that the nine-year plan to end homelessness will not turn into another empty promise?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness has delivered a plan for 10 years, and that plan is to address affordable housing, to address homelessness in the context of how we have viewed all areas, and that includes people with disabilities that do require homes that are barrier free.

2:30

Mr. Hehr: There are currently 1,634 special-needs units that are subsidized in Alberta, but clearly this isn't enough since people are warehoused at places like the Fanning centre instead of living in houses. What is the minister doing to provide more accessible housing to people who need it now and, in fact, needed it years ago?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, within the next two weeks we have a request for proposal being announced, the applicants that were successful for the \$142 million. When we put out that request for proposal, very much a part of what was put out to the community on the criteria did include, of course, homes that are barrier free. I can tell you that almost all the 145 proposals that we did receive did include this area in their proposal.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will people with disabilities along with other people looking for affordable housing reading over the holidays be able to read the secretariat's report, or will it be hidden in various government departments?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated before to you, the report that has been submitted to me by the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness is going to be released in the near future, and that will be after it goes through the proper pro-

cesses, as I've indicated to you, hon. member. With the fiscal climate the way that we have it and the responsibilities that we have today, I can tell you that it will go through a total process, and that does include from cabinet and caucus and Treasury Board and on through government processes.

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

Building Canada Infrastructure Funding

Mr. McFarland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In August the governments of Canada and Alberta announced agreement on the framework for the building Canada program and an agreement in principle on the base funding agreement for the same program. Despite this announcement and federal announcements of individual project support, there has been very little federal money that many municipalities that I represent have actually seen. My question is to the President of the Treasury Board. Can you tell us exactly what the status of this program, that our municipalities have been waiting a long time for, currently is?

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Snelgrove: Yes. Mr. Speaker, we actually have been working on the legal language of the very complicated agreements, and we have made tremendous progress, I would think, under the direction of ministers Baird and Merrifield. I think that possibly by the end of today or tomorrow we will have the formal agreements ready to sign. In fact, only \$80 million of the around a billion dollars that has been committed has come to Alberta, but we are certainly at the stage where I think we're able to go ahead.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McFarland: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Could the President of the Treasury Board tell us exactly what criteria are going to be used to decide upon the funded projects, whether they're in Whitecourt or the county of Lethbridge or Barrhead?

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, there are two negotiating categories: one for the major infrastructure component and the base funding, where the federal government and the provincial governments will negotiate the priority projects; the other one, the communities component, will be a combination of municipal application to it, and the projects will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis with representatives from the AUMA, AAMD and C.

Mr. McFarland: Mr. Speaker, before my supplementary may I take the opportunity to offer you and your officers and all members in the Assembly that are elected and their families a happy and healthy holiday season coming up.

Mr. Speaker, to the President of the Treasury Board: can you tell us, given the current situation in Ottawa, what the ramifications may or may not be when it comes to the delivery of these programs and the various funds that are being applied for?

Mr. Snelgrove: Merry Christmas to you, too.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that what we're dealing with is called a building Canada fund, and at the same time in Ottawa there seem to be forces at play that may be having exactly the opposite effect on it. The point is that we never really can count on federal governments from budget to budget because their priorities may

change and their financial situations may also change. But there's no question that the instability in Ottawa at this time may have a very dramatic effect on the funding relationship between the provinces and the federal government, so we hope they put Canada first.

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

Long-term Care

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel a little left out not asking a question to the minister of sustainable resources.

However, the minister of health stated that to make more acute-care beds available, seniors need to be placed in long-term care facilities. The minister still has not come forward with any details on how he plans to accomplish this. To the Minister of Health and Wellness. The minister has 566 seniors waiting in acute care for a long-term care bed. His department target was 242. How does the minister plan to free up acute-care beds when there are no available long-term care beds?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues will support me, I will follow through on my commitment that we have a strategy around continuing care within the nine-month time frame, which concludes on the 15th of December.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Why is the minister pushing more and more seniors into designated assisted living facilities, which provide less care yet cost more? Must it always be about money and not care, respect, and dignity?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, this minister isn't pushing anybody anywhere. What we are doing is attempting to find a continuum of care model that meets the needs of the patient, not the needs of the system.

Ms Pastoor: Funny.

As far as long-term care is concerned, this government is happy to strike committees and come out with a Vision 2020 plan that has absolutely no details. Why are our most vulnerable citizens going to have to wait 12 years before anything actually changes, many of whom probably won't even be here?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, the member did not hear my first answer. They won't have to wait 12 years; they'll have to wait about 12 days.

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

Workers' Compensation Appeals

Mr. Cao: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a recent case the Workers' Compensation Board Appeals Commission accepted that an injured worker is not fit for employment based on the same medical evidence and criteria that was filed to the provincial AISH program and the federal CPP disability program and for the WCB claim. My question today is to the hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration. Based on this recent decision of the WCB Appeals Commission, can the WCB cases now be reviewed with AISH eligibility and CPP disability as medical evidence?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is no. AISH, CPP, and WCB have very different mandates, so eligibility criteria for all three of them are very, very different. WCB will consider all relevant medical evidence to determine the work portion of an injury, and each case is decided on its own individual merits. Eligibility for other benefits is not a factor in work-related injuries and therefore is not considered in WCB decisions or adjudication.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental question is to the same hon. minister. What can the minister say to the injured worker who was injured at work, who had applied to WCB and now relies on AISH and CPP disability?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Eligibility for workers' compensation is different than eligibility for benefits from other sources. Workers' compensation is legislated to insure against workplace injury and illness. Other programs are social assistance programs. WCB claims are adjudicated using workers' compensation policies and legislation whereas CPP and AISH apply different criteria and provide assistance for different reasons than WCB.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplemental question is to the same hon. minister. Our Workers' Compensation Board plays a vital role for workers and employers in Alberta. Could the minister update the Assembly on the status of recommendations in the previous and latest WCB reviews commissioned by our government?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2006 the Minister's Monitoring Committee on Workers' Compensation reviewed and reported to my ministry on WCB's implementation of the recommendations. The committee was pleased with the reforms that were made, and I can confirm that WCB continues to enhance its process and services every day. We see that by the statistics, where we are getting reports that satisfaction rates with WCB files are improving. As well, between 2004 and '07 the number of appeals, actually, has fallen to about 29 per cent of what we used to hear before.

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

2:40

Workplace Safety

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government's report on occupational fatalities in Alberta, 1998 to 2007, shows that Alberta is third highest of all the provinces for on-the-job deaths. Despite a multitude of new job sites in the oil sector and construction, the government has not issued any new joint health and safety committees since 2005. Can the Minister of Employment and Immigration explain why he has not taken more action to protect workers and reduce on-the-job deaths?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, we've taken a different approach, and

we want to make sure that employers and employees are protected. We want to make sure that everybody is aware of safety requirements, so we've moved to doing a lot more work-site inspections. We're targeting employers, this year about 500 employers, that have higher rates of incidents than others, so we're concentrating our efforts in different areas.

Ms Blakeman: Well, does the minister recognize the importance of joint health and safety committees in protecting workers and in reducing job-site injuries and deaths?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Well, thank you. We do recognize that any action will help. We're encouraging employers and employees to work together – there's no doubt – but we're not forcing that with certain individuals or certain companies. We are, as I indicated, targeting those. We are sending them individual letters. Those with very, very poor safety records are getting a lot more inspections, so instead of having activities occur at the work site, we are taking a very active approach.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you. Then if the minister is not going to require mandatory health and safety committees on workplaces with 20 or more workers, is the minister going to put any mandatory requirements in place, or will this all be left as some sort of voluntary compliance? Workers die on the job site in Alberta.

Mr. Goudreau: Well, Mr. Speaker, when we look at where there are mandatory committees on site, we're not really seeing any reductions in incidents in the workplace. We know that these things are happening. We are, as I indicated, targeting those that have the worst records, and we are working very, very closely with them to see if we can get their numbers reduced.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that was 102 questions and responses today. Thirty seconds from now we'll continue with the Routine.

Members' Statements

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

Riparian Habitat Management Society

Mr. Berger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to make the members of this House and all Albertans aware of a very important program and their celebration of 17 successful years in Alberta with a gala event later this afternoon in Edmonton.

The year 1992 was the start of the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, which soon became known as Cows and Fish. The Cows and Fish program has done a tremendous amount of work in Alberta watersheds on watershed awareness, community building, measuring riparian health, and guiding improved management of riparian areas.

Nearly 50,000 people have had exposure to Cows and Fish presentations, and Cows and Fish have over 50 active watershed and landowner groups within Alberta. The Cows and Fish partnership is a partnership between three government ministries – Sustainable Resource Development, Environment, and Alberta agriculture – as well as Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited, and individual landowners. This initiative in riparian management is not only

important to all of us for water quality, fish and wildlife, and agriculture; it is also important to maintain these vital pieces of our Alberta landscape. The Cows and Fish program enhances and assists such government initiatives as Water for Life, sustainable agriculture, and the land-use framework.

This excellent Alberta idea has been exported to most of Canada, where other provincial groups have developed their own programs resembling that of Alberta. Cows and Fish is something to be celebrated here.

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

Tribute to Alberta Writers

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has incredible talent all across the province. We have world-class artists who are recognized nationally and internationally, but inside Alberta we are too often unaware of the talented people in our midst. For a number of years I managed Celebration of Women in the Arts, which allowed me to work with some of the arts disciplines that I didn't know well. The greatest gift from that time was to get to know some of our writers and their work.

Today I'd like to recognize a few of Alberta's outstanding writers. Dianne Linden, who has joined us in the gallery, has recently been recognized nationally. Her book *Shimmerdogs* was a finalist for this year's Governor General's award in children's literature. Three other writers from our province were also finalists for the Governor General's awards: Shenaaz Nanji, Fred Stenson, and Chris Turner. This is a big deal, Mr. Speaker. Another Albertan, Marina Endicott, was nominated for this year's Giller prize, also a very big deal.

Our local writers tell our stories to the world, but they struggle to get attention in media that are constantly cutting back on local coverage. In bookstores they can be overshadowed by books from American publishers with bigger advertising budgets, and it's no secret that our publishing industry in Alberta is struggling.

Here in the Legislature we can take steps to promote Alberta artists and writers to tell our stories. The government of New Brunswick recently developed a policy to include local writers in the school curriculum. Let's do the same here. As MLAs we can showcase local talent in our constituencies, for example, by purchasing books by local authors to give out as awards or volunteer recognitions or to use during Read In Week and then donate to the local school library. Let's all work to promote and support our Alberta artists. Let's stand up for our cultural workers and honour and celebrate the work of our incredible artists.

Thank you very much, Dianne and Mary and your fellow nominees, for your wonderful gift of imagination.

Thank you.

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

Wind Power

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to highlight some highly successful wind power initiatives in my constituency of Cardston-Taber-Warner. The power of the wind has been harnessed for centuries, and the concept is a simple one. Its use as an alternative source of energy is appealing for many reasons. It's abundant, cheap, inexhaustible, clean, and climate benign.

Three school districts, two of which are located in my constituency, have initiated an innovative electric energy partnership using renewable, clean wind energy to reduce their operating costs. Westwind school division and the Horizon and Livingstone Range

school districts have established a groundbreaking 20-year power purchase agreement with Enmax Energy that will see a total savings of 40 per cent. The success of this project has led 40 urban and rural school boards to join together as the Alberta schools for sustainable energy, a team comprised of the school boards, electricity industry experts, and a competitively selected electricity provider.

In the municipal district of Taber Enmax has constructed the Taber wind power project, a wind farm that produces 82 megawatts, enough power to provide energy to over 32,000 homes. This project is of particular significance because the turbines were produced by Enercon, a German manufacturer, and they implement a direct drive system that has a far greater power output than previous wind turbines.

Mr. Speaker, worldwide energy demand is expected to grow by 50 per cent over the next 30 years. Wise energy use must be our goal. Indeed, one of our Premier's five priorities for this government is to develop new environmentally sustainable alternative energy sources.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in applauding the school boards and Enmax for their efforts in these projects.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

2:50 Carbon Capture and Storage in Joffre

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The unprecedented activities in our oil and gas sector, including our petrochemical industries, over the last few years have been huge economic drivers for both our province and the entire country. The CO₂ emissions that are generated as a result of these activities have been a source of challenge as well as an opportunity.

In 1983, 25 years ago, the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority provided 74 per cent of the funding for the original experimental pilot project of capturing and storing CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery. In 1984 NOVA Chemicals at Joffre in my constituency began to supply Penn West Energy Trust with captured CO₂ for an enhanced oil recovery project. The Joffre Viking pool was Canada's very first miscible CO₂ flood project and possibly one of the first in the world. This oil field was discovered in 1953, and by the mid-60s it had been abandoned because it was no longer viable. In the early '80s laboratory tests and reservoir simulations determined that the Joffre Viking field was an appropriate geologic formation for CO₂ flooding.

In 2005 in another CCS project NOVA Chemicals at Joffre and Dow Chemical in nearby Prentiss, just south of Lacombe, reached an agreement with Glencoe Resources to supply CO₂ for capture, compression, transport by pipeline, and injection into an oilfield near Ponoka.

These projects are outstanding examples of applications of research and development partnerships. They will extend the lives of oil fields for many years and eventually prevent millions of tonnes of CO₂ emissions from entering our atmosphere.

As we move forward, the government of Alberta continues to take real action with a \$2 billion carbon capture and storage investment in battling climate change and enhancing the productivity of some of our oil fields. This is a clear indication to the country and to all of the world that Alberta is taking a decisive leadership role in doing research, developing technology, and making an actual difference in reducing CO₂ emissions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Simple Acts for Holiday Season

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

With Christmas fast approaching, I remind all Albertans to consider the environmental impact of our Christmas activities this year. Albertans lead the country per capita in the disposal of municipal waste at almost 1,000 kilograms per person per year. Some suggestions for reducing the waste we produce at Christmas are wrapping gifts in recyclable material or in reusable cloth bags or giving gifts that encourage environmentally conscious living. You can also commit simple acts this Christmas season that will make a big difference such as using energy efficient lights when decorating, putting lights on a timer, and avoiding paper plates and plastic cutlery at Christmas parties.

Since we launched our one simple act program earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, Albertans have committed to simple acts resulting in a savings of more than 17.2 million litres of water, 514,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions, and more than 128 garbage trucks of waste. This is an impressive story that shows the environmental spirit of Albertans.

This Christmas season I encourage all members to be part of this story and to commit to performing another simple act.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merry Christmas. Fröhliche Weihnachten.

Human Rights Day

Ms Woo-Paw: Mr. Speaker, respect for human rights and human dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world as the United Nations gave proclamation to the universal declaration of human rights in 1948, which was driven by the foundation members' resolve that the horrors of the Second World War should never be allowed to recur. This declaration, which is now 60 years old, was drafted by a fellow Canadian, John Humphrey, who believed in the fundamental link between human rights and peace. His lifelong involvement with human rights law earned him the United Nations prize for human rights advocacy.

In 1950 the United Nations invited states and organizations to observe the 10th of December as Human Rights Day.

Our province's response to the development of human rights instruments started with the introduction of the act for the Alberta Bill of Rights by Mr. Peter Lougheed, Leader of the Opposition, in 1970. The Alberta Bill of Rights was finally passed when Mr. Lougheed introduced it as Bill 1 during the 17th Legislature as Premier of Alberta in 1972.

I know there are people who question the relevance of the promotion and pursuit of human rights protection in our province today. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is relevant and necessary when we have young people who discard the promise of education when they see their well-educated parents denied opportunities to employments appropriate to their training. There is a need to strengthen our human rights entities when an analysis of Statistics Canada's ethnic survey data reported that 1.6 million Canadians experienced discrimination or unfair treatment at workplaces, stores, banks, restaurants, on the street, and when dealing with police or courts in the past five years.

These experiences work against the kind of safe and vibrant communities that Albertans desire because unfair treatment breeds resentment and mistrust of authorities and institutions, diminishes productivity and economic opportunities, and erodes social integration and cohesion.

I believe we have an opportunity and the responsibility to continue to build on the foundation laid by visionary pioneers in our province.

Thank you.

Presenting Petitions

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a petition with 515 signatures which urges the government of Alberta to put a moratorium on closure of long-term care facilities until an independent assessment of needs for long term-care in the province of Alberta can be completed.

Thank you.

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

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be presenting a petition that states:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly [of Alberta to urge the government to] reconsider the decision to change the role of Extencare Lethbridge from a long-term care facility to a Designated Assisted Living facility as we believe that this decision is misguided, and has more to do with cutting costs and services than providing the best and most appropriate care for our seniors.

It is signed by 2,058 people.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Horne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to table the requisite number of copies of a document released today by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The document contains profiles of the winners of the 2008 awards of excellence, and they are Donna Martyn, Meloni Lyon, Friends of the Alberta Jubilee Auditoria Society, and John Tensen. These awards were presented across the province today at celebrations connected with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank you.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling this on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar. It is the appropriate number of copies of the role specification for the position of chief executive officer with Alberta Health Services prepared by Egon Zehnder International, and it does contain, in fact, on page 3 a statement made by my colleague around proposed new legislation imposing constraints on growth of costs in health care. I'm happy to table that on behalf of my colleague for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Thank you.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of two documents which pertain to my questions today. One is a news article dated November 29, 2008, which quotes the Minister of Health and Wellness as suggesting that lower incomes could lead to better health.

The second is a report from Alberta Health Services released November 24, which indicates a link between low incomes and poor health.

Thank you.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Renner, Minister of Environment, a letter dated December 1, 2008, from hon. Mr. Renner, Minister of Environment, to Dr. Swann, hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, responding to questions raised during Oral Question Period on November 25, 2008, regarding water monitoring in the oil sands.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Snelgrove, President of the Treasury Board, pursuant to the Conflicts of Interest Act report of selected payments to the Members and former Members of the Legislative Assembly and persons directly associated with Members of the Legislative Assembly, year ended March 31, 2008.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

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

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Snelgrove: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move third reading of Bill 51, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2.)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first opportunity to speak to the supplementary supply estimates, an honour to do so. Let me begin by making some general comments relating to budget and accountability. It strikes me and all Albertans, I think, that there's a critical need for confidence, especially at these times, in how we are managing our resource development and that monies that flow from that, all sources of money flowing through the Alberta government. Fundamentally our budget needs to be credible. It needs to be thoughtful, including considerations of the coming year and the coming decade, and it needs to be accountable.

3:00

The question, I guess, that many Albertans have asked me is: how can we make our budgeting process more predictable and accountable? Having the greatest resource revenues in the country coming to our government places an extra responsibility on us to ensure that our budgeting process lives within our means. By that, I guess, the many people that have talked to me about the process of budgeting have indicated that for many years, especially the last decade, there is evidence that we have not been living within our means, and by depending on nonrenewable resource wealth, there are serious questions about our ability to sustain any quality of life that is acceptable to Albertans.

As the great Canadian philosopher Wayne Gretzky said: I'm not so interested in where the puck is but where the puck is going to be. That is indeed the challenge of this Legislature, particularly the finance minister and the Treasury Board.

The fundamental principle, however, is living within our means. Is that plan based on a larger financial vision? Does it assume a balance between resource development, both renewable and nonrenewable? Does it include the vital dimension of public services which actually create the level playing field in which businesses can thrive and all individuals have an opportunity to

create the Alberta advantage for themselves and for the province? Does it address the triple bottom line, which is fundamentally government's role; that is, the balancing of economic, social, and environmental values?

Mr. Speaker, spending requires accountability. It requires, therefore, evidence of results. It requires some degree, at least in this House, of a demonstrated effort to look at alternatives to achieve the same results. Some individuals, including this side of the House, have raised the questions: why is Alberta spending \$2,800 per person more each year than other provinces in the country, and what exactly are we getting for that extra investment? There appear to be some serious questions about accountability.

Given that context, Mr. Speaker, the 2008 budget estimates of \$37 billion in total government expenditures, forecasted expenditures from the previous year were \$33.7 billion, an increase of almost 10 per cent in spending. The supplementary supply added close to a billion in additional spending, which would bring the actual expenditure increase from last year to 13 per cent. The budget estimated spending increases of 12 per cent over the next three years, and the budget saw capital spending increase by 22 per cent from the previous year, to \$8.7 billion.

I note with some concern, Mr. Speaker, that in the last 10 years, since fiscal year 1999-2000, the total additional money requested through supplemental supply was \$14 billion, or an average of \$1.4 billion per year over the last 10 years. I think Albertans deserve better.

Some general questions arise from this, and clearly the discussions need to address these, both in the House and outside the House, for greater public understanding. What is the government's plan to curb our spending increases? Can the minister explain how she is assured that these supplementary supply estimates will help departments to meet their performance measures, and are we monitoring those and reporting back on those sufficiently? Why did the budget not allocate proper funding so as to avoid the need for supplementary supply amounts? Will we continue to see this in the next decade as well? One assumes that with the current economic downturn we're going to see changes in the way we do these things. It's unfortunate that it takes this kind of assault on our economy to address responsible budgeting and development in this province. How will the government maintain its current spending levels without reducing reliance on this volatile revenue stream, our fossil fuel industry? Finally, given the current economic situation, what direction has been given to the ministries by this Premier to limit spending increases?

To focus more specifically on areas of my particular interest, Aboriginal Relations, a supplementary amount of \$32 million to provide additional spending authority to the First Nations development fund to support economic, social, and community development of First Nations communities. The fund receives money from the lottery fund based on proceeds from slot machines in First Nations casinos. My question here is: why is there a \$32 million shortfall in the First Nations development fund? Has there been a decrease in the amount collected from First Nations casinos? If this decrease is evidence of the success of the antiaddictions programs and we can expect a long-term decrease in the amount of proceeds from such slot machines, then going forward, how will the government make up for this shortfall? What is the plan? Will this money be going to specific projects, and if so, what was the process used to vet the projects that will receive the funds? Will these funds be distributed in a lump sum or distributed over several years?

In the area of Sustainable Resource Development I have a few other comments, Mr. Speaker. The supplementary amount of \$134 million is requested to provide \$117 million for emergency assis-

tance for firefighting costs as a result of high wildfire hazard levels, \$15 million for emergency assistance for ground survey and control operations for the mountain pine beetle infestation – this funding will come from the sustainability fund – and a million dollars to prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease into and within Alberta. With respect to the firefighting costs can the minister explain why the budget did not include a more accurate reflection since year after year the budget allocations have been in the order of \$16 million to \$17 million dollars while the actual amount has been almost eight times that much?

The supplementary supply requisition of \$117 million coming from the sustainability fund in previous years was transferred from the environmental protection and enhancement fund. According to the 2007-08 government estimates \$16 million was budgeted from the environmental protection and enhancement fund for forest fires. Can the minister explain why this money is now being transferred from the sustainability fund and not from that environmental protection and enhancement fund? The budget of '08-09 indicates that forest fires will no longer be funded from that fund. Again, can the minister tell us why that decision was made?

With respect to the mountain pine beetle can the minister provide a more detailed breakdown of what the \$15 million for the continuation of ground survey and control operations entails? What are the specific programs this money will be spent on, with what results? Given the evidence from the British Columbia studies, with increased impacts of clear-cutting on mountain streams and water quality downstream, will the minister look at other means? Albeit some of them have to do with more selective logging and more protective management of riparian areas, can the minister tell us what success he is having in looking at alternatives? It seems that we are stuck in one particular approach to the mountain pine beetle, and it's unclear whether we're measuring the harmful effects as well as the beneficial effects of controlling the mountain pine beetle.

In the area of chronic wasting disease it's clear we are losing the battle in Canada and in Alberta. It raises real questions for us about conflicts between our agricultural and our economic diversification project, which moved us into game ranching, and the harmful effects we're now seeing in the wasting disease, which is increasingly spreading into the wild populations of elk and deer in this province. Can the minister tell us specifically what programs his investment is going to and how they will actually get to the root cause of the spread of wasting disease? Are we going to continue to do this border by border and allow the disease to increasingly spread into the wild, or are we going to get at the root cause, which has to do fundamentally with removing the game ranching industry in this province and across this country?

3:10

Clearly, the writing is on the wall, and ultimately human health may be at risk if people are consuming products like elk velvet and other animal products from infected game. We're still not getting the proper testing, the proper recognition of the potential seriousness of this disease, just as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, in the U.K. ultimately ended up in the human population, because of an unwillingness to recognize that there is a risk and that, in fact, wasting disease is much more readily spread in the environment. It doesn't have to be consumed from animal products. It's actually spread into the environment through saliva and urine, and we are not treating that with the seriousness it deserves, notwithstanding the extra investment this minister has identified for control.

With respect to the grizzly bear population, real concerns across the province. I applaud the minister for at least not opening up the hunt again. We are dealing with, according to some experts, less

than 500 animals left in Alberta. Clearly, the writing is on the wall there. We have to take a more aggressive approach to habitat preservation and maintaining no-go areas or roadless areas for some of our foothills and mountainous areas if we're going to have this wonderful legacy to leave to our children.

Those are some of my key concerns, Mr. Speaker, with great reservations about our continued out-of-budget spending. It's recognized that we've had extra growth, extra demands, clear interest in both human services, extra needs in the health system, but a call from both this side of the House and many across the province to see more responsible planning for the future, a more bold willingness in this government to live within our means, to stop living off the nonrenewable resource wealth, and to begin a very serious commitment to saving for the future, when our nonrenewable resource wealth is not there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak briefly on Bill 51 and in support of it because of the wonderful news that it brings to those communities waiting for these injections. I just want to comment briefly with respect to the \$32 million of additional monies that will be coming into my ministry for the First Nations development fund. As we know, these monies do flow to us from the casinos that are owned and operated by First Nations on First Nations land, so just to alleviate the concerns of the previous speaker, this is not in any way, shape, or form to be construed as a shortfall. It is one hundred per cent a windfall. These are additional monies over and above the \$78 million that are already in my ministry for distribution, based on application, to First Nations communities for economic initiatives, for social initiatives, or for community initiatives that otherwise contribute to safe, healthy, and vibrant First Nations communities in our province.

As to the question about distribution, Mr. Speaker, the distribution is made on an application basis, applications received by my ministry from the First Nations. All of whom are participating are eligible to receive these monies based on certain criteria. So I hope the hon. member will feel alleviated that this is a windfall of \$32 million more, not a shortfall.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available before I recognize the next speaker. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given the source of the revenue, I guess the question has to be asked whether the benefits from this activity outweigh the risks and harmful effects of gaming on the reserves or if there is an alternate way that we could assist First Nations in meeting those financial needs.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, we do have other programs, but I think most members here would know that virtually 99 per cent, if not almost a hundred per cent, of those programs are federal in nature because we're talking about First Nations on-reserve activities. There is some harmonization and some additional assistance that we do provide through a couple of select ministries. However, in answer specifically to the member's question, this is how the policy was arrived at after several years of consultation with First Nations, when these casinos were requested by them to be operated on their land but within the greater context of Alberta.

The Speaker: Additional questions?

Then the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre to continue the debate.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased for the opportunity to rise in third reading to speak to the anticipated effect of the passage of the appropriation bill that has been presented in the House. I think the effect that I'm seeing of the choices that the government has made around its budgeting processes is one of a lack of self-restraint in most cases, and that particularly shows when we look at the proliferation of supplementary supply budgets that the House has experienced. I had used an example earlier showing that in 1997 there was one supplementary supply involving five ministries and \$217 million of operating and \$5 million of capital, up to 2004 where we got to nine ministries and almost a billion dollars. Now in 2008 we're looking at 14 ministries and almost a billion dollars. We're just a couple of thousand shy of the billion-dollar mark.

It's been noted throughout the debate on this appropriation bill that it would be logical, especially given the timing, that the items would have been included in the budget that was brought forward by the government in the spring. We have not had our questions answered as to why those items were not included in the spring budget when clearly the government knew about them. There had been press releases. In some cases the projects were announced while we were debating the '08-09 budget.

The issue around the increasing use of supplementary supply. When I first started, I used to view it as a whoops budget, a whoops opportunity. So any time that a department had gone over budget, it could correct its whoops by having a supplementary supply, which would transfer money in, and lo and behold they would come out having not had a deficit in their particular department. But what we're seeing is, in fact, much larger and deeper than that, where it's allowing funds to be used for policies that are not outlined in documents, not outlined in government policy like the throne speech or the budget speech, and, I would argue, is more reflective of various priorities of certain more powerful people in the cabinet. I don't think that's an appropriate way for the budgeting and allocation of the people's money to take place. Also, to me it shows a lack of self-restraint.

A number of people have noted inside and outside of the House the number of finance ministers we've had who have said: "Well, that's it. That's the last possible year. Next year we're really going to tighten our belts. Don't expect the largesse to continue. This is the end of the gravy train. Everybody smarten up now." I can think of four or five years where that has been essentially the public face of the finance minister in presenting the budget.

I think that in having conquered the elimination of the cash deficit, if I can call it that, the government lost its focus and didn't replace it with a different one, which is why members of the opposition were saying that the government didn't have a plan. It didn't. It didn't have a plan. It didn't have a focus. So there was no way to say: "No, we won't spend money on this pet project or that pet project because this is our focus. This is what we're driving toward."

The only thing that was clearly a problem, and they did address it and in a very strange fashion, was the infrastructure deficit. Again, that was an understanding that the government only arrived at after being pounded by the opposition about it because everybody in the government liked to go around saying: "Well, that's it. We've wiped out our deficit. Yippee. Good times. Aren't we wonderful. Aren't we terrific managers." It was members on this side that kept saying: excuse me, but you have now built up a huge infrastructure deficit of government assets – roads, bridges, buildings – that have

not been maintained and now require extensive maintenance. We had all kinds of experts that came in and said that, yes, indeed, it would have been a lot cheaper if we had done the regular maintenance all the way along, but the government made choices to not do the regular maintenance and to plow all the money into paying off what I'm calling a cash deficit to distinguish it from the infrastructure deficit.

3:20

Again I question the management of that. I think that for any homeowner, you know, yes, it's a good thing to pay off your mortgage as fast as you can, but if you don't look after the asset that the physical structure of your building actually is, you may pay it off a few years sooner, but if you've let a hole get into the roof, you've actually reduced the asset overall. So you may own it outright, but you're now owning something that's going to cost you even more money to fix, and that didn't need to happen.

Once the government had lost its sort of ideological focus on reducing or eliminating that deficit, it's been all over the map, and we've had all kinds of short-term starts and fits. We had a legacy of a cancer fund that was supposed to end up with a billion dollars in it and ended up with \$500 million. Nobody has ever put any more money into it, and it's been drawn down. So, in fact, the value of it is actually less. It just got dropped, and nobody seemed to pick up and carry forward on that one.

I was talking about a lack of restraint and a lack of a focus and a plan, and I still see that, although what is now creeping in as an underlay is an ideological direction. I'm always interested in the number of times I have heard members of the benches opposite say: "Well, would you just keep on spending in health care? Would you just spend forever? Would you never stop?" I find that such an odd question. For anybody that's ever suffered a really devastating health problem, disease, injury, you know that if you don't have your health, you really have nothing. You can have all the money you want in the bank, and you could have houses in every city in North America, but if you don't have your health, you're not enjoying any of those. You can't make use of them at all.

Being the steward, being the entity that's responsible for delivering health services to the Alberta citizenry is, I think, a very important part of what the government does. I've always been baffled by the government essentially setting a limit on the health budgets and then saying to the health authorities: "That's it. You deliver all the health care we want you to for that amount of money." And there was no seeming relationship. No matter how I asked the questions, how I asked for backup, how I asked for documents, anything that would support what they were doing, to show that this was actually going to achieve a level of health the government said it wanted to achieve, nothing was ever produced or given back to me to support that.

I would think that you would want to choose the level of health that you want your citizenry to achieve and that you'd fund to that. I don't see why it needs to cost you that much more than what we're spending. It may well be that you can provide that for exactly what we're spending in health care today.

I really have to question the priorities of where the government spends the money. Clearly, we have an ideology-driven minister now who's making choices about it. We're hearing again phrases like "cost containment." I just tabled a document that contained that in the job description for the search for the new CEO for the Health Services Board. Clearly, phrases like "delisting": we're hearing all of that again. I truly question it. When we're a province who literally cannot manage to understand hot lunch programs for children who are poor and have arrived at school without any food to eat through no fault of their own, I question that that is somehow

something the government wishes to avoid or to have handed off to the charitable sector in hope that they can manage to achieve something there. I don't see those priorities coming really strongly from the government.

I'll acknowledge to the finance minister: this is not an easy time to figure this out. It's very volatile. It's very difficult to predict what the price of a barrel of oil is going to be or what the Canadian dollar will be against the American dollar or what percentage you could expect to get as a rate back on interest on investments. I think what I'm missing here is a really clear idea of where the government wants to move forward, and that is the effect of what I see in this appropriation budget before us today. I see a reliance on supplementary supply budgets to supply personal agendas and/or missed opportunities or a whoops factor. That's not to say that everything that's in this appropriation budget is inappropriate or should have been less or should have been more. I'm not saying that, but overall I don't see that focus, and I don't see that discipline.

You know, here's an example, Mr. Speaker. A few days ago I asked in the House about a seniors' residence that was a renovated high-rise building. Times have changed. Every single resident seems to have one of those walkers. Where before you could have gotten six or seven residents into an elevator, now you can get three. This building only had three elevators to begin with, and now we're facing a situation where it's an hour and a half to get the residents down to the main floor for their mealtimes. I think that there is a safety factor here.

When I suggested that their application should be relooked at by the minister, I was met with a great deal of heckling from the front bench that somehow I was contradicting myself in asking for gobs of money to be spent. Surely, as a priority, as a province, as a government, as stewards of our citizens' money the safety of a building full of senior citizens would be a priority place to spend money when we know that because of circumstances, to a certain extent, they've been placed at risk. No, you know, there's no fire there. There's nobody calling "fire," but there is an identified risk there, so why would we not address that as a priority and spend money there and not spend money in some other places? I just find that very curious. I find that kind of dogma – and, frankly, I can't figure out what the dogma is because it doesn't seem to be standard. It doesn't seem to be consistent. I guess this is the government that people wanted; there's a 72-seat majority in this House. But it sure baffles me and baffles some people out there in Alberta why we'd be looking at a billion dollar supplementary supply for 14 ministries. I don't think it reflects much of a fiscal discipline and a management discipline.

As much as I think that some of the things in here are very deserving of the money, because I object to the process by which this is arrived at and the lack of discipline and planning and accountability of the government, I won't be supporting the bill itself.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if there are questions. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm curious to know more about the cancer fund and what's happened to that. I understood that in the previous administration there was a strong commitment, especially to cancer prevention. I'd like to hear more about what's happened to that fund if the member is able to speak to it.

3:30

Ms Blakeman: My understanding is that the fund, which actually sits inside of the heritage savings trust fund, would still exist. It is being drawn down, as I said, and the money does go to cancer programs. There was a question and answer back and forth between the opposition and the minister responsible that monies designated for cancer programming would continue to go there and, further, that monies that had been donated philanthropically to certain wings, for example, or to certain programs in the cancer treatment program would be honoured and that those monies would be safeguarded for the public. In other words, they wouldn't now be spent somewhere else.

Beyond that, the minister responsible for health has made choices to disband the Cancer Board, so there's no longer an overarching group of people who are particularly advocating in a very direct way for how we approach cancer treatment. That has now been rolled together with AADAC, which is the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, under that Health Services Board, so it disappears as a separate entity and has been rolled into the mixed priorities of the Health Services Board.

The Speaker: Additional questions?

Are there additional speakers on Bill 51?
Shall I call the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 51 read a third time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just prior to putting forward an important motion for consideration of the House that would conclude this fall session of the Alberta Legislature, I'd like to personally thank all members who have been here over the past number of months and who participated in their special way to help improve the lives of Albertans, we hope, both current and future ones.

In looking back at this session, Mr. Speaker, which began in the spring, recessed over the summer, and then continued on with a vibrant fall session, we passed something like 53 pieces of legislation. I think that's pretty remarkable, and I sincerely want to say thank you to everyone for their input in that regard.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, thank you to all members as well and best wishes for a very happy, safe, and healthy Christmas season and for an equally healthy and happy and prosperous, let us hope, new year.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 3.1(4) and in accordance with the amendments to the standing orders, which will take effect tomorrow, I would now move that the Assembly stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 10, 2009, unless it becomes necessary to commence or to meet on another day.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, have a safe, happy number of weeks ahead of us and both a joyous and prosperous occasion and be family oriented.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:33 p.m.]

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

Activity to December 03, 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cS-4.7]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cF-11.5]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cW-5.1]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cA-4.2]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c33]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force December 2, 2008; SA 2008 c28]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2184 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c35]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c27]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c32]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2008 c31]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2008 c37]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cH-4.3]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cE-6.6]

- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c38]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c39]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c34]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c36]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force December 2, 2008; SA 2008 c29]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c40]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c41]
- 51 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2) (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 2111 (Nov. 27 aft.)
Second Reading -- 2166-72 (Dec. 1 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2188-95 (Dec. 2 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2210-13 (Dec. 3 aft., passed)
- 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)
Committee of the Whole -- 2166 (Dec. 1 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2188 (Dec. 2 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)
Royal Assent -- 2185 (Dec. 2 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c30]
- 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.)
Second Reading -- 2141-54 (Dec. 1 aft., passed)
- 211 Documentation of Child Access Exchange Act (DeLong)**
First Reading -- 2111 (Nov. 27 aft.)
Second Reading -- 2155-58 (Dec. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 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]

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