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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

Second Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 7, 2009

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. Let us keep ever mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our province, and in that work let us find strength and wisdom. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you a group of students all the way from Medicine Hat. The students are from Crestwood school in Medicine Hat. This is about the 20th or more time consecutively that the grade 6 students at Crestwood school from Medicine Hat have come up and joined us here at the Legislature. I'm very, very pleased with the commitment of the teachers and the parents to give the students that opportunity. Joining the students – and they're seated in both the public and the members' galleries – are Principal David George; Vice-principal Al Tisnic; teachers Maria Thompson, Wade Lawson, Darcy Nielson, Wendy Smid, and Kathy Western; along with parent helpers Paula Tessier, Nelda Davis, and Diane Foster. This is an outstanding group of young students, and I'm proud to introduce them to this Legislature. I'd ask that they all rise and receive a warm welcome from all members of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. McFarland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly a special school from Vulcan, Alberta. They've been up a number of times before, not this same group, but I want all the members to pay special attention. The teacher asked, out of respect for the Legislature, that the boys wear ties – I thought they were with a little hockey team – and the girls are all dressed up very nicely. These kids are from Prairieview elementary school along with teachers Ms Vanda Ruffli, who grew up around Westbank, B.C., and Ms Heather McBride, who's from around Rumsey, she tells me; education assistants Mrs. Terry Lanktree from Vulcan and Mrs. Kay Ellis from Vulcan; along with parent drivers Mr. Brian Connors and Mr. Clarke Williams. I would ask that they rise and be extended the warm welcome of our Assembly, please. Thanks for coming.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the members of the Education Advisory Committee. This is a group of dedicated educators who volunteer their time to provide pedagogical and curricular expertise in support of all school programming offered by the Legislative Assembly Office: Glenda Bistrow from St. Paul, David Bryce from Edmonton, Catherine Cole from Edmonton, Linda Couillard-L'Abbé from Peace River, Wally Diefenthaler from Edmonton, Rick Homan from Lethbridge, Carol Anne Konkin from Edmonton, Susan MacKay from Calgary, and Corvin Uhrbach from

Lacombe. They are seated in your gallery. I would like to ask that all our guests rise and receive the most warm welcome from our Assembly.

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

Mr. Horner: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly members of the Alberta Student Executive Council, or ASEC. This organization represents postsecondary students in our province and has done so for over 27 years under the name of ACTISEC. Much like Alberta's postsecondary system, the organization is evolving to better meet the needs of the students in our great province. They're holding their first annual leadership conference under the new name of ASEC and will be electing the new leaders of their organizations this week in Edmonton. Representing over 120,000 postsecondary education students in Alberta from four of the six sectors in our six-sector model, they are an excellent stakeholder group, ensuring that front-line student issues are clearly communicated to government.

Mr. Speaker, we have over 40 guests in both galleries, but I would only like to name the outgoing executive committee, who I've had the pleasure of working with this past year: Matt Koczur, Lisi Monro, Marie Barnes, Stephen Griffith, Brent Constantin, Adam Boechler. Also, the new executive director is Carol Neuman. The current executive director, Adam Boechler, is leaving after two years of very great work, and I would commend him on that. These student leaders are in both galleries. I would like to ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

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

Walking Away Hunger Campaign

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a great privilege today to rise and speak about an initiative that I was involved in starting some four years ago. This is the Walking Away Hunger campaign. My reasoning to start this initiative was (a) to help the Calgary Inter-faith Food Bank and (b) to get young people to serve. When you get people to serve, they bring out their best, and they experience their best. When someone experiences their best, they're less likely to do anything negative.

It's with great pride that I announce today that this past weekend was the conclusion of our campaign for this year. The young folks raised \$25,829.63 in cash and over \$12,200 worth of actual food. That brings our collective total for four years to \$130,029.63.

Mr. Speaker, this is an initiative that involves young people and schools from all different backgrounds, that is organized and coordinated by Sikh Youth Calgary. I applaud them, and, most importantly, I thank them for stepping up and keeping this initiative going since my time is now devoted elsewhere.

I'd ask all members to show their appreciation of these members, who are watching and listening on TV right now. Thank you.

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

MS Walk

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week you mentioned that May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. It is an honour for me to rise this afternoon to recognize the MS Society of Canada and their annual MS Walk campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wearing a red lanyard. These have been distributed to all members of this Assembly. I'd ask them to wear this today, if they're so inclined, in observance of this month.

Multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults in Canada, with between 55,000 and 75,000 Canadians having been diagnosed with MS, 11,000 of those in Alberta. That number is growing by an estimated three people today.

Mr. Speaker, my family is no exception. My aunt Mora Hauk was diagnosed with MS in her early 20s. She has a very severe case, and we just had some very bad news about her health this week. No one needs to face MS alone, and I'm thankful that my aunt has had her husband, Jamie Beckstead, and my mother, Marguerite Denis, to care for her every day.

There is some good news about MS, Mr. Speaker. Researchers are developing new and better treatments with the ultimate goal of finding a cure for MS. Every year the MS Society of Canada helps organize the MS Walk in order to raise money for this research. The MS Walk involves over 60,000 volunteers in 160 communities across Canada. Last year the MS Walk campaign helped raise \$12 million towards research.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank every volunteer that has worked tirelessly in support of the MS walks that have already been held but particularly Crystal Phillips and Jamie Ivey, who brought this walk to my attention this year. I remind everyone that there are still many opportunities to get involved by walking or sponsoring a participant in the Edmonton MS Walk on May 31, the Calgary one on June 7, and others that can be easily found at www.mssociety.ca.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues and fellow Albertans to support the MS Walk and help cure a disease that afflicts my family along with tens of thousands of other Canadian families.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

1:40

Provincial Budget

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and his ministers have mishandled one of their most important responsibilities, to craft a budget that both prepares Alberta to meet today's challenges and lays the foundation for a prosperous tomorrow. This budget and the changes to the so-called Fiscal Responsibility Act that will enable this budget remove any legislative means of saving. The cap on oil and gas revenues that can be used for budget purposes: gone. The \$2.5 billion held in reserve to deal with natural disasters: gone. In essence, once the act passes, the government will be able to spend every penny they have, and once this budget passes, they will start doing exactly that.

One of the guiding principles of responsible government should be that we govern not only for ourselves but for the benefit of future generations. A consistent and enduring refusal to commit to any kind of legislated savings strategy is not the position of a responsible government. For years opposition parties, media, think tanks, and citizens have been calling on this government to save more of its nonrenewable resource revenues, but this government has failed Albertans: no fiscal responsibility, no plan for the future, just a wish and a prayer that another oil boom will dig them out of the hole just one more time.

On top of all this, Mr. Speaker, the government expects the Official Opposition to debate this budget on behalf of Albertans without the benefit of critical information about that budget. Out of all the requests we made for written responses to questions we raised

during the ministry-by-ministry estimates debates, only one ministry has bothered to deliver on the promise they all made that they would provide those answers before today's vote.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans deserve better.

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

Parental Choice in Education

Mr. Mason: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a dark day for Alberta's public educators and for our children. This government, through Bill 44, has said that it needs to use the Human Rights Commission to keep teachers in line. This has a chilling effect on teachers who are attempting to address issues that may arise in the classroom that might be deemed publicly sensitive and that might promote critical inquiry on the part of the students. Quite frankly, it undermines the very fabric of our public education system, which strives to stimulate dialogue, inspire, and educate our children so that they might become engaged participants in a healthy and vibrant society.

Never should a public school teacher be at risk of persecution, prosecution, or penalty for engaging students in critical debate in our public schools. If such a thing were to happen, Alberta would stand to be embarrassed among developed jurisdictions for stifling education, scientific methodology, and the very creativity of the youth we hold so dear. Yet this government proposes amendments to the Human Rights Commission legislation that threaten to do just this.

In this country and in this province parents have already got the right to raise their children as they see fit and to instill in them the spiritual and cultural values they hold dear. No government can prevent that, nor should they even try. By the same token, no government should threaten our educators with violating human rights legislation for teaching controversial issues and for allowing students to draw their own conclusions.

Mr. Speaker, this government's priorities are dangerously off course. A child's right to an objective, open education in the public school system and a teacher's right to provide that education without fear of retribution is a goal that all of us, and especially our provincial government, should consistently pursue.

Thank you.

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

Paving Health Pathways Strategy

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise today and speak about paving health pathways, the health services strategy that was announced by Alberta Education on April 30, 2009. This pilot project will develop a number of high school courses designed to help Alberta students to explore careers in health services. This project is backed by a three-year, \$12 million funding commitment by the government of Alberta. Students in these 10 pilot jurisdictions will have a greater opportunity to explore the world of work, gain insight into possible health services careers, and work toward postsecondary certification while still in high school.

The Edmonton Catholic separate school district, with a school in my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie, offers health care aide, sports medicine, medical sciences, and prehospital care programs. Other available programs include emergency responder and licensed practical nurse programs. The program will be phased in starting this fall.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this program will provide great benefit to high school students by providing them with real-life education.

At this time I would like to recognize Alberta Education, Alberta school boards, teachers, and parents for providing pathways to jobs in health for Alberta's high school students.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize the creation of the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation. It is an important step on the road we are travelling in Alberta when it comes to fighting climate change. As we know, technology is the foundation for our government's climate change strategy. It will provide the keys to unlocking the door to a more carbon-friendly future by allowing significant and meaningful greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and it will reaffirm Alberta's commitment to being a responsible global energy producer.

The Climate Change and Emissions Management Act created the continent's only emissions reduction program that is operating and achieving real results. We are taking another leap forward with the creation of the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation, which will be led by, I'm happy to say, Mr. Eric Newell. His experience with industry and serving the interests of Albertans will give the corporation the guidance it needs to take the money collected from industry as part of complying with our climate change regulations and leverage it into significant emission reductions here in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Notices of Motions

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. According to Standing Order 30 I would like to now give oral notice that at the appropriate time I'll be raising the following issues under Standing Order 30, which is, of course, the emergency debate provision.

That the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, the failure to provide written responses to questions posed during debate on the 2009-10 main estimates obstructs opposition members of the Legislative Assembly in their review and evaluation of the budget, preventing them from making a fully informed decision on the vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(3) to advise the House that on Monday, May 11, 2009, Motion for a Return 25 will be dealt with.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of 10 reports from long-term care workers indicating specific problems on shifts that were short-staffed. These indicate that staff did not have sufficient time to provide effective care to residents with dementia.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Are there others under tablings?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table these five copies of my responses to the questions raised during Alberta Transportation's estimates in Committee of Supply on April 20, 2009.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Hancock: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate number of copies of answers to questions raised in Committee of Supply for the benefit of the House.

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. Hayden, Minister of Infrastructure, responses to questions raised by Mr. Mason, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, and Mr. MacDonald, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, on April 21, 2009, in the Department of Infrastructure main estimates debate.

On behalf of the hon. Ms Redford, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, response to written questions 9, 16, and 17, all asked for by Ms Notley on April 6, 2009.

Oral Question Period

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

Budget Debate Process

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year we've experienced a budget process that is fundamentally flawed and violates basic requirements of openness, timeliness, and accountability to us as the opposition and to Albertans. After the delay in even seeing the budget, we are debating as the Official Opposition separate ministries at up to \$160 million a minute. This government failed to provide written responses, as promised in debate, to allow the opposition to represent the public interest. To the President of the Treasury Board: why have most of the ministries except Energy failed to provide written responses?

1:50

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, I would allow the hon. leader to ask the ministers, but, as I think he's heard, most of them are tabling the responses.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that should be pointed out: anyone in Alberta can go to *Hansard*, and they can go and review the questions that were asked while we were undergoing budget deliberations. If the hon. leader thinks it's appropriate with two or three or five minutes left in a committee meeting to put on the record 30 or 40 or 50 asinine questions and expect written answers in a few days, then they have a little different opinion of the budget.

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order.

The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. How can this government sit there and claim that this is a fair, accountable budgeting process when it withholds required information by the opposition and all Albertans in doing our job?

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, we spent approximately 60 hours on the budget. We've created an opportunity now where we can deal

with two departments a night, where the opposition has the opportunity to focus on the areas they feel important, too. The departments are critically aware of how important it is to get accurate information back when it's asked for. Sometimes the information asked for is very complicated. Sometimes the numbers are very detailed and need to be extrapolated from the bigger budget numbers. The departments work diligently to try and respond to questions as soon as they can.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will this government commit to delaying this budget vote until the opposition does receive the written responses so that we can do our job on behalf of Albertans and give sufficient time to review the information so that we can represent these interests appropriately?

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, the process has gone on since the introduction of the budget here about a month ago. It has taken the same time or track that we have had for years, where the budget gets a very full vetting both by members of the government and members of the opposition. The general public can certainly go to some of the Liberal caucus rooms – why they can't be debated. I've just underlined the ones that say that we don't spend enough and the ones that say that we spend too much, and it's coming out of balance.

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

Mental Health Services

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, mental illness is a prevalent problem within our health system, but unfortunately it's put on the back burner by this government. Many people who are homeless suffer from mental illness, yet this government continues to fail the very efficient voluntary agencies that are working with the mentally ill and now struggling to cope with reduced resources at a time of actual increased demand. To the minister of health: how will the minister support the underfunded nonprofit sector in their work with the homeless and the hard-to-house as they struggle with increased demand from mental illness?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was at a very enjoyable breakfast yesterday put on by the Mental Health Association; so were a number of colleagues in this Assembly. In speaking with my colleagues who were meeting with various people involved both at the volunteer and the professional levels within mental health at yesterday's breakfast, it was very clear that the people that are actually delivering the service and are volunteering for the service are incredibly happy and pleased with the initiatives that this government has taken in the area of mental health. The only one I heard that wasn't was the Leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, they are very committed and dedicated people, and they're very frustrated people also. As the Canadian Mental Health Association, Edmonton region, stated to me, they are struggling with nearly a hundred individuals whom they cannot house, and they lack resources to help. Mr. Minister, what support and reallocation will your ministry provide to the Edmonton region of the Canadian Mental Health Association?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had been taking some time in looking through our budget documents, it would be very clear as to what we are committing to in this particular year for mental health. In addition to that, we have through our safe communities work made a number of announcements. There is an announcement tomorrow in Calgary, and I extend an invitation to the hon. leader to show up. In addition to that, one of the initiatives in our health action plan was the introduction of a children's mental health plan. So we've got a number of initiatives that we've taken around mental health that have been very progressive.

Dr. Swann: Well, as the Auditor General has said, Mr. Speaker, properly addressing mental health would reduce suffering and keep many people out of hospital and out of the justice system, saving money. Why is the minister not showing leadership in mental health service delivery which would offer significant cost reductions to the health care system?

Mr. Liepert: In fact, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. Our announcement tomorrow is a joint announcement by the Justice minister and myself relative to a number of beds in the Calgary region. It's through our safe communities task force, where we've got a number of departments working together because we recognize that mental health just isn't health. It involves the Justice department, the Solicitor General's department, a number of departments of government. It's an initiative that's working very well.

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

Definition of Religion

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The current human rights legislation forbids discrimination on the basis of religion, yet what constitutes religion or religious belief has been the topic of debate for thousands of years. My questions are to the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. For the purposes of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act what is the definition of religion the government is using?

Mr. Blackett: Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of a definition, we don't have a definition that we're using. We're referring to the curriculum that the Department of Education is using and what they determine religious instruction is with respect to the curriculum.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. Again to the same minister. A dictionary definition of religion is "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power" or "a particular system of faith and worship." So for the purposes of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act are all religions equal? For example, if Christianity and Islam count as religions, does Wicca or Falun Gong?

Mr. Blackett: Mr. Speaker, religious beliefs are already in the human rights legislation as a protective ground, but for the purpose of the parental rights piece, section 11.1, we are talking about religion as an area of study. We do not care which religion is more important than another. We treat them all equally because in this province, as far as I can remember, we treat people equally.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. Back to the same minister: for the purposes of government policy what is the difference between a religion and a cult, and by what criteria does the government determine this?

Mr. Blackett: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a spurious comment. It has no relevance to what we're talking about with respect to Bill 44 and the parental rights amendment. What we're talking about is religious content as it appears in the boundaries of the curriculum of the school boards, nothing more, nothing less.

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

Taser Deaths

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, this morning we learned that the RCMP have deployed a taser, resulting in another person's death, this time an Albertan. Last night the Mounties were called to investigate a complaint of an injured man causing a disturbance in Brooks and ended up using a taser on him. Grant William Prentice is the fifth Albertan to die after being tasered by police. Enough is enough. Why won't the Solicitor General ban taser use in Alberta when it's clear that tasers kill?

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, the incident the hon. member is speaking about is a tragic incident that occurred last night in Brooks. That being said, the taser has been utilized in this province probably at least 2,500 times in the last four or five years. There's been no evidence at all to indicate that any of those incidents have resulted in the death of anybody. In fact, we have evidence to indicate that they've saved probably hundreds of lives over that period of time.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In 2004 Ronald Perry was tasered by Edmonton police and died. In 2005 Alesandro Fiacco was tasered by Edmonton police and died. In 2006 Jason Doan was tasered by Red Deer RCMP and later died. Last year Trevor Grimolfson was tasered by Edmonton police and died. Why won't the Solicitor General ban these lethal weapons in Alberta?

2:00

Mr. Lindsay: Again, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has any evidence at all that taser use contributed to those deaths, bring it forward, because the medical reports that we have do not indicate that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 when the RCMP tasered Robert Dziekanski to death in the Vancouver airport, I called on this government to review taser use in Alberta. No such review was done, and I think we're past that now anyway. The families of these victims are outraged that their loved ones continued to be killed by police using tasers. Why won't the Solicitor General follow Newfoundland's lead and ban tasers in Alberta?

Mr. Lindsay: Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why this hon. member doesn't do something responsible and reasonable and provide evidence that these particular instruments are causing death instead of spreading innuendo and misinformation.

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

Building Construction Review

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There have been recent reports in the media and some calls in my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie about homes that are experiencing leaks and mould due to problems with the building structure. My questions are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Can the minister tell us if he's aware of these concerns and what he is doing about them?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, we are. Because of some of the concerns that we did receive, a handful of concerns, I asked my parliamentary assistant to do a review, and this last summer he met with homeowners, consulted with stakeholders, municipalities, also builders, and examined ways to ensure that the quality of construction in new homes is examined. The builders and designers and homeowners are responsible to ensure that homes comply with these building codes.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental to the same minister: can the minister tell us when we can expect a response to these reviews?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, we did and do realize that this is very important, and that's why we did the consultation. We wanted to be proactive. Alberta's building codes are strong. We are looking at the issue in its entirety, and we feel that it's very important to do a very good, thorough review.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been recent media reports about a specific exterior system causing this mould. Could the minister indicate if this was addressed in his review?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear that these are two separate issues. I was recently made aware of the concerns regarding this specific product. I understand that the Safety Codes Council has been approached. We'll hear a presentation from an individual, and that is our first indication. We don't know what the presentation will be about. Our review looked broadly, going back, at how to maintain the quality of construction practices in Alberta.

I need to say that we are confident that the homes in Alberta are built to code, and we want to ensure that Albertans continue to have confidence in the construction industry.

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

Religious Content in Education

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the millennia innumerable wars have been fought over the separation of church and state, but now this government has blurred that separation and threatens to turn Alberta classrooms into the next battleground. To the Minister of Education: how can you expect teachers to know which lessons would be objectionable on religious grounds when your colleagues cannot even agree on what would be considered religious subject matter?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I don't expect teachers at all to take a look at each and every part of the curriculum through any form of religious lens whatsoever. The curriculum they're teaching is mandated. They're required to teach the curriculum that we provide to them. What the hon. member is obviously referring to is a bill that is coming up for debate later on today, possibly, and certainly has been before the House that is talking about a potential for opting out of instruction about religion. I think the House can be very clear and teachers can be very clear what we mean about instruction about religion. About religion is about the faiths that we know and the faiths that people practise. That's not about using religion to correct the curriculum. It's about instruction about religion.

Mr. Chase: Why is the minister imposing an unreasonable burden on Alberta teachers by requiring them to send out consent forms in advance of the countless situations that could be considered objectionable?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased that the hon. member is helping to clear this up because we are not requiring teachers to send out notices to parents about things that people might consider objectionable in the curriculum. What we're asking is what they're required to do now: to send out notice when they're teaching about human sexuality so that parents can participate in the education of their children on something that is very important to them and their families. With respect to religion the School Act currently provides for an exemption where there's religious instruction. The new provision will provide for instruction about religion – not about anything else; instruction about religion – and notifying parents in the same way that they do now with respect to human sexuality. It's not a burden, and it certainly shouldn't freeze up discussion in the class on any other topic.

Mr. Chase: How do you justify turning secular public schools into opt-out Sunday schools when taxpayer-subsidized home-schooling, charter, and private school options exist?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, the only time that religion would come up that I'm aware of in a public school curriculum is if a teacher decided to teach a module, for example, on comparative religions. Science is not about religion. Social studies is not about religion. Math is not about religion. Certainly, literature is not about religion. They all may have some issues that cover religious topics in them. This act is about teaching about religion, and there's nothing in the curriculum now that I'm aware of which requires teaching about religion. But if a module came up where a teacher wanted to bring, for example, comparative religions into the social studies curriculum, then, and only then, would they be required to provide notice to parents and let them know what is included in that curriculum.

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

Bullying Prevention

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable any time, anywhere, and at any age. Preventing bullying starts with each one of us. Unfortunately, bullying happens all too often and even sometimes here in the Legislature. Yesterday a student from my constituency was featured on *Oprah*, telling his

story about being bullied. I'm sure there are many other students across the province who are being targeted each and every day as well. My first question is to the Minister of Education. Can the minister tell us what government is doing to ensure that bullying prevention is being taken seriously?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. This is, in fact, a very, very important topic across Alberta. I think in surveys it's shown that about 49 per cent of Alberta youth indicate that they feel that they have been bullied, and 58 per cent of Alberta youth say that they've seen bullying taking place, so this is a very important topic. We do, in fact, with my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services have a joint ministry approach to bullying. There are websites called bullyfreealberta.ca and b-free.ca that Albertans can go on, and those websites are visited a significant amount of times. We have a task force. We have employees who are specifically tasked with dealing with bullying in schools and providing materials to schools. Of course, school boards also have a responsibility to make sure that schools are safe and caring places.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Oprah has offered up a student program to the school to help stop bullying behaviours, and I'm happy to say that the school and the division have accepted that offer. Can the minister tell me how this program will effectively address bullying in conjunction with the provincial initiatives?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd say that I always appreciate when people bring the topic of bullying into the public domain for discussion because I think it's very important that we have that discussion, that we have that discussion in public, that we raise the awareness that this isn't about the old days and what we had to brace in the schoolyards. This is a real issue for real students driving some students even to the point of committing suicide. So it's an extremely important issue. The reality is that there's no one single answer. The program that Oprah is promoting may be one part of the solution, but there are many, many ways that we can help bring awareness and deal with the issue.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you. Finally, the last question to the same minister. If we're going to stop bullying, we need to get to the heart of where our students live, learn, and play. Is the government's bullying prevention strategy doing enough to reach all Albertans and make sure they are getting the message?

2:10

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we do have the websites, and there is good indication that we are reaching people. There have been 4.3 million hits on that website since May 2006. To date about 1,100 people have called the 24/7 toll-free bullying helpline for assistance. We've reprinted and updated our information materials, which have been sought after in high demand by schools, community groups, and associations. We have an Alberta Prevention of Bullying Youth Committee, whose advice has been sought. In fact, employees of our department travel to schools around the province to promote bullying prevention and to provide materials and advice to schools.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

Building Construction Review (continued)

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A home is the biggest investment one makes, and some condo owners may have to walk away from their investment because of unmanageable repair bills. Condo owners cannot afford to wait for this administration to conduct a lengthy review with no guarantee of action. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what is the minister doing today to help condo owners who have repair bills, big ones, due to shoddy workmanship?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, there has been a concern raised by a handful of individuals, mostly single-home dwellers. We did bring forward a consultation process with the parliamentary assistant. That process has come to me. I have brought it to my department, that is looking at the recommendations or the comments that came forward, and we are looking at solutions if there need to be.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not the first time this issue has been raised. The Calgary Region Home Builders Association was advising about stucco application problems almost three years ago. Why is the minister only now looking into these standards?

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Speaker, we have very good codes in Alberta. The Safety Codes Council reviews the codes on a regular basis. When the concerns came forward to our ministry, we initiated the consultation with the condo associations, with individual home builders, with municipalities. We do have recommendations that have come forward, and we are dealing with it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been three years. No action so far. To the Minister of Service Alberta: why is the minister denying protection to condo owners by her continued inaction on this issue?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, just following up the minister's comments, with respect to the Condominium Property Act, as I've indicated before, this piece of legislation is going to be under review. The review process has begun. The complexity of this particular act is evident today with the issues that Albertans are facing, and that's why looking at this particular angle and working with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, we have to look at this and do the right thing.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Whitecourt Ste. Anne, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Highway Traffic Enforcement

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall a pilot project between the RCMP and the sheriffs was brought to my constituency in Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. You know, the police presence out on provincial highways has just been outstanding. My questions are all

to the Solicitor General. Can the minister tell this Assembly how this program is working and if the pilot project will become a permanent project in Whitecourt-Ste. Anne?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member speaks about a program that's working very well in Alberta. We've always had great co-operation between the RCMP and the sheriffs. We put in place four pilots this spring: one in Olds, one in Wetaskiwin, one in Airdrie, and one in this member's constituency of Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. They work very well together. In the Whitecourt area the joint forces issued 2,500 violations. Over 1,600 of them have been for speeding and 880 of them for other violations.

Mr. VanderBurg: To the same minister. I understand as well that there have been some charges laid for speed limits that have been exceeded, like over 200 kilometres an hour. I wonder if you could advise us: do these people just get a 24-hour suspension, or are their licences taken away for a longer period of time?

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, as the legislation is today, when there's evidence that somebody has been drinking and driving and there may not be enough evidence here for an impaired-driving conviction, the officer, including our sheriffs, have the ability for a 24-hour suspension. However, Mr. Speaker, I'm getting feedback that sometimes they're pulling over the same people more than once, so I will be speaking to the Minister of Transportation to review that, as other provinces are doing. They're putting more stringent penalties in place for subsequent actions when the same number is picked up.

Mr. VanderBurg: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you that it's not an old blue Dodge going over 200 kilometres down that highway. I am very upset that we continually give a 24-hour suspension to these same people going over 200 time after time after time. We have to get tougher on this issue, and I want to know from the minister if he can act on this very quickly.

Mr. Lindsay: Well, just so we're not confused, Mr. Speaker, when somebody is travelling over 40 kilometres over the speed limit, they do have to make a court appearance. However, when that same person has also been consuming alcohol, that's another matter, and that's where the 24-hour suspensions come in. I will be talking to the Transportation minister to look at making some more stringent penalties in that regard.

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

Worker Recruitment Hosting Expenses

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall during the worst financial meltdown in generations the Minister of Employment and Immigration spent over \$25,000 in New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, on hosting expenses to recruit workers to Alberta. These events were all by invitation only, another example of elitist Conservatives. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: how can the government justify spending over \$25,000 in hosting expenses to recruit workers when so many Albertans here in Alberta at the very same time were losing their jobs?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member indicates or seems to leave the impression that I was there on those particular trips, and

I want to make it clear to the Assembly that I did not participate in those particular trips. However, we do have staff that do some of the fairs and will go into very strategic markets to identify individuals that we are very short of here. Specifically, we are targeting individuals in the health professions, and we will spend the money necessary to attract individuals that we are short of in the province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's interesting now that there's a freeze or the brakes are on hiring. The department took their travelling road show across the Atlantic to Britain last fall, spending an additional \$15,000 on hosting expenses while thousands of Albertans were lining up for EI, if they could get it at all. Where is the value in this expenditure for Alberta taxpayers? To the same minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, we're monitoring the labour market very, very closely. While I admit that we are in a much more balanced labour situation, it's always important to develop our workforce. We are targeting, first and foremost – and I've always said that in this House – Albertans and Canadians. Having said that, there are still areas of shortages, and those are the areas that we're putting emphasis on.

Mr. MacDonald: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. The government seems more interested in supporting overseas catering companies and doing very little for unemployed Albertans. Why is it necessary to spend all this money abroad when so many Albertans here at home are losing their jobs?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, as I have indicated, Albertans and Canadians have every opportunity to participate in the Alberta labour force, and we do encourage that. We work with them. Those that lose their jobs have all of the resources available through our ministry to try to match them with other jobs, and we'll continue to do that. If there are some holes that need to be filled, we'll also work in those areas.

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

Building Construction Review

(continued)

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's new home warranty program is deficient, and this government knows it. Instead of demanding better from builders, they're passing the buck onto unsuspecting homeowners. A top engineer with CMHC has already written two reports about shoddy workmanship leading to mouldy buildings, and we know that a lot of homes were built in a hurry during the boom. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: why is he letting fly-by-night contractors get away with building faulty homes, that are costing people tens of thousands of dollars to repair just a few years after they were built?

2:20

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that our ministry has not received any complaints about the product that the hon. member is talking about. The Safety Codes Council has not received any complaints. The individual that the member is talking about I do believe has asked for a meeting. There is no indication on that proposal for a meeting with the Safety Codes Council of what it could be about. If there are issues and there are concerns, our ministry and the Safety Codes Council look at them immediately.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian condominium association has been telling this government for some time to make new home warranties mandatory and to extend them beyond the first year of ownership, but this minister has ignored them. Given the crisis that we had with pine shakes and the billion dollar condo crisis that affected tens of thousands of B.C. homeowners, how can this government go on ignoring this problem?

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Speaker, this government is not ignoring those concerns or those requests. That is why I asked my parliamentary assistant to meet and have consultations with the condominium association, with homeowners, with municipalities, with the Safety Codes Council, to look at those issues and try to find a solution if one is necessary. As I said before, those recommendations have come to me. I have sent them to my department, and they are looking at them. I'm sure I will have recommendations very shortly.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, while there are years of studies and examinations and consultations and hand holding, buildings are rotting. Now, single-year warranties for new homes are ridiculous. We all know that major construction problems in new detached homes and condos take years to crop up, and what's more ridiculous is that for condo owners the new home warranty timeline applies to the entire building, not just their unit. So the warranty has already expired before some people even move in. When will the minister stop consulting, stop examining, stop hand holding, and instead take a lesson from B.C. and Ontario and insist that home builders provide better, longer home warranties for new owners?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will say one thing. Maybe a little bit different from the member of the third party, we don't operate on a whim of a newspaper article. We have some of the strongest safety codes in this country, and the comparison with British Columbia is completely different because their safety codes that were in place were not of the same calibre as ours.

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

Stock Market Rally

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Stock markets have begun to rally of late, with the TSX rising by nearly 375 points on Monday. This could be taken as a sign the economy is beginning to recover. Now, on this side of the House we all knew it was eventually coming but are pleasantly surprised that it seems to have started so soon. My first question to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise: what impact will this market rise have on the province's economy?

Ms Evans: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I think that people have been watching the markets much more closely of late. We've heard the head of the U.S. Federal Reserve say that the U.S. could be out of their recession in the latter part of this year. We've heard the same prediction from the Bank of Canada. The surge on Monday, interestingly enough, was quite buoyant for many seeing those stocks increase, but we take it as nothing more than a few days of good news. Today, you'll notice, they're down 262 points, so we have to watch that we don't get too excited when we get these increases.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is also to this minister. Will this improve the province's fiscal situation in the near future?

Ms Evans: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly hope so, and we hope to see more on the increase side. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everybody in the Assembly that we have \$17 billion in an emergency fund that will help us bridge the storm. We're using it wisely. This year when we spend roughly \$4.7 billion out of that fund, we'll be able to sustain many of the programs that Albertans want. I think that's a good-news story in itself.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the minister again. What effect will the stock market rally have on the heritage trust fund, and when will the next report be coming out?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, again, the heritage fund is our long-term savings account. We're very prudent in our management of that account. That account is not intended to be used as emergency savings. We hope to see increases. Many people will know, if they've taken a look at their most recent RSPs, that some of the stocks have gone up and had some rally since last year. We expect that when we get a first-quarter report on the heritage fund, we'll see some of that reflected in that report as well.

Fundraising Dinner Sales Committee

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Speaker, some of the names on the list of the sales committee for the Premier's dinner here in Edmonton, a partisan political fundraiser, make for interesting reading. Two of those names, Dave Broda and John Logan, are vice-chairs of the Surface Rights Board. To the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development: how is the Surface Rights Board independently governed when its vice-chairs are fundraisers for the governing political party?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, this is a standard practice of the opposition to try to tarnish the reputation of good Albertans, one of whom actually served in this Assembly. There are a variety of backgrounds of members on that board, and they're doing a good job.

Mr. Hehr: Well, I'm not trying to tarnish anyone's reputation here. What I'd just like to inquire about is: what kind of code and conflicts-of-interest provisions are there that would say that people on the Surface Rights Board should be fundraisers for a political party at Premier events?

Dr. Morton: Well, Mr. Speaker, the opposition obviously doesn't understand a lot about a variety of human rights, one of them called freedom of association. If somebody wants to be a member of a political party, they can be a member of a political party.

Mr. Hehr: I understand being a member of a political party full well. I just don't understand what kind of conflict-of-interest rules or regulations exist with your Surface Rights Board when they can be chief fundraisers for political events.

Dr. Morton: Now we're back to plan 1, which is innuendo, tarnishing the reputation of individuals. I'm tired of these kinds of questions.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Integrated Ambulance Services

Mr. Allred: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents in St. Albert are hearing rumours that due to ambulance service moving under the purview of Alberta Health Services, city council has had to hire more fire and ambulance workers and that this, in turn, will result in higher taxes for the city of St. Albert. Can the Minister of Health and Wellness please explain this situation?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to comment on rumours, but let me state the fact. The fact is that prior to April 1 of this year the provincial government paid 60 per cent of ambulance costs, and municipalities paid 40 per cent. As of April 1 the provincial government through Alberta Health Services is paying 100 per cent of the cost of ambulance services. I fail to see how our picking up 40 per cent of the municipalities' cost somehow would increase their property taxes.

Mr. Allred: Mr. Speaker, my next question is also for the same minister. Since the minister has said that the province is providing all of the funding for ambulance service, how is it possible that St. Albert's costs could rise? Were fire costs previously buried in the EMS budget?

Mr. Liepert: Well, I don't know that I'd want to go that far, Mr. Speaker. I'd let the member and others make their own presumptions. All I know is that the changeover to EMS and the signing on of municipalities, if they chose to remain in an integrated service, has gone very well. In fact, in flipping through the clippings in the weekly newspapers, I happened to see where many of the mayors and councillors have been very pleased with it. I know that the mayor of Airdrie, as an example, has been a strong proponent of an integrated service. Her comments couldn't have been more complimentary about how this has worked well in their favour.

2:30

Mr. Allred: Mr. Speaker, my final question. Again to the minister: can the Minister of Health and Wellness provide a couple of tangible examples of how this transition of ambulance services from municipalities to Alberta Health Services will benefit Albertans?

Mr. Liepert: Well, we have several instances already identified that show that having a centralized dispatch service and one province-wide ambulance service has created efficiencies. I know, as an example, it was told to me that a patient was transferred from Olds to Red Deer, and the dispatch happened to pick up at the same time that another patient had to go from Red Deer to Olds, so that ambulance was used both ways. In the past you'd have had one ambulance passing the other on the highway.

We've got a number of other instances that have been related to me, and I'd be happy at some point in time, maybe by written answer, to let all members know of some of these examples.

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

Medically Necessary Abortions

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just an hour or two ago there was a large, well-organized pro-life, antiabortion protest on the steps of the Legislature. The Minister of Sustainable Resource

Development spoke to the cheering crowds and urged them on. Now, given that the Minister of Health and Wellness has indicated that there could be 50 or so services delisted, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Is there any consideration being given by this government to delist public funding for medically necessary abortions?

Mr. Liepert: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Taft: Thank you. Well, given the very recent delisting of gender correction surgery by this government, I'm going to repeat this question for the minister. Will the Minister of Health and Wellness guarantee that this government plans to respect the law of the land, including the Supreme Court ruling, and continue to fund medically necessary abortions?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear in this House that we plan to follow the principles of the Canada Health Act. I'm not sure if the member is familiar with those particular principles. I'd ask him to read up on it, and then we'll ensure that we follow those.

Dr. Taft: Yeah, I am pretty familiar with those, actually, Mr. Speaker.

Again to the same minister: will any delisting of any medically necessary services being considered by this government be taken to a policy field committee before implementation?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, we can use whatever terminology we want, but clearly there are a number of programs and services that were offered in the past through the regional health authorities that the Alberta Health Services Board has to take a look at and ensure that there's not duplication of services, that they're services, within the budget constraints that they have, that they can continue to meet. That's the job of Alberta Health Services. I've got the utmost confidence that they'll do their job.

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

High School Graduation

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One avenue in helping create a culture of innovation amongst our youth is to promote early high school graduation. When students reach the high school level and have flexibility in their course load, they have the potential to graduate early. To the Minister of Education: has the minister considered any incentives for early high school graduation?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although we think of high school in traditional three-year terms, we are not actually organized on a time basis. It's organized on a credit basis. As soon as a student gets 100 credits, they can graduate. We have many students who take summer school courses. We have many students who try and accelerate their programs. As I say, there's no specific reason why a student has to be in high school for three years.

With respect to incentives to complete early, no, I don't believe we have any on a provincial-wide basis, nor are we contemplating such.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first and only supplemental: on the flip side, can the Minister of Education tell us what flexibility the education system has in allowing students to stay an extra year if they cannot finish high school in three years?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, in our business plan the members will see that we have targets which report on graduation within three and five years, I believe. That's to recognize the fact that while, as I just mentioned, some students want to accelerate their programs, in other cases students need a longer period of time to graduate. We want to emphasize that the outcome that we're looking for is graduation, is completion of high school. Therefore, whether a student wants to do it quickly and can do it quickly or whether it take a little bit more time – and some of the jurisdictions, for example, offer particular schools to encourage that – we have online learning; we have all sorts of processes for students to graduate in the manner which they find most appropriate for them.

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

Workplace Health and Safety

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Employment and Immigration has recently updated the occupational health and safety code for 2009. Changes were made to confined spaces, cranes, hoists, and lifting devices, powered mobile equipment, and other devices. However, what is most notable is what hasn't changed with OH and S laws here in the province. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: why were these updates done to provide more protection around the areas mentioned above but not to make joint work-site health and safety committees mandatory on each and every job site in Alberta where 20 or more people are employed?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. The occupational health and safety code 2009 was enacted on April 2, 2009, and the version of the occupational health and safety code needs to be complied with on or before July 1 of 2009. We go through a very regular extensive public consultation in order to keep our codes up to standards, and the mandatory safety committees have never been part of the discussion as to the changes to the occupational health and safety code.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That public consultation is on a one-way street.

Again to the same minister: why are investigation reports of accidents not admissible as evidence in a trial, a public inquiry, or fatality inquiry?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has asked that question a number of times. The reports are exactly that. They are reports, and the individuals that make up those reports are usually the ones that will testify in person and indicate the background and the information that they had used towards the report, so generally in court those reports are not admissible.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. Again to the same minister: will the minister please consider making changes to allow these reports to be admissible as evidence in trials and inquiries, reports which are key in investigating not only work-site accidents but also, unfortunately, fatalities?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that I'm the proper minister to be asking. I would suspect that this is a question for Justice to respond to and to determine the definition of reports or when they can be used and when they cannot be used.

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

High School Curriculum

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I've been talking to a number of young people in my constituency and throughout the province in my role as chair of the Youth Secretariat. They've expressed concerns to me about the relevance of high school curriculum, specifically math and career and life management. All my questions are to the Minister of Education. Can the minister share with this Assembly how his department evaluates the relevancy and effectiveness of the CALM curriculum?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, the CALM curriculum was designed to help students with questions and concerns that come up as part of life and planning for the future. It includes topics relevant to students' lives with outcomes organized around personal choices, resources, finances, and career and life choices. We regularly update curriculum, and as part of that process we're currently updating the CALM curriculum. Recent research about learning and teaching and the needs of students in society, continuity among programs, et cetera, are included when we do update the curriculum. We'll be consulting with stakeholders on that. One of the things the hon. member might be interested to note: there's a recent push, for example, to include things like financial literacy.

Mr. Fawcett: Actually, Mr. Speaker, that's very good to hear.

Grade 12 math, particularly math 30 pure and applied, provides a significant amount of pressure and stress on a large portion of students, and a majority of them have a difficult time seeing the relevance between this curriculum and their future career or educational pursuits. Quite frankly, calculus math has very little applicability to most careers and postsecondary courses. To the minister: how is the current math high school curriculum determined?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, a timely question because the math curriculum has been under revision, and a new math curriculum will be in place beginning September 2010. The new curriculum will have three streams. The first course sequence will replace pure mathematics and will provide students with the mathematics they need for those postsecondary programs that require intensive math skills, an in-depth study of math. The second sequence will replace applied math and will provide students with the knowledge, skills, and entry to those postsecondaries that require some math but not the high-intensity math. Then a third stream for those students who also will need math but at a lesser level. So we've revised the program. It will be implemented September 2010.

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister must have seen my last question because he just answered it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that was 108 questions less one response, so that would be 107 questions and responses today.

In a few seconds from now we'll continue the Routine.

Projected Government Business

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. According to Standing Order 7(6) could I ask the Government House Leader to please share with us the projected government business for the week commencing the 11th of May, which would make it the 12th of May for the first day of government business.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'd be happy to do so. Pending passage this afternoon of Government Motion 15, it may be anticipated that if necessary we would sit evenings as well as afternoons.

In projected government business I would propose for Tuesday, May 12, in the afternoon for second reading Bill 27, Alberta Research and Innovation Act; Bill 36, Alberta Land Stewardship Act; Bill 43, Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2); Bill 44, Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 45, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2009; and Bill 47, Appropriation Act; and as per the Order Paper. In the evening for second reading Bill 25, Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 37, Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 38, Tourism Levy Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 39, Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 40, Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009; and in Committee of the Whole bills 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 33 and as per the Order Paper.

For Wednesday, May 13, in the afternoon for second reading Bill 20, Civil Enforcement Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 23, Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2009; and Bill 26, the Wildlife Amendment Act, 2009. In committee bills 24, 25, 27, 28, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, and 47, the Appropriation Act, and as per the Order Paper. In the evening at 7:30 under Committee of the Whole Bill 44, Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 45, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2009; and as per the Order Paper.

For Thursday, May 14, in the afternoon for second reading Bill 35; third reading on bills 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 24, 25, 27, 28, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 47.

Statement by the Speaker

Television Cameras on the Chamber Floor

The Speaker: Hon. members, yesterday in the House I provided erroneous information with respect to the CBC in an incident which occurred in 2000. At page 997 of *Hansard* I said, "I banned the CBC from this building for a year. They went to court; they lost. They went to court; they lost." The correct statement should have been: "I can confirm that CBC video cameras will not be permitted on the floor of the Legislature Chamber for the balance of the calendar year."

Further, the matter did not proceed to court; hence, the case could not have been lost if it did not go to court. I want to clarify this matter in the public record so that there'll be no misunderstanding either now or in the future, and I further wish to apologize to the House and the CBC for providing this incorrect information on May 6, 2009, in the Alberta Legislative Assembly. Corrective disciplinary action will be taken upon myself.

I also received a number of notes from members yesterday, but I indicated that we do have a protocol that allows for cameras to come onto the floor of the Legislative Assembly. It's a very detailed protocol. There are certain rules and conditions. The request made yesterday was by one carrier of the CBC to attend at one point in the activities. The CBC will decide who they choose to film and who they choose not to film. It will not be upon the direction of the chair or the Speaker. There is one location for these cameras. It just happens to be to the left of me in that one corner, so there's no interference whatsoever from the chair with respect to anyone coming or going. They have a protocol simply to film the person who's speaking at the time and not to pan.

Now we have, first of all, a point of order. The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If you would allow me to argue this point of order on behalf of my leader, I would appreciate it. Thank you very much. This is referring to an exchange between the President of the Treasury Board and the Leader of the Official Opposition in the early part of question period. I would like to use as a citation 23(j), which is specific to using abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder, which in fact it did. I can compliment the President of the Treasury Board on his effectiveness.

The issue that is on point, Mr. Speaker, was – and I'm going to have to paraphrase because, as always, we don't have the benefit of the Blues. I'm sure the Speaker does, but I don't. The President of the Treasury Board was making an assertion that opposition members were asking asinine questions and also loading 30, 50, or 70 questions in the last few minutes of debate. I don't think even the Member for Calgary-Varsity could speak fast enough to load 70 questions into the last 10 minutes, so I'm not going to deal with that one.

But the use of the word "asinine" in reflection upon members of the Official Opposition and the questions they were asking, some of which I might add, Mr. Speaker, were on behalf of Albertans who had contacted us through our website, so in fact the President of the Treasury Board was casting the net very wide by in fact calling some members of the Alberta citizenry asinine for asking questions – just because questions are difficult for the President of the Treasury Board or embarrassing for the government or even put the government in a different light and catch them in a compromising position, I think for the member to say that opposition members are asking asinine questions is abusive.

The President of the Treasury Board is a smart man. He has a very wide vocabulary. He has a choice of many words that he could be using. So he may not like the questions that have been asked, but he definitely offends the intent behind Standing Order 23(j) and, I might add, *M and M* page 431 under Replies to Oral Questions. If I may quote part of it: "Replies are to be as brief as possible, to deal with the subject matter raised and to be phrased in language that does not provoke disorder." Again, my congratulations to the President of the Treasury Board for having provoked disorder.

You know, I understand that the President of the Treasury Board is a passionate individual. I can certainly understand that, but I

would argue that he went a tad too far in describing members of the Official Opposition and the questions that they ask as being asinine, and I would ask him at this point to withdraw the comment. We would certainly be happy to accept an apology from him.

Thank you.

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit I was caught a little bit by surprise today. In fact, I thought the opposition had forgotten all about me over here, so I was so pleased that they asked me a question that I came out of my slumber in too much of a rapid ascent.

I truly do not ever wish to bring any disrespect to this Chamber. As to the terminology around "asinine," I guess appropriately I should have used the proper dictionary description of having or showing little sense. But I think that may too stretch what may upset the hon. member. In the fact that we do have a lot of business to do here today – and a lot of it is serious business – I would like to apologize to not only the hon. leader but to all hon. members. I appreciate the latitude that we have in here, and I don't want to abuse that. I do appreciate the opportunity to debate them in a meaningful way. Sometimes we need to stretch it.

Mr. Speaker, I also apologize to you for taking up the time of your Assembly.

2:50

The Speaker: Well, I think that's very honourable, but we're going to go one step further. I'm going to go out and buy a thesaurus and deliver it to the hon. President of the Treasury Board so that he can find alternate words to use in the future.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Are you asking if I'll accept the apology?

The Speaker: No. I assume that everybody did. We're on to your point of order now.

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry; I don't have an additional point of order. I have a Standing Order 30.

The Speaker: Sorry. Standing Order 30.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've got a lot on my plate, and I just didn't need more.

Request for Emergency Debate

Budget Debate Process

Ms Blakeman: Pursuant to Standing Order 30 I would like to move a motion.

Be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, the failure to provide written responses to questions posed during debate on the 2009-10 main estimates obstructs opposition Members of the Legislative Assembly in their review and evaluation of the budget, preventing them from making a fully informed decision on the vote.

I am aware that the motion has already been distributed in hard copy.

What brings us to this point today, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that during the estimates process 24 departments were involved in scrutiny by the opposition members and others. A number of questions were not able to be answered at the time. We have documented at least 10 instances where ministers agreed to provide written responses to the questions that we had asked. In fact, as of yesterday, the day before the votes are to take place, we had received

responses from the Minister of Energy. Just today I've had some correspondence from the minister of finance, who I think did attempt to supply answers. I don't think it actually got to the individual she was trying to get it to, that being our finance critic, but she did try. A total of 3 out of the 10 that we identified in *Hansard* as promising responses were in fact tabled either yesterday or today. We're still far short.

Our ability to make a decision and vote on behalf of all Albertans, filling our role as the Official Opposition, has been severely compromised. That's the crux of the debate today. It's our belief that the government's failure to provide adequate written responses for the information we requested during the estimates process places severe limitations on informed debate and jeopardizes our ability to accurately assess the budget.

Let me talk about urgency because that's what we're here to argue. This is the first year, Mr. Speaker, that we have not received a significant number of responses for answers that were not able to be given during the regular debate. In fact, I often commented on the promptness of the former minister from the constituency of Drumheller with her alacrity in providing written responses to the questions that had not been answered during her debates. We even at one point had a standing order, which was then numbered 59.05(1), that the vote not be held until answers had been tabled. Now, that standing order was in fact removed by the committee examining the standing orders, a committee that has a government majority, I might note.

We have a situation where there is no requirement on the government to provide those written responses, but there's certainly an expectation that we would receive it. As I said, in *Hansard* is recorded the ministers' agreement to that in a number of cases.

Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of the estimates process. These amounts are to be voted on in the Committee of Supply. I'm going to work my way through some of the tests that are generally used in assessing Standing Order 30. *Marleau and Montpetit* in 584 ask that it be specific, and I think I have been very specific. Our concern and the request for an emergency debate is because we have not been able to receive answers to questions that were outstanding from the estimates debates. It is urgent and important and, I would argue, requires urgent consideration.

M and M 585 asks that it be immediately relevant and of attention and concern throughout the province. Well, certainly, the budget and the vote on the budget is of concern to the province, a particular concern to a number of projects to be able to move forward or not. This is not a chronic issue, which is one of the tests under *M and M*. As I say, prior to this year we even had it in standing orders, but it had not been an issue. One or two departments might have been remiss, particularly the ones that were immediately prior to the vote, but not most of them. I mean, at best we got four responses out of 24 ministries, Mr. Speaker, so this was more of a wholesale abdication from providing us with the answers we were looking for.

Referring to the parameters set out in *Beauchesne 387 to 398* on emergency debates, 387 and 389 are indicating that the primary issue is the urgency of the debate and whether there has been opportunity for debate under the rules and provisions of the House. Well, yes, Mr. Speaker. But this is about the information being provided in time for us to analyze and go forward on a vote, and that time has not been given to us.

What are the other opportunities? What else would we have to do to try and get that information? Do we have time to do it before the vote, which is scheduled for this afternoon? We have no time to go through a FOIP process at this point. As the Speaker well knows, once a written question or a motion for a return is on the Order Paper, there is a three-week delay, so that is not a possibility for us

to try and get this information through some other source since it wasn't supplied prior to today. We have very limited caucus research support. You know, again, the government has been careful to deny our request for that, certainly, through their membership on the committees that would have been able to grant us additional funds for that support. So our ability to go out and try and somehow find these answers between when we realized yesterday we weren't going to get the answers and our ability to vote on the budget today is severely compromised. So it's urgent, and we have no other opportunity to recoup and reassemble ourselves to do this.

The Speaker has set a test on the 28th of February of '06 in which he talks about other opportunities for a member of the Assembly to discuss this matter, and in fact I've just set out that it's not so much about the discussion; it's about the receipt of the information for us to be able to go forward and make a decision on a vote. But, further to that, the appropriation bill next week limits us in a way that we can't have a further discussion on it. There is nothing that compels the ministers to respond to any questions we might have if we were able to dig up the information and go back and say: "Well, here's the answer. Can you respond to me now?" There's nothing that compels the minister to respond. Our opportunity to seek that information has passed.

This is a genuine emergency. The budget debate is this afternoon. I would argue that when we look at that test set out by the Speaker, this is both the earliest opportunity for caucus to raise this issue and ask for an emergency debate but also the final opportunity for us to do that. The vote has been scheduled for this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I believe I have met the tests that are required here. We are talking about budget debates, so the usual test that would apply to an opportunity to debate a bill doesn't come into consideration here, and I've already talked about that the opportunity for debate in appropriation does not compel ministers to respond to us at all. Most times they don't, as a matter of fact. I think we have been put in a position by the government – I don't know if it was deliberate, but it was certainly effective – where the members of the opposition are here today without the information that they need to be able to proceed, and I would ask that we suspend the ordinary business of the day and allow for that emergency debate. Perhaps we'll be able to get some of the answers that we're lacking before a vote is finally called.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present that.

3:00

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 30(2) states the following:

The Member may briefly state the arguments in favour of the request for leave and the Speaker may allow such debate as he or she considers relevant to the question of urgency of debate and shall then rule on whether or not the request for leave is in order.

There are several words in here that are quite subjective: "may briefly state" and "may allow."

Are there additional members who would like to participate?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, very briefly, there is no valid argument to be made that the ordinary course of business, which this afternoon happens to be voting on the estimates, for the most part, be suspended in order to debate the failure, as the Opposition House Leader puts it, to answer questions. First of all, there is no parliamentary requirement that all of the opposition's questions be answered before a vote is taken on any bill or any subject matter. That would be a very strange practice indeed.

There was in this Assembly for one year under a trial set of procedures that we had for estimates a standing order that said that

answers should be filed if a commitment was made in estimates in Committee of Supply and that answers should be responded to within two weeks of that department's estimates having come up. That was a temporary standing order. That standing order no longer exists.

There is no standing order, there is no rule or procedure which requires, in fact, that written answers to questions be tabled. Certainly, in the past in Committee of Supply we have and I as House leader have encouraged the answering of questions just as a matter of practice. In fact, that exists with our new procedure this year with the estimates being heard before the policy field committees. But there is nothing in parliamentary procedure, law, or requirement that says that all the information that the opposition might want to have or asked for at any given time on any bill or subject matter before the House must be provided before they're required to go to a vote on that, and it would be most unusual if that was required in this circumstance today.

So if there's not a requirement for that, then the fact that the vote's coming up and there's some urgency to deal with this issue before the vote, the urgency matter, doesn't override the fact that there's no precedent, no requirement for what they're actually asking for to be done. Therefore, there's no urgency to debate it at this time. Just because we're having a vote, why would we usurp the normal procedure of the House in order to debate something that's never been the practice of the House other than for a very short period of time under some temporary rules?

The Speaker: Are there additional speakers that want to participate? Okay. The Leader of the Official Opposition, then the Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, and then perhaps we can move on.

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on this as a point of confidence, really, as opposition leader, as representing the accountability of a government that's spending \$37 billion. I find it very difficult in good conscience to say to Albertans that we can support a budget where a large number of questions remain unanswered. In my particular department we were debating \$160 million a minute. It's very difficult to get the kinds of detail and understanding of where money is going, what kind of impacts it's having, why changes were made from one year to the next. Those are the kinds of questions that Albertans are asking me, especially professionals who have had many suggestions for improving the health care system over the last decade.

It's a very difficult position that we find ourselves in, the major responsibility of the opposition, and being fundamentally unable to say with confidence that we have reviewed the budget, that we have seen the decisions and the priorities of this government and could in some way endorse the past 12 months of spending or the plans for the future.

I think it's unfair to expect an opposition of nine members, indeed, to stand up and support a budget where we have had a very substantial number of reasonable questions, not asinine questions, actually, and have had no answers on a number of these, leaving us very vulnerable to criticism both within our caucus and by the public. I hope other members will support a few days at least of delay and further discussion and opportunity to raise some of these important issues that have to be clarified in the interest of the public.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne on this Standing Order 30, please.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past five weeks I had the opportunity to chair the estimates in Public Safety

and Services. You know, the ministers having from 230 to 270 exchanges during the three-hour period I found was very productive. Many times I could have raised the point that questions that were brought up weren't on the budget. They were on policy. They were on other issues and even referred to question period.

I don't really feel that the comments raised by the members opposite are valid. I think there was plenty of time. There were very good answers, and there were very good questions, like the opposition leader stated. There was ample time and good exchanges. What I experienced over the five weeks was that there were valid exchanges of questions and answers, and I don't believe that we need to deliberate longer on our estimates.

Thank you, sir.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Regarding Standing Order 30 I would like to remind the previous speaker and all members of the Assembly that the opposition, when they go before a field policy committee, regardless of which department it is and which policy field committee, they're restricted and limited by the clock in the questions that they can ask. Regardless of how many questions they have, regardless of the size of the budget, whether it's in hundreds of thousands of dollars or hundreds of millions of dollars, the Official Opposition – and this is the whole point of this Standing Order 30 – does not have enough time to scrutinize the budget on behalf of the taxpayers of this province. We have 60 minutes at the start of the committee, and then we wait like everyone else to have our questions answered. We have detailed questions on the budget. Many of the government members, the hon. member is correct, have policy questions, but the Official Opposition tried to deal with each line item.

Thank you.

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I just want to use a little bit of an example. I think there were four questions unanswered in mine, two from the third party and two from the Official Opposition, and I tabled them today. I think the Official Opposition ones, if I remember correctly, I gave them the answers, but they said: could you supply that to me in writing so I have a copy of it? They got the answers verbally there and wanted them supplied in writing. That's what I've done.

In the eight years that I've been in this House, I can't remember once through the eight budgets that our budget was supported by the Official Opposition. Their job is to criticize us. Let's move on with things.

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

3:10

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to set the record straight, in previous years we have pulled out certain budgets for further discussion, but in the end the budgets were passed, and we were part of that passing. Let's not rewrite history.

Secondly, anyone who has been in the committee of services debate with me knows how hard and how fast I try to get issues on the table. I use the format of the full 10 minutes so that I can ask and put on the record as many questions as I possibly can. Last night I think I achieved the highest speed humanly possible, and I was pleased to have an hon. member who is a former emergency doc in his background sitting beside me in case I passed out from lack of oxygen.

The point I'm making, Mr. Speaker, is that I was able to ask about 15 pages' worth of very important questions on Children and Youth

Services. I still had at least five pages to go. These questions were very directed. They were specific. I cited page and reference number from the pages of the ministries that I talked to. I do appreciate that there were opportunities to have some of those questions answered, and it would probably be unrealistic of me to think that the hon. Minister of Children and Youth Services could have provided written responses for me today. But as a former teacher, the fact that I received the responses for the Education debate from weeks previously on my desk today, where I have no opportunity to go over the information and make an accurate judgment on the budget, I would give this paper a failing grade, as I'm sure you would in my circumstance.

If we are going to do Albertans justice in debating a multibillion-dollar budget, then the time allotted for the opposition, which is in total 40 minutes out of that three-hour period when you break it down into 10 minute slots, isn't doing Albertans any type of justice. It's not holding the government accountable, and contrary to what the Minister of Transportation suggested, the job of the opposition is not simply to oppose. It's to provide viable alternatives, to require accountability. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in the time allotted that was impossible to do.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Hon. members, the chair has listened attentively to the arguments put forward on this Standing Order 30 application, and I would like to thank the members – there were quite a number today – who actually participated in this debate.

I've already written into the record what Standing Order 30 says about the brief statements and the role of the chair then to rule on whether or not the request for leave is in order. If the chair were to find this request in order, then the question would be put to the Assembly as to whether the debate on the urgent matter should proceed, and if 15 or more members were to rise in support of this motion, then the emergency debate would proceed. Again, first the chair must rule on whether the request is in order, and it is in order. The application was received at 10:14 this morning. We know what the motion basically says.

To be in order, Standing Order 30(7) requires that the matter proposed for discussion "must relate to a genuine emergency, calling for immediate and urgent consideration." Several members have referred to *Marleau and Montpetit*, but I would like to refer members to pages 586 to 588 of *Marleau and Montpetit's House of Commons Procedure and Practice* and *Beauchesne's* paragraph 390.

One of the criteria that the Speaker must consider is whether the matter could be brought before the House by some other means. *Marleau and Montpetit* at page 587 outlines that. It's also important to note that Standing Order 30 applications cannot be used as a mechanism to debate the interpretation of a standing order. Once again *Marleau and Montpetit* at page 588 will provide further reference.

Both the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader did refer to some recent history surrounding our standing orders. In 2007 there was in place a temporary standing order, 59.05, as has been identified, which required members of Executive Council to table answers to questions raised in Committee of Supply within two weeks, and such answers were to be tabled prior to the vote on the main estimates. That requirement was in place for one session of this Legislature.

Hearing the debate today and looking at the motion today and looking at the circumstances today, the chair is hard pressed to find that this issue relates to a genuine emergency for several reasons. A Standing Order 30 application is not the appropriate means to debate

matters concerning the administration of this House, and there are other opportunities for this issue to be brought before the Assembly or to be considered by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

As all members of this Assembly are aware, the current standing orders were a product of the work of an all-party committee of this Assembly and were the subject of debate in this Assembly last fall. One can look at *Alberta Hansard*, November 27, 2008, pages 2112 to 2121. It would appear that during the committee's deliberations last year and during the debate on the amendments to the standing orders would have been the appropriate times to discuss a requirement to table responses to questions raised during estimates consideration. Any member could have initiated such a discussion by moving an amendment on point.

Accordingly, the chair does not find the request for leave in order under the Assembly's rules, and the question will not be put.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Committee Membership Change

14. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that Mr. MacDonald be appointed to the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to fill a vacancy.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The House will recall that sometime earlier this spring session a certain member resigned from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee. Under the provisions of the act, I believe it is, that provides for the membership of that committee, it provides that a certain number of members from the government caucus be appointed and a certain number of members from the opposition caucus. Accordingly, it's appropriate to propose a member from the opposition caucus to fill the vacancy that was created by the resignation of an opposition member. As there is not a member from the third party available to fill that vacancy, we have requested the Official Opposition to provide a nominee. They have, and it is the member I referenced. I would ask the House to support the motion.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Regarding Government Motion 14 I consider it a privilege to sit on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee. I have served on this committee before. It is an issue of great interest in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar, not only the history of the heritage savings trust fund but also the amount of money that's there now. I have many interesting discussions not only in the constituency office but at the Capilano Mall with constituents regarding the heritage savings trust fund and the direction we're going. I would be very pleased to sit on this committee again.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Taft: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had the privilege of serving with the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar now for this is the third term. When this vacancy became available, we considered it in caucus, and the member, despite his heavy workload, including

chairing Public Accounts and serving on any number of other committees, volunteered with enthusiasm for the position. I think he will fill the position extremely well. He's got a remarkable mind in many ways, we'd all agree . . . [interjection] I was going to finish that by saying that he's got a remarkable mind for numbers and details, and I think he'll do an admirable job. I would urge all members to support this motion. I can see that the President of Treasury Board is enthusiastic. I'm glad to support this.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise to support the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar's nomination to this committee. I won't speak to his remarkable mind, but I will say that I have served with the hon. member, and I remember that he served with great ability. I'm pleased that he's willing to serve. I'm willing to support his nomination.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise and speak in support of the motion to appoint the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I know he's got a remarkable mind. People have remarked on his mind from time to time. I think he's a person of exceptional ability and integrity. I regret that we don't have the staff support to continue on all of the committees that are in the House. I think that the hon. member would be a fine member of the committee.

The Speaker: Should the hon. Government House Leader close the debate, or shall I just call the question on the motion?

Mr. Hancock: Question, please.

[Government Motion 14 carried unanimously]

3:20

Evening Sittings

15. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business for the remainder of the 2009 spring sitting, unless on motion by the Government House Leader made before 6 p.m., which may be made orally and without notice, the Assembly is adjourned to the following sitting day.

The Speaker: Under Standing Order 4(1) this motion is not debatable, so I call the question.

[Government Motion 15 carried]

Committee of Supply

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

The Chair: The chair shall now call the Committee of Supply to order.

Hon. members, as most of you are aware, this is the first time in the history of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta where consideration of proposed main estimates of the general revenue fund and lottery fund and business plans of various ministries was done

almost entirely by policy field committees. The exception, of course, is the estimates and business plan for Executive Council, which were considered by the Committee of Supply on April 15, 2009.

We are now on the last leg of this historical journey, where these estimates must now be voted on. Prior to beginning, I thought it would be useful to outline how the process will unfold this afternoon. The Committee of Supply will first call on the chairs or deputy chairs of the policy field committees to report on their meetings with the various departments under their mandate: standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4). Members are reminded that no vote is required when these reports are presented.

The committee will then proceed to vote on the amendments introduced during the policy field committee meetings, and please note that these votes shall be taken without debate or amendment: Standing Order 59.03(1)(a).

The vote on the estimates of the Legislative Assembly as approved by the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services and the estimates of the officers of the Legislature shall then take place, also to be decided without debate or amendment: Standing Order 59.03(5).

Following that, pursuant to Standing Order 59.03(1) the committee will then proceed with a single vote on the main estimates. Please note that if the vote has not concluded prior to the normal adjournment hour, the process will continue until all matters have been voted upon. At that time the committee will immediately rise and report.

Committee Reports

The Chair: I would now invite the chair of the Standing Committee on Community Services to present his committee's report.

Mr. Doerksen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As chairman of the Standing Committee on Community Services and pursuant to standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4) I am pleased to report that your committee has reviewed the 2009-2010 proposed estimates and business plans for the following departments: Department of Culture and Community Spirit, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, Department of Municipal Affairs, and the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

I would also like to table amendments to the estimates of the following departments that were introduced during our meetings for the Committee of Supply's consideration: one in the Department of Culture and Community Spirit, one amendment in the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, one in the Department of Municipal Affairs, and two in the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would now call on the chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy to present his committee's report.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy and pursuant to standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4) I am pleased to report that your committee has reviewed the 2009-2010 proposed estimates and business plans for the following departments: Advanced Education and Technology, Employment and Immigration, Finance and Enterprise, Infrastructure, Transportation.

I would also like to table amendments to the estimates of the following departments that were introduced during our meetings for the Committee of Supply's consideration: for the Department of Advanced Education and Technology, three; for the Department of

Employment and Immigration, one; for the Department of Finance and Enterprise, three; for the Department of Infrastructure, one; and for the Department of Transportation, two.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Health.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the deputy chair and on behalf of the chair of the Standing Committee on Health and pursuant to standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4) I'm pleased to report that your committee has reviewed the 2009-2010 proposed estimates and business plans for the following departments: Children and Youth Services, Health and Wellness, Seniors and Community Supports.

I would also like to table amendments to the estimates of the following departments that were introduced during our meetings for the Committee of Supply's consideration: Department of Health and Wellness, one; Department of Seniors and Community Supports, one.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would now call on the chair of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As chair of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services and pursuant to standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4) I'm pleased to report that your committee has reviewed the 2009-2010 proposed estimates and business plans for the following departments: Aboriginal Relations, Justice, Service Alberta, Solicitor General and Public Security, Treasury Board.

I would also like to table amendments to the estimates of the following departments that were introduced during our meetings for the Committee of Supply's consideration: Department of Justice, one; Department of Solicitor General and Public Security, one; Department of Treasury Board, one.

Further, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank all members that participated in our committee both from the opposition and from government and, as well, the staff from *Hansard*, the security officials, and our able committee clerk, Jody Rempel, for the excellent service given during those estimates.

Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you.

Then for the last one here I would like to call on the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As the deputy chair and acting on behalf of the chair for the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment and pursuant to standing orders 59.01(7) and 59.03(4) I'm pleased to report that the committee has reviewed the 2009-10 proposed estimates and business plans for the following departments: Agriculture and Rural Development, Energy, Environment, International and Intergovernmental Relations, Sustainable Resource Development.

I would also like to table amendments to the estimates of the following departments that were introduced during the meetings for the Committee of Supply's consideration: one for the Department of Environment, one for the Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations, and one for the Department of Sustainable Resource Development.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, chairs.

3:30 Vote on Main Estimates 2009-10

The Chair: The next item in our business is to vote on the amendments introduced during the policy field committee meetings. There are a total of 25 amendments, and they are numbered A1 to A25. All members have received copies of the amendments on their desks. Now we start voting on each amendment.

A1. Dr. Taft moved that the estimates for communications under reference 1.0.3 at page 36 of the 2009-10 main estimates for the Department of Advanced Education and Technology be reduced by \$63,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 33 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$2,977,069,000.

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

A2. Dr. Taft moved that the estimates for strategic corporate services under reference 1.0.4 at page 36 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Technology be reduced by \$3 million so that the amount to be voted at page 33 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$2,974,132,000.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

A3. Dr. Taft moved that the estimates for corporate costs under reference 1.0.5 at page 36 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Technology be reduced by \$1 million so that the amount to be voted at page 33 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$2,976,132,000.

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

A4. Mr. Chase moved that the estimates for horse racing and breeding renewal program under reference 4.0.6 at page 108 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Culture and Community Spirit be reduced by \$33 million so that the amount to be voted at page 105 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$259,762,000.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A4 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:32 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

The Chair: Before calling the vote, the chair would like to remind hon. members that should there be any subsequent divisions, the interval between division bells shall be reduced to one minute.

For the motion:

Blakeman	Kang	Swann
Chase	MacDonald	Taft
Hehr	Mason	Taylor

Against the motion:

Allred	Horner	Rogers
Benito	Jacobs	Sandhu
Bhullar	Klimchuk	Sherman
Blackett	Lindsay	Snelgrove

A16. Mr. Kang moved that the estimates for corporate services under reference 1.0.4 at page 294 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Justice be reduced by \$15,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 291 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$461,638,000.

[Motion on amendment A16 lost]

A17. Mr. Chase moved that the estimates for support services under reference 1.0.3 at page 306 of the 2009-10 main estimates for the Department of Municipal Affairs be reduced by \$1,247,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 303 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$592,723,000.

[Motion on amendment A17 lost]

A18. Ms Pastoor moved that the estimates for strategic corporate services under reference 1.0.4 at page 322 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Seniors and Community Supports be reduced by \$12,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 319 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$1,971,773,000.

[Motion on amendment A18 lost]

A19. Mr. Kang moved that the estimates for corporate services under reference 1.0.4 at page 354 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Solicitor General and Public Security be reduced by \$15,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 351 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$601,301,000.

[Motion on amendment A19 lost]

A20. Mr. Hehr moved that the estimates for communications under reference 1.0.3 at page 378 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Sustainable Resource Development be reduced by \$325,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 375 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$335,568,000.

[Motion on amendment A20 lost]

A21. Mr. Chase moved that the estimates for strategic corporate services under reference 1.0.3 at page 394 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation be reduced by \$53,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 391 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$190,708,000.

[Motion on amendment A21 lost]

A22. Mr. Chase moved that the estimates for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games under reference 4.0.6 at page 395 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation be reduced by \$2 million so that the amount to be voted at page 391 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$188,761,000.

[Motion on amendment A22 lost]

A23. Dr. Taft moved that the estimates for communications under reference 1.0.3 at page 414 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Transportation be reduced by \$337,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 411 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$2,282,369,000.

[Motion on amendment A23 lost]

A24. Dr. Taft moved that the estimates for strategic services under reference 1.0.4 at page 414 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Transportation be reduced by \$29,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 411 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$2,282,677,000.

[Motion on amendment A24 lost]

A25. Mr. Kang moved that the estimates for spending management and planning under reference 5.0.1 at page 430 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Treasury Board be reduced by \$750,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 427 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$241,731,000.

[Motion on amendment A25 lost]

The Chair: We shall now proceed to the vote on the estimates of the Legislative Assembly as approved by the Standing Committee on Members' Services. Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 59.03(5), which requires that the estimates of the offices of the Legislative Assembly be decided without debate or amendment prior to the vote on the main estimates, I must now put the question on all matters relating to the 2009-10 offices of the Legislative Assembly estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Agreed to:

Offices of the Legislative Assembly	
Expense and Equipment/Inventory Purchases	\$96,265,000

The Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? Carried.

The chair shall look at the government estimates now and ask those members in favour of each of the resolutions for the 2009-10 government estimates for the general revenue fund and lottery fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, to please say aye.

[The voice vote did not indicate agreement]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:55 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

For the motion:

Allred	Horner	Rogers
Benito	Jacobs	Sandhu
Bhullar	Klimchuk	Sherman
Blackett	Lindsay	Snelgrove
Brown	Lund	Tarchuk
Calahasen	McFarland	VanderBurg
Campbell	Mitzel	Weadick
Dallas	Oberle	Woo-Paw
Evans	Ouellette	Xiao
Hancock	Quest	Zwozdesky
Hayden		

4:00

Against the motion:

Blakeman	MacDonald	Swann
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Chase	Mason	Taft
Hehr	Pastoor	Taylor
Kang		
Totals	For – 31	Against – 10

[The estimates of the general revenue fund and lottery fund were carried]

The Chair: I would now like to invite the hon. Government House Leader to move that the committee rise and report the 2009-10 offices of the Legislative Assembly estimates and the 2009-10 government estimates for the general revenue fund and lottery fund.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So moved.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Dr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions relating to the 2009-10 offices of the Legislative Assembly estimates and the 2009-10 government estimates for the general revenue fund and lottery fund, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

The following resolutions for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, have been approved.

Support to the Legislative Assembly, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$58,450,000; office of the Auditor General, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$23,221,000; office of the Ombudsman, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$2,911,000; office of the Chief Electoral Officer, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$4,951,000; office of the Ethics Commissioner, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$991,000; office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$5,741,000.

Aboriginal Relations: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$149,966,000.

Advanced Education and Technology: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$2,977,132,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$139,300,000.

Agriculture and Rural Development: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$622,857,000.

Children and Youth Services: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$1,136,277,000.

Culture and Community Spirit: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$292,762,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$2,685,000.

Education: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$4,298,126,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$1,000,000.

Employment and Immigration: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$1,015,356,000.

Energy: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$252,614,000.

Environment: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$251,747,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$1,100,000.

Executive Council: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$35,880,000.

Finance and Enterprise: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$479,289,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$43,660,000.

Health and Wellness: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$12,962,471,000; capital investment, \$19,200,000.

Housing and Urban Affairs: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$532,027,000.

Infrastructure: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$585,195,000; capital investment, \$588,929,000.

International and Intergovernmental Relations: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$26,347,000.

Justice: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$461,653,000

Municipal Affairs: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$593,970,000.

Seniors and Community Supports: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$1,971,785,000.

Service Alberta: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$366,018,000; capital investment, \$92,500,000.

Solicitor General and Public Security: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$601,316,000; capital investment, \$35,061,000; lottery fund payments, \$1,497,927,000.

Sustainable Resource Development: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$335,893,000; capital investment, \$20,450,000.

Tourism, Parks and Recreation: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$190,761,000; capital investment, \$17,284,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$375,000.

Transportation: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$2,282,706,000; capital investment, \$1,482,278,000; nonbudgetary disbursements, \$6,545,000.

Treasury Board: expense and equipment/inventory purchases, \$242,481,000.

The Deputy Speaker: Having heard the report by the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill, does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Concur.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

4:10 Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 44 Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009

[Adjourned debate May 6: Dr. Brown]

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

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and participate in the debate on Bill 44, the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009. I sat with interest, and I listened to the speeches from various members yesterday afternoon. It certainly was an interesting discussion and debate.

I listened to all sides in this discussion, and from what I have learned, Mr. Speaker, Bill 44 is a political compromise between the progressives and the conservatives in the government caucus. I would be very interested in hearing more on the public record of the internal debate that went on on Bill 44 in the government caucus. Certainly, it must have been an interesting discussion because we see the progressives and then we see the conservatives and we see this bill which, in my view, is a political compromise between both of those groups. I don't think the citizens of this province are further ahead in any way with this compromise.

Now, this bill writes sexual orientation into legislation and once and for all indicates and points out that it is no longer tolerable that we can discriminate in any way, shape, or form based on sexual

orientation. It makes other administrative changes to separate the role of the executive director of human rights within the department from the director position with the Human Rights Commission as both were the same person. Certainly, the section 11 that is added includes a parental opt-out that will allow parents to remove their children from any teaching course or lesson or instruction that deals with religion, sexuality, or sexual orientation. Teachers are required to provide notice of these topics in writing to parents so that the parents can decide to remove their children from the discussion.

With this legislation we've also got to remember what's not in it and should be in it. It ignores the recommendation from the Sheldon Chumir foundation to remove the hate crime freedom of speech in section 3 of the legislation as it currently stands. When we look at this and we review *Hansard* on the record again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the UN convention was quoted and discussed yesterday. Certainly, hon. members are correct in quoting the United Nations universal declaration of human rights, but it's interesting that the government seems to be shopping or picking and choosing which issues they want the declaration of human rights from the United Nations to apply to and which issues they do not want it to apply to or issues that they ignore.

I'm dealing specifically with the issue around migratory workers or workers that may be coming here as temporary workers. The United Nations has some issues not only in this country but throughout the world as to how those workers are treated, and the government conveniently ignores those standards whenever we're dealing with workers, whether they're on farms or whether they're in factories. Certainly, also in children's services – and this has been brought up many times by many different members as to how the UN declaration on human rights could perhaps be considered when we're drafting rules and regulations regarding the treatment of children under the care of the government. I found that quite interesting, not unusual because, again, this is a government that picks and chooses and selects when they want to provide certain information to voters.

Now, the Alberta Liberals have been calling on the government to write sexual orientation into the human rights act as an illegal ground of discrimination. We've been asking for that in the House for years. Hon. members have brought up the fact that it was the courts; it was the judicial system that finally forced this reluctant government to come forward with that.

Ms Blakeman: They went around them and just wrote it in.

Mr. MacDonald: Well, that's right. The courts did write it in to become law. That is the part of this legislation that I think is long overdue.

But I cannot understand the parental opt-out section. Certainly, this is going to create a legal and an administrative mess for teachers and the Human Rights Commission. It's going to threaten, in my view, the quality of public education in Alberta if teachers are forced to censor themselves. I believe that this section has to be removed in its entirety from this legislation. There is no need for this, to start with. When we look at the current School Act, there's no need. There's absolutely no need to have this section in here.

When we look at section 11, I'm not going to discuss in any further detail because hon. members before me have, but I'm going to note that in subsection (1) under the act we must "include subject-matter that deals explicitly with religion, sexuality or sexual orientation." That was discussed yesterday. When we talk about sub (2) "the teacher or other person shall in accordance with the request of the parent or guardian and without academic penalty permit the student" to do a number of things, either leave the classroom on a temporary basis or remain in the classroom without taking part in the

instruction. How is this going to work? I asked yesterday for the resources that will be provided to school boards and to schools and to the classroom to enforce this. What extra resources will be needed?

We look at Edmonton public, and we look at the site-based budgeting that goes on, that principals and teachers and other staff may set that budget with the co-ordination of the central office. How are they to know, if this bill becomes law, that these options will be exercised by a parent or guardian? How is this all going to work? Who is going to provide the resources to ensure that it will work? Certainly if this amendment becomes law, there is going to be quite a long list of parents or guardians that are going to take exception to some of what may be studied in these classrooms. How are teachers going to deal with this?

Science. The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill gave quite an interesting presentation yesterday afternoon while we were discussing Bill 44, which, in my view, rejects the importance of science. The hour before that we discussed Bill 27, which is a legislative initiative to enhance, as the hon. minister has indicated, our position in research and development within the scientific community in the world. When we talk about Bill 27, I certainly have my issues around it, but I recognize the diligence and the interest the minister has in promoting research and technology in this province and what it would mean to all of us.

4:20

Then I find it quite ironic, Mr. Speaker, that an hour later we're into this bill that essentially could allow people to argue that dinosaurs did not exist or, if they did exist, they were wandering around Drumheller at the same time the pyramids were being built in Egypt. This bill will certainly add to a lot of confusion. It is totally unnecessary. Parents already, as I said, have the option. They can opt their children out of sex education if they so wish. Biology and the science of evolution are likely to attract religious objections. The government knows this. Evolution is not the only area that could trigger such objections. As I said, what about the discussions of dinosaurs and other things that occur in nature?

Mr. Mason: Where did the oil come from?

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood asks the question: where did oil come from? A lot of the guys I know in the oil patch call it dinosaur juice. That's what they call crude oil. It's quite interesting that some reject the whole idea of the creationist view of natural history. It can be strict. It can be rigid. Charles Darwin and his ideas can be certainly called into question. The teaching of other sciences such as astronomy could also be impacted if this amendment were to become law.

Now, here's what others have said about this parental opt-out section. This is from the Sheldon Chumir foundation. They point out that if the parental opt-out clause is legislated or becomes law, they have this question: would the Human Rights Commission be obliged to respond to concerns – phone calls, letters, and the like – from parents? How are we going to do all this? Again, what resources are going to be available? What's the formal process here?

Teachers. It was described yesterday as a chill, and it certainly will be that for teachers.

With this legislation, Mr. Speaker, if it's to become law, we're going to enshrine a right under the human rights act in one section and, in my view, take it away in another. I think that is unacceptable.

Again, in conclusion, I would remind members of this Assembly to please think about what we're doing here with this bill. It's not

right. It never was right. There's no need for this legislation. I can understand where the government caucus is coming from. There must have been a political row over there, and this is a political compromise, again, between the progressives and the conservatives in the government caucus. It is not acceptable. I think it's going to lead to chaos and confusion and further erosion of our public school system. There are other avenues that already exist in the School Act for parents to take. Please vote this down.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, if no one wants to use the five-minute question period, I would like to recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark on the bill.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn debate on Bill 44, the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:26 p.m. to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 27th Legislature - 2nd Session (2009)

Activity to May 07, 2009

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

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

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

1 Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act, 2009 (Stelmach)

First Reading -- 6 (Feb. 10 aft.)
Second Reading -- 90-93 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 503-4 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 583-84 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c4]

2 Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)

First Reading -- 9 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 93-94 (Feb. 17 aft.), 121-23 (Feb. 18 aft.), 212-14 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 575-79 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 609 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c5]

3 Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009 (Berger)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 123-24 (Feb. 18 aft.), 202-03 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 579-80 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 609-10 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 1, 2009; SA 2009 c3]

4 Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2009 (Bhullar)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 124 (Feb. 18 aft.), 353-56 (Mar. 11 aft.), 585-86 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 680-83 (Apr. 16 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 912-15 (Apr. 30 aft., passed)

5 Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (Griffiths)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 125 (Feb. 18 aft.), 214-15 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 506-07 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 585 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c6]

6 Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Amendment Act, 2009 (Forsyth)

First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 356-60 (Mar. 11 aft.), 586 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 633-38 (Apr. 14 aft.), 861-65 (Apr. 28 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 899-900 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)

7 Public Health Amendment Act, 2009 (Liepert)

First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 437-38 (Mar. 17 aft.), 439-40 (Mar. 17 aft.), 586-87 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 865-70 (Apr. 28 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 900 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)

- 8 Feeder Associations Guarantee Act (\$) (Groeneveld)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 203-08 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 580-83 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 610 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 cF-11.1]
- 9 Government Organization Amendment Act, 2009 (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 360-61 (Mar. 11 aft.), 587-88 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 895-97 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 915-17 (Apr. 30 aft., passed)
- 10 Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 361-62 (Mar. 11 aft.), 588 (Apr. 8 aft.), 889-91 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 920-21 (Apr. 30 aft., adjourned), 980-83 (May 5 aft.)
- 11 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2009 (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 362-63 (Mar. 11 aft.), 891-92 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 983 (May 5 aft.)
- 12 Surface Rights Amendment Act, 2009 (Berger)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 383-85 (Mar. 12 aft.), 892-95 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
- 13 Justice of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 385 (Mar. 12 aft.), 895 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
- 14 Carbon Capture and Storage Funding Act (\$) (Knight)**
First Reading -- 138 (Feb. 19 aft.)
Second Reading -- 208-10 (Mar. 3 aft.), 884-89 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 921-22 (Apr. 30 aft., adjourned)
- 15 Dunvegan Hydro Development Act (Oberle)**
First Reading -- 105-06 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 210-11 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 504-06 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 584-85 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 20, 2009; SA 2009 cD-18]
- 16 Peace Officer Amendment Act, 2009 (Lindsay)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 385-86 (Mar. 12 aft.), 919-20 (Apr. 30 aft., passed)
- 17 Securities Amendment Act, 2009 (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 386-87 (Mar. 12 aft.), 622-26 (Apr. 14 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 737 (Apr. 21 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 917-19 (Apr. 30 aft., passed)
- 18* Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement Implementation Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Stevens)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 211-12 (Mar. 3 aft.), 349-52 (Mar. 11 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 381-83 (Mar. 12 aft.), 446-54 (Mar. 17 aft., amendments agreed to), 472--81 (Mar. 18 aft.), 482-83 (Mar. 18 aft.), 574-75 (Apr. 8 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 604-09 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 20, 2009; SA 2009 c7]

- 19*** **Land Assembly Project Area Act (Hayden)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 438-39 (Mar. 17 aft.), 626-33 (Apr. 14 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 683-90 (Apr. 16 aft.), 737-53 (Apr. 21 aft., amendments agreed to), 770-84 (Apr. 22 aft.), 797-806 (Apr. 23 aft.), 857-61 (Apr. 28 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 897-99 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
- 20** **Civil Enforcement Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 767 (Apr. 22 aft., adjourned)
- 21** **Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2009 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 283 (Mar. 9 aft.)
Second Reading -- 377-80 (Mar. 12 aft.), 386 (Mar. 12 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 440-43, 454 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 468-71 (Mar. 18 aft.), 481 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 23 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 23, 2009; SA 2009 c2]
- 22** **Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2009 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 344 (Mar. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 380-81 (Mar. 12 aft.), 386 (Mar. 12 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 443-46, 454 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 471-72 (Mar. 18 aft.), 481-82 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 23 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 23, 2009; SA 2009 c1]
- 23** **Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2009 (Danyluk)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 735 (Apr. 21 aft., adjourned)
- 24** **Animal Health Amendment Act, 2009 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)
Second Reading -- 735-36 (Apr. 21 aft.), 969-70 (May 5 aft., passed)
- 25** **Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2009 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 283 (Mar. 9 aft.)
Second Reading -- 767 (Apr. 22 aft.), 970-72 (May 5 aft., adjourned)
- 26** **Wildlife Amendment Act, 2009 (Mitzel)**
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)
Second Reading -- 736 (Apr. 21 aft., adjourned)
- 27** **Alberta Research and Innovation Act (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 466 (Mar. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 767-69 (Apr. 22 aft.), 1003-06 (May 6 aft., adjourned)
- 28** **Energy Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 769-70 (Apr. 22 aft.), 1006-07 (May 6 aft., passed)
- 29** **Family Law Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 851-52 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 30** **Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2009 (Drysdale)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 736-37 (Apr. 21 aft., adjourned)
- 31** **Rules of Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 402 (Mar. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 852-53 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 32** **Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (Horne)**
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 853 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)

- 33 Fiscal Responsibility Act (Evans)**
First Reading -- 545 (Apr. 7 aft.)
Second Reading -- 853-54 (Apr. 28 aft.), 972-79 (May 5 aft., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 998-1003 (May 6 aft., adjourned, amendment introduced)
- 34 Drug Program Act (\$) (Liepert)**
First Reading -- 882 (Apr. 29 aft.)
Second Reading -- 979-80 (May 5 aft.), 1014-15 (May 6 aft., adjourned)
- 35 Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**
First Reading -- 591 (Apr. 9 aft.)
Second Reading -- 854 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 36 Alberta Land Stewardship Act (\$) (Morton)**
First Reading -- 818-19 (Apr. 27 aft.)
Second Reading -- 882 (Apr. 29 aft., adjourned)
- 37 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 701 (Apr. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 854-55 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 38 Tourism Levy Amendment Act, 2009 (Evans)**
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 855 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 39 Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (Evans)**
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 855-56 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 40 Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 856 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 41 Protection for Persons in Care Act (Brown)**
First Reading -- 766 (Apr. 22 aft.)
Second Reading -- 856 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 42 Gaming and Liquor Amendment Act, 2009 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 734 (Apr. 21 aft.)
Second Reading -- 857 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 43 Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2) (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 850 (Apr. 28 aft.)
Second Reading -- 883 (Apr. 29 aft., adjourned)
- 44 Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009 (Blackett)**
First Reading -- 850 (Apr. 28 aft.)
Second Reading -- 883-84 (Apr. 29 aft.), 1007-14 (May 6 aft.), 1036-38 (May 7 aft., adjourned)
- 45 Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 933-34 (May 4 aft.)
- 46 Gunshot and Stab Wound Mandatory Disclosure Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 966 (May 5 aft.)
- 52 Health Information Amendment Act, 2009 (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 436 (Mar. 17 aft.)
Second Reading -- 436 (Mar. 17 aft., reinstated), 437 (Mar. 17 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Health)
- 201 Traffic Safety (Vehicles with Unlawfully Possessed Firearms) Amendment Act, 2009 (Hehr)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 165-76 (Mar. 2 aft.), 284-86 (Mar. 9 aft., defeated on division)

- 202 Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General) Amendment Act, 2009 (Johnston)**
First Reading -- 138 (Feb. 19 aft.)
Second Reading -- 286-96 (Mar. 9 aft.), 406-08 (Mar. 16 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Community Services)
- 203 Local Authorities Election (Finance and Contribution Disclosure) Amendment Act, 2009 (Johnson)**
First Reading -- 251-52 (Mar. 5 aft.)
Second Reading -- 408-16 (Mar. 16 aft.), 829-31 (Apr. 27 aft., passed)
- 204 Provincial-Municipal Tax Sharing Act (Blakeman)**
First Reading -- 498 (Mar. 19 aft.)
Second Reading -- 831-32 (Apr. 27 aft.), 934-41 (May 4 aft, defeated on division)
- 205 Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 649-50 (Apr. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 941-46 (May 4 aft., passed on division)
- 206 School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009 (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 621 (Apr. 14 aft.)
- Pr1 Beverly Anne Cormier Adoption Termination Act (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)
- Pr2 Caritas Health Group Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Elniski)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)
- Pr3 Les Filles de la Sagesse Act Repeal Act (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)

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