



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Third Session

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 27th Legislature**  
Third Session

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 25, 2010

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

Let us pray. From our forests and parkland to our prairies and mountains comes the call of our land. From our farmsteads, towns, and cities comes the call of our people that as legislators of this province we act with responsibility and sensitivity. Grant us the wisdom to meet such challenges. Amen.

Hon. members, tomorrow is the 50th wedding anniversary of His Honour and Mrs. Kwong. I know that all members will want to join with me in extending to them the very happiest of happy occasions. [applause]

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

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

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the hon. members of our Assembly the students of Gateway Christian school. They're here today to observe the Legislature and observe the members here in the House. I'd like to introduce their teachers, Mr. Jim Driedger, Mrs. Klaaske deKoning, and Miss Nicole Stolte, and dedicated parent helpers Mrs. Burzuk, Mrs. Oosterhof, Mrs. Bouch, Mrs. Loney, Mr. Trost, Mrs. Burke, Mrs. Moca and her mother, Mr. Schultze, Mrs. Stewart, Mrs. Boorse, Mrs. Vander Leek, and Mrs. Rademacher. This is a group of brilliant young children that will make us very proud in the future. I would ask them all to rise and accept the warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Cao:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you 32 members of the Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council, and the 4-H, who are participating in the 39th Alberta Girls' Parliament from March 24 to 28, 2010, in Edmonton. This unique program is modelled on the Alberta Legislature, and the delegates come from all over the province. They are accompanied by their adviser, Melanie Reichle; Cindy Fendall, activities co-ordinator; Shannen Hoffman, registrar; Faye Greenslade, facilities co-ordinator; parliamentarians Shannon Robertson and Caitlin Lyster. They are seated in the members' gallery this afternoon. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome from our Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you. It is my honour and privilege to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly some of the immediate family members of the late Father Michael Joseph Troy. The late Father Troy was a well-respected leader, leaving a legacy of tremendous contribution within the Catholic community here in Edmonton, the capital city of our province. Father Troy's family join us today after travelling from Dublin, Ireland. This is a very difficult time for this family as they are here

for the funeral of their beloved brother, uncle, and friend, and it is with heartfelt compassion that I introduce to everyone here in the Assembly the following family members, who are located, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery. I would ask them to rise as I call out their names: Mary Farrell, Father Troy's sister; Tom Farrell, nephew of Father Troy; Paul Farrell, nephew of Father Troy; Betty Farrell, Paul Farrell's wife; Marie Hogan, Father Troy's niece; Deirdre Rhattigan, Father Troy's niece; Bernie Finnegan, Father Troy's niece; Gerry Finnegan, Bernie's husband; Angela Farmer, Father Troy's niece.

They're also joined by some of my immediate family members and a close friend of our family: Tony Sarich, my brother-in-law; Susan Sarich, my sister-in-law; Nicholas Sarich, my nephew; and Bob Fillion, a close family friend to the Sariches and to Father Troy. I would ask everyone to give them the traditional warm welcome of this Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure on behalf of my colleague from Athabasca-Redwater to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 19 students, teacher Mike Popowicz, teacher assistant Sharon Lakusta, and three parent helpers who have travelled from Thorhild Central school to Edmonton today. I met with them earlier, and I want to compliment the teachers. They had the students very well prepared on the questions that they asked, and it was something that I'm going to definitely pass on to the member. They are seated in the public gallery today, and I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathcona.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you on behalf of the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations a group of residents from the Silver Birch Lodge in Sherwood Park. I'm not sure if they've actually arrived yet, but if they are here behind me, could they please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Elniski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you might imagine, it takes a very persuasive woman to get someone like me to do yoga for the first time in public in West Edmonton Mall. Today I would like to introduce to you the team behind the yogathon for Haiti. These ladies held a five-hour yoga event in West Edmonton Mall and raised over \$6,000 for the Haitian earthquake relief. I'd ask them to stand as I introduce them: first of all, my very dear friend and constituency board member, Ms Elissa Scott; and Ms Tiffany Burns, an accomplished documentary filmmaker and the event's producer. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd ask you to please give them the traditional warm greeting of the Assembly.

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

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the House two members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, sitting in the public gallery. They've come here to witness the tabling of the petition calling for Alberta Health Services to stop contracting out security services. Please stand. They are Cherelyn Stefaniszyn, provincial executive for AUPE local 57 and staff at the Red Deer regional hospital centre, and David Climen-

haga, director of communications, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. Please give them our warmest welcome.

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be doing a private member's statement on this individual later, but I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Connor Yuzwenko-Martin. Connor is an active member of Rapid Fire Theatre's famed improv troupe, which plays Friday night Theatresports. He is seated in the public gallery. He is accompanied today by his interpreter, Nicole Sander, and by his friend Ryan Giroux. I would ask them to please stand, and I would welcome them to the Assembly.

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

**1:40**

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly my guests from the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees: President Guy Smith; antiprivatization chair Karen Weiers; from Calgary local 95, chapter 13, Chair Theresa Crabtree and Secretary-treasurer Cindy Tolley; and antiprivatization committee members Dusan Milutinovic and Lois LaRose. They have come to the Legislature to see the tabling of their petition to end contracting out of security services in health care facilities so Alberta can better protect patients. My guests are seated in the gallery. I would ask now for them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature my constituent Hunter Mulawka, who is joined this afternoon by his mother, Jodi, and father, Brian. Hunter was the proud recipient of a trip to the Olympics that was awarded to him from the ATCO celebrating excellence program, which was partnered with the Alberta government. Hunter's application was selected out of thousands which were submitted from children in grades ranging from 4 to 12 across the province. This is not the first time I've had the opportunity to meet Hunter. He's an extraordinary young man. I commend his parents for spending the time to bring him to the Alberta Legislature to see democracy in action. I would ask that they rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

### Members' Statements

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

#### Father Michael Joseph Troy, CSSp

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a heavy heart I rise today before the Assembly to pay tribute to a long-time family friend of 32 years, the late Father Michael Joseph Troy, Congregatio Sancti Spiritus.

He was born in 1917, Dublin, Ireland, and passed away in Edmonton, Alberta, on Friday, March 19, 2010, at the age of 92. Father Troy entered the Spiritan novitiate in 1936 and made his first profession as a Spiritan in 1937. Perpetual vows followed in 1940 and ordination to the priesthood in Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1947. From the moment Father Michael Troy stepped off the ship's

gangway in 1958, he kissed the ground and said, "Hello, Canada," and he never looked back.

Father Troy was a charismatic leader, an academic, legendary, and an inspiration to us all. He was an outstanding missionary and priest. He lived his life making the world a better place for everyone. No mission was impossible for Father Troy. Given all of his accomplishments, from being a founding father of numerous organizations to his tireless work with charities to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in his mid-60s, Father Troy was larger than life itself. He lived every moment to the fullest extent.

He held true to the proud charisms of the Spiritans' tradition. Father Troy concentrated his work on the social justice and spiritual needs of so many individuals, families, and communities. His arms were always held wide to embrace and love others. Father Troy touched the hearts of many and taught us that we are part of God's family.

A recent example of how he touched my family's heart was during the baptism of my great-niece, Sophie Sturko. Father Troy had gifted a holy picture of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which he had received from his mother and carried with him on his life's journey. His wish for Sophie was to live a life full of love and compassion for humanity and to pass down the blessed image and devotion to the next generation of her family. This act of generosity serves as a subtle reminder to us all of the importance of passing down family traditions.

Father Troy was a humble man who throughout life always put the needs of others before his own. Whatever you may have gifted to Father Troy, he always found a way for that gift to be passed on to those in great need. In his last weeks and days Father Troy had a difficult time accepting care from others. He was always concerned that someone else was more deserving of the time and attention.

Mr. Speaker, Father Michael Joseph Troy passed away on March 19, the day which commemorates St. Joseph. According to the Bible St. Joseph was a man of faith and obedient to whatever God had asked him to do, without knowing the outcome. Father Troy was that embodiment. Father Troy was well known for saying: the best is never over; the best is yet to be. Let the good times roll.

Today it is with heartfelt, great sadness that Father Troy has left us behind, but we honour him by celebrating his life, acknowledging that he has touched the hearts of us all.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

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

#### Connor Yuzwenko-Martin

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I introduced Connor Yuzwenko-Martin, a smart, funny, cute-looking young man who excels at improv theatre and successfully auditioned to become a member of Edmonton's famous and world-winning Theatresports troupe. Connor is also a student at the University of Alberta, taking political science, and is active in campus life, including the OUTreach group.

Oh, did I forget to mention that Connor is deaf? Well, it doesn't affect his energy, his willingness to participate, or his creativity, so it's not the first thing that you notice. Only when you realize that he has an interpreter with him does the penny drop.

Connor's integration into campus and theatre life illustrates a part of society's struggle with the commitment to barrier-free access. While we have capital budgets to ensure that the infrastructure is built to accommodate people with mobility issues, we often don't have operating monies to accommodate access for people with sight or hearing barriers. Thus, Rapid Fire Theatre and GM Karen get big

smoochy kisses from me for insisting on opening their audition process to Connor and for taking the step to pay for his interpreter so that he could be on stage every Friday for Theatresports, a huge commitment at 120 bucks a pop. Today our very own visitor services has stepped up with their commitment to barrier-free access, and I'd like to thank them and recognize them.

Oh, yeah. Did I mention that Connor is gay? It's interesting that still today an impairment of sight or hearing or one's sexual orientation makes one a member of an invisible minority. They are all still subject to discrimination, to barriers of access, and even to questions of personal safety.

So kudos to you, Connor, and to those who support you.

Thank you very much.

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

### Earth Hour

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Saturday marks the third global celebration of Earth Hour, started by the World Wildlife Fund in 2007. We are encouraged to turn off our lights for one hour in support of action against climate change. The real value of Earth Hour is the awareness it raises, and its success is a result of how easy it is to take part.

Last year Earth Hour reached more than 1 billion people in 80 countries around the world, and in Canada more than 10 million people switched off their lights. I intend to take part, and so does the government of Alberta. As a symbol of the government of Alberta's commitment to take action to address climate change, all nonessential lights in the Legislature Building and the McDougall Centre will be shut off during Earth Hour. The Alberta government continues to reduce its environmental impact by improving energy practices, promoting recycling, and implementing environmental programs that ensure sustainability. I encourage my colleagues and all Albertans to support the global lights-out initiative by turning off the switch at 8:30 on Saturday evening.

Earth Hour alone, Mr. Speaker, will not accomplish what is needed with regard to our action on climate change, but it is an important step in dimming human impact on the environment.

Thank you.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

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

### Funding for Human Services

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Premier. Does the Premier accept the fact that the oil and gas industry is a boom-and-bust industry?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas industry is just like any other. It depends on world markets. It depends on technology and innovation to access some of the more difficult sedimentary basins that we have in Alberta. Of course, it's an industry that has been hit very hard, as have other industries, forestry, and agriculture, because of this unbelievable economic downturn.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier also accept that human services such as health and education are not boom-and-bust industries?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Protecting the vulnerable is not an industry. It is something that we do for people. It is something that we do to protect the vulnerable in this province out of compassion, and we do it to the best we can given the revenue stream, trying to find a balance in other budgets to provide as much money for taking care of the vulnerable in this province.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that our province's largest source of revenue is a boom-and-bust industry and given that services such as health care and education and other human services need stable funding, how does the Premier justify making decisions on which services to cut and how much given the revenue of the past year?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, once again, prudent financial planning has not only paid off a huge accumulated debt in years prior, but we have set aside two savings funds. One is the heritage savings trust fund. That is for our grandchildren. That fund is coming back up closer to its original value of \$17 billion. Then we also have a cash surplus fund, which we call the sustainability fund, that we're using today to cushion the blow to our revenues, and that is going to sustain our social programs.

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

### Vancouver Winter Olympics Advertising Costs

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Vancouver Olympics and the amazing performances of our athletes created excitement and inspiration across Canada with a wave of patriotism that still lives. Now we are starting to see some of the bills for this event, created not only by athletes but by politicians and partying. This government has recklessly claimed that \$70 million in advertising benefit has been achieved, as if it was a fact, through the train and other services, yet we all know that this kind of advertising benefit is notoriously hard to measure. To the Premier: can the Premier tell Albertans what metrics were used to determine the number, and if he can't, will he promise to quit using \$70 million until he can confirm it?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it's amazing. People outside this province have recognized the value of the Alberta train, recognized the value of Alberta House, all of the people that we've attracted from different corners of the world. Again, just to quote:

Alberta Hitchin' Its Hoss to B.C. Games Train.

You have to hand it to the Albertans. First, they stole our Olympic train . . . you know, the sole train now operating on the scenic railway line between North Vancouver and Whistler, wrapped in Alberta's new promotional materials.

That's Jon Ferry from the Vancouver *Province*.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the same question: what metrics are you using to make sure that Albertans got value for that multimillion-dollar expenditure? What metrics?

**Mr. Stelmach:** I'll give another metric here.

The Hottest Olympic Ticket Isn't the Hockey Final.

What the wily Albertans figured out even before the closing ceremony in Beijing in 2008 is that they weren't going to fork out hundreds of thousands of dollars hosting VIPs at gold-medal events that they are almost certain to watch.

With the train, they not only have their guests' full attention by taking such good care of them, they've attracted all kinds of media coverage.

Media coverage: that's a measurement of success.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we now know that the much-vaunted Alberta train was really a ghost train. It was only around half full, even with the added presence of Tory MLAs and their friends and staff riding for free. Why did the government wait until just days before the games to begin selling tickets?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Once again, misinformation. The train was full. In fact, people were wanting to get on as one of the sole ways of getting from Vancouver to Whistler.

You know, Mr. Speaker, here again we just heard a member's statement about the value of arts and culture to this province. It is a value. It's part of the industry. I think the \$6 million that we spent on culture, advertising Alberta, is money well spent, and it helps the artist that the hon. member introduced in the House earlier. That's where the expenditures and the support are going.

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

#### Health Facilities Security Services

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is proceeding to contract out yet another service of our health care system with no regard for consequences on patient and worker safety. No proof has been shown that could justify getting rid of in-house security. We have been contacted by a range of people, from nurses to patients, who feel that this change is actually going to provide less public safety and less quality of care. To the Premier: in the interest of public safety and quality of care will the Premier immediately order Alberta Health Services to stop contracting out security services?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is much closer to that file and has more information on it.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, under the old model, as it's sometimes referred to, many areas of the province virtually had little or no security whatsoever, and in the new model all care sites are going to have access to the kind of protective services that are important to their area.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, speaking of the rural hospitals, Mr. Speaker, that's some of the people we heard from. Security staff are an integral part of their health care delivery team. They know the staff. They know the patients. They know the community. This improves patient care. To the minister: why will the minister not take action and reverse this unwise decision?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're doing in the security operation centre that will help monitor the situation being referred to is having some live feed television monitors put in place. That, too, will help provide the kind of added security that is necessary, particularly in those centres that I mentioned earlier that have little or none.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, this government doesn't seem to understand health care, and it doesn't seem to understand human security and human relations. Will the Premier come clean and do what his minister of health could not this week and tell Albertans how many jobs will be lost throughout the province with this change?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you if their jobs will be lost or not. All I know is that this will be a better system. It'll be much more efficient. Also, any savings that we can muster in that particular area will go directly into front-line health care services.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

#### Children and Youth Services Budget

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government definitely doesn't understand the difference between needs and wants. They are spending billions pumping hot air into the ground while Alberta's most vulnerable are facing cuts. The minister of children's services claims that she gave a clear directive that was ignored by a respected CEO in region 6. Now he allegedly has gone on to pursue other opportunities. To the Premier: when will he table proof in this House that the minister actually gave that direction so that Albertans know with certainty that this staff member isn't being used as the minister's scapegoat?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the member was here for estimates, and those estimates were before the House. I can't recall the debate and when the estimates came here, but they were here. He can refer to *Hansard* for all of the questions with respect to the respective areas of her budget.

**Mr. Hinman:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, you might as well say that we cut off a finger, but we gained two pounds, so we didn't lose anything.

Today we learned of more cuts to vulnerable Albertans. Again to the Premier: given that the agencies supporting the disabled are raising concerns about million-dollar cuts to their funding, can the Premier explain why this government is so intent on punishing community-based agencies that compassionately deliver services to disabled more effectively and efficiently than government does?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Enterprise has rolled out exactly how much the budget has increased in all of the social areas. We've had to reduce some budgets in some ministries, but we're maintaining the budgets in PDD and in foster care. Those are part of the most vulnerable, and we will move dollars around within the overall budget to make sure that we do take care of the vulnerable.

**Mr. Hinman:** He'd better look at the regional budget; it's not the overall budget.

Again to the Premier: how many social agencies in Calgary will be forced to close as this government continues to direct funding to their \$7 million branding initiative, their growing, bloated bureaucracy rather than to community-based organizations and front-line workers?

**Dr. Morton:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is really scraping the bottom of the barrel now. He's having to go around and look at different regions to try to play with numbers and confuse Albertans. There was an actual spending growth for the demographic growth in seniors in the budget. I suggest the hon. member look at total figures, not wander around trying to pick out little misleading figures from this region or that region.

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

### Funding for Foster Care

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 9, 2009, 11 foster parents wrote a letter to the Premier, the minister of children's services, the CEO of region 6, and their government MLA. They were concerned that government had broken its promise to maintain funding levels for foster parents who actually adopt foster children. Nine months later this funding disparity remains. Why won't the Premier admit that by contacting government, these parents got absolutely no help?

2:00

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I don't recall the letter from May, I think, of '09. All I know is that on the particular issue that was before this House and that occurred over the last few days, the minister took firm and decisive action in this file. We kept our word. We said that there would be no cuts to foster supports and for those that are looking after children especially with disabilities like autism, which is very difficult on foster parents. That is where we're at today, and the minister will proceed with respect to working with all of the regions.

**Ms Notley:** Well, given that the Premier has suggested that it's up to foster parents to brief him and his minister about government policies that threaten funding for foster children, why won't the Premier admit that he is effectively blaming foster parents for the fallout of his own decision to cut funding to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Actually, the reverse: I'd like foster parents to come directly to the minister and to their MLA in case there is misinformation given by any service providers out there that we contract. They come to the minister. That is the process. I invite all foster parents that may have some maybe misinformation or wrong direction given to them by the particular region to come forward and advise the minister so the minister is fully well aware of what's happened.

**Ms Notley:** Well, given the Premier's illogical take on who is responsible for the effects of this government's plan to cut funding for children in care in the Edmonton region, why won't the Premier admit that his blame game has a chilling effect on foster parents and staff and will increase government secrecy rather than promote transparency and public accountability, which presumably we all want?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous respect and admiration for parents who come forward and open their homes to foster children. Those are very, very difficult situations for many. I would say that rather than criticizing some of the foster parents in this House, we all work together to encourage more foster parents because, as I said earlier, we have over 9,200 children in the care of government. That is a serious matter, and that's why we need the support of foster parents and government to work together.

### Alberta Health Services Budget

**Dr. Taft:** Mr. Speaker, for many months the Alberta Health Services superboard has claimed \$650 million to \$700 million in annual efficiency savings since taking over the health regions, but I'm beginning to think these claims are bogus. We've asked in writing, in meetings, in committees, and in the Legislature for details. At

most the replies have accounted for less than 10 per cent of the claim. In other words, Alberta Health Services has fallen 90 per cent short on accountability. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: will the minister either provide details on where this \$700 million came from, or will he finally admit the claims are bogus?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the comments made by Alberta Health Services regarding the savings that they anticipate will be made. They remain in that estimated figure of \$600 million to \$700 million. As soon as I receive that information in a little more detail, I'd be happy to provide it to that member.

**Dr. Taft:** Well, will the minister explain what seems to be a contradiction in that the superboard says that it's found \$700 million in annual savings but still needed a \$1.3 billion top-up? Was, then, the total deficit of Alberta Health Services really \$2 billion?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, \$1.3 billion was not a top-up, and the member should know this if he pretends to know anything about health care. It was a deficit.

**Ms Blakeman:** You won't give us the information.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** I've given the information, hon. members. The hon. member over there knows it. If you've read estimates, you'd have it.

The point here is that if you were looking for \$1.3 billion of savings, if we hadn't covered it, I challenge this member to tell me where he would find those cuts because you won't find them, and you know darn well you won't.

**Dr. Taft:** Well, since we're challenging each other here, Mr. Speaker, if the \$700 million in savings which Ken Hughes of the superboard claimed again just a couple of weeks ago in his speech are not true, I challenge this minister to hold Ken Hughes to account. Will he do that?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, that information will come out. It's been offered publicly that there's a commitment to say it. [interjections] If you'd just keep quiet for a moment, I'll finish answering the question.

The point here is that there are savings going forward here as part of the five-year funding plan, and they've identified those areas, and we will see them. So just hang tight. Don't get too excited over there. It'll happen.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

### Crowsnest Creek Diversion

**Mr. Berger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environment. During the flood of June 1995 the Crowsnest Creek overflowed its banks and took a new route, threatening the Canadian Pacific rail line near Summit Lime Works. To mitigate this threat to the rail lines, CP Rail had contractors divert the flow, which inadvertently cut the flow to Island Lake, turning a healthy, fish-bearing lake into a stagnant slough. What action did Alberta Environment take on this issue?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing issue that I've had discussions on both with the current MLA and the previous MLA for Crowsnest Pass. The history on this is that there was a diversion that

was put in place in about the 1940s that was destroyed by the flood in 1995. What actually happened was that the river returned to its natural course. What CP did was remove the silt that had accumulated over that period of time so that the river could be accommodated. They did so under approval of Alberta Environment.

**Mr. Berger:** To the same minister: given that this had the effect of taking away the flow and that the water level of Island Lake is now very low, is there anything Alberta Environment will do to rectify this situation?

**Mr. Renner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a number of instances around the province where we have requests from communities to build diversions or protect erosion problems caused by nature. We've taken the position that we don't get involved in funding those kinds of projects. However, we would welcome any application to come forward from the community should they wish to restore this original diversion, which would in turn restore the levels in the lake.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Berger:** Thank you. My third question is to the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Given that your ministry has a day-use park on the lake and an overnight campground immediately adjacent to the lake, will you take measures to ensure that someone makes this lake a lake again?

**Mrs. Ady:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. We do have about 40 camping stalls and a day-use area at Island Lake provincial recreation area, and re-establishing the lake levels would be a very big enhancement to these campgrounds. We're very supportive of that, and my ministry would be willing to work with Sustainable Resource Development and with Environment to see if anything could be done.

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

### Community Grant Programs

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community facility enhancement program and community initiatives program continue to take six months or more before groups get a response despite years of promises from the ministry that that will be fixed. Groups continue to get form letter rejections which give no indication of the criteria by which they are judged, what the priorities are for any given grant cycle, or what they could do to improve their chances next application. To the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit: why does there continue to be an absence of any kind of verifiable and consistent criteria so groups can understand how their applications are judged?

**Mr. Blackett:** Mr. Speaker, there are criteria that are obviously given to each and every applicant as they apply for their particular application, whether it's CIP or CFEP. That means that they have financial criteria to meet. We have to look at the viability of the project. We have to look at community support and those interests, and our community liaison officers indicate that right at the outset. There will be 80 per cent of the applications denied because of the tremendous amount of ask that there is out there. We don't have the time to go through each and every application that is not approved and let them know exactly what the criteria that weren't . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** You've got a due diligence checklist, not eligibility requirements.

Back to the same minister: if it's not accurate, then why do groups continue to be told that problems with CIP and CFEP funding applications should be taken to government MLAs to be fixed?

**Mr. Blackett:** Well, I don't know about government MLAs. There are MLAs there on the opposition benches from each and every party that have come to me and asked for help with respect to a constituent's application, and I have done so. I have government members who come to my office and ask for assistance, and we do so. You know what? We are trying in our department to come up with improvements. We have a quarterly grant processing program that we utilize now.

**An Hon. Member:** Your nose is growing.

**Mr. Blackett:** The hon. member who is talking about noses growing: at least that paragon of virtue over there actually went out, had the temerity to indicate on his website how much money he gave out, which was contrary to the rules that are already on there.

2:10

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Education: given that schools are the heart of the community and the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues supports a moratorium on closures until a comprehensive review can be completed, will the minister commit to meet with the Minister of Municipal Affairs to discuss common interests, please?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, that's hardly supplemental to CFEP, but I'll see if I can connect it to CFEP in some way. The short answer is that I meet with . . .

**The Speaker:** I don't know the connection either, and the hon. member signed a document saying that they wouldn't do that, so I don't get this.

### Education System in Finland

**Mr. Allred:** Mr. Speaker, one of the best ways to enhance Alberta's competitiveness is to maintain our world-leading standing in education. Other countries recognize the extraordinary importance that education will play in their economic future, and their students are leaping ahead of Alberta students. I was pleased the other evening to go to hear an educational consultant from Finland speak in St. Albert. To the Minister of Education. Finland has what is, very simply, the best education system in the world. Notably, unlike Alberta, they have no state testing or school ranking lists. When will Alberta follow their lead?

**The Speaker:** We have to get a response from the minister.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Pasi Sahlberg has been on a tour around Alberta a number of times and is quite an expert on education and well worth listening to, and I've heard him a number of times. Finland is actually recognized as one of the best systems in the world, but it's more than just a question of not having tests. In fact, in the opportunity I had to meet with six jurisdictions from around the world who are rated among the top 25 in the world, the common thing that we found about all jurisdictions that are excellent is excellence in teaching. All the rest of the things that



they have are quite different, and we can be strong in different areas, but it's excellence in teaching which draws them together. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that Finnish students are in school for far fewer hours than Alberta students yet their achievement is much higher, are you considering reducing the number of hours Alberta students spend in school?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not actually a question of hours. Yes, Finland does have a lot shorter number of hours for their students. Also, their students start later. They start at age 7, which develops a maturity that has worked very well for them.

Of course, as the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has been shouting at me, they have child care and other things at the earlier ages, which is supported. Suffice it to say that Finland does very well. They have many different things in their system which are different from ours and different from other successful places in the world, and they have some things that other places do which do not give them the results.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: why does Alberta's education system not follow the Finnish model, where teachers spend more time collaborating with each other than anywhere else?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question. Again, when I had the opportunity to be in Singapore to look at the Singapore system and meet with ministers of education from around the world, one of the things that became very apparent: professional development, selecting the best teachers, educating them appropriately, making sure that they're well inducted into the profession, and making sure that they have good, solid opportunities for professional development throughout their professional life is what helps to create excellence in teaching. That amount of time that they have in Singapore and in Finland for teachers to get together to learn from each other and to build their professional practice enhances their education system, and we should be looking very closely at that.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, followed by the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

### Residential Building Codes

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Municipal Affairs said that he's not looking at applying building codes retroactively because to do so would be too difficult. Well, it hasn't been too difficult for Ontario to bring buildings up to code. Ottawa alone has retrofitted over 2,000 of them. In British Columbia it wasn't too difficult for them to fork over \$670 million in interest-free loans over 12 years to fix their leaky condo mess. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: if it isn't too difficult for other provinces to protect condo owners from fire and water, why is it too difficult for this minister?

**Mr. Goudreau:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta doesn't have the same types of issues that British Columbia had. We don't have, as far as I'm aware, leaky condos. Certainly, there are some issues with the

envelopes around some of our homes, but we're not dealing with some of the issues that B.C. and other provinces are dealing with.

**Mr. Taylor:** Whoa. Talk about splitting hairs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in recent years cheaper construction materials have been used in building multifamily housing and the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs claims that that stuff burns faster and hotter, if the minister won't look at retrofitting buildings with sprinklers to solve the problem that we have in this province, what will he do?

**Mr. Goudreau:** Mr. Speaker, we are still working on our building codes. As I've indicated all week to this hon. member, we do have some of the strongest and best building codes anywhere in the nation. We continue to review those, and we are well ahead of other provinces and the national building code in doing those things.

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, last time the building associations weren't consulted about the changes to Alberta's building codes. Will the minister commit to immediately working with building associations to strengthen fire safety and to tabling the results in the House?

**Mr. Goudreau:** Mr. Speaker, that was part of the whole process. We do consult with industry. We do consult with building individuals as well as individual homeowners. Because of that particular process, it takes us a while to bring in additional codes.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

### Health Services Decision-making

**Mr. Doerksen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the creation of the Alberta Health Services Board my constituents have voiced concerns about loss of local autonomy or influence with regard to decisions made impacting rural hospitals. Some decisions are best made locally. My first question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. What is being done to ensure that the local organizations like hospital foundations have input into how the funds they have raised are spent locally and in a co-ordinated manner?

**Mr. Zwodzesky:** Mr. Speaker, health foundations and other fundraising groups at the local level are an extremely important part of what we're doing in terms of delivering the best-performing, publicly funded health system in Alberta. Foundations here locally, for example, have helped build the world-renowned Stollery children's centre, the Mazankowski Alberta Institute, the Lois Hole hospital, which will be opened more vigorously very soon. There is ongoing consultation that AHS is doing with foundations and other local community groups. They'll be doing that over the next few months and working out a plan in that regard.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Doerksen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question to the same minister: is there a mechanism in place for front-line health workers to have input into the system with good ideas and best-practice suggestions?

**Mr. Zwodzesky:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of mechanisms or initiatives in place. In fact, one of them deals directly with employee submissions. There is a program called action your ideas, for example. It's more of an initiative than a program through which

employees can feed in, and I believe that something in the order of 700 submissions were recently received. Quarterly staff sessions with the CEO is another mechanism. Finally, our health advisory councils, one of whom I met with yesterday, rounds out the three that I had in mind.

**Mr. Doerksen:** Again to the same minister, Mr. Speaker: have there been cost efficiencies or other efficiencies gained as a result of the organizational structure of a single health board for Alberta?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of cost savings. Unfortunately, there was so much yelling and shouting from the opposition that I didn't get a chance to answer this a little earlier. There is a target there, a real one, of between \$600 million and \$700 million due to the amalgamation of nine regions into one. There are huge savings in HR and finance and payroll and other administrative areas, and more information on that will come out when it's provided to me.

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

#### Oil Sands Emissions

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a speech on Tuesday the Premier stated that emissions from the oil sands have been cut by 38 per cent since 1990, when the truth is that they've actually increased more than 300 per cent. The Premier's staff rushed to his defence, saying that the information they provided to the Premier wasn't clear. To the Minister of Environment: will the minister explain to the Premier the difference between intensity and absolute reductions before environmentalists, the NDP, and maybe even the roaming peahen are blamed for keeping information from the Premier?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure this member and all members that I don't need to explain the difference to the Premier. He's well aware of it, and he indicated that when he answered the question.

**Ms Notley:** Well, given that emissions have actually increased more than threefold over the last 20 years, why won't the Minister of Environment set the record straight and admit that intensity targets don't equal absolute reductions and that any statement otherwise, even if made by the Premier, is pure spin?

2:20

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, the end target, of course, is absolute reductions. How do you get absolute reductions? You get them by advancing technology, by ensuring that the technological advances reduce the intensity, and over time as you reduce more and more intensity, then you can accommodate some additional growth. If we could have twice as much or three times as much economic activity with 10 per cent emissions, we would have absolute reductions.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the Premier claimed a 38 per cent reduction when, in fact, we have a 300 per cent increase, will the minister commit to contacting each of the oil sands suppliers at the National Buyer/Seller Forum, where the Premier gave the misinformation, correct the record, and report the emissions information in absolute terms, not intensity spin?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, the record is intact. There is no need to correct the record. The facts speak for themselves. There have been dramatic reductions in intensity in the oil sands regions, and I

suggest to this hon. member that there is not a person at the buyer/seller conference that doesn't understand that.

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

#### Beach Corner Road Intersection

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Local residents are angry about changes that were made to the intersection of 16A and Beach Corner Road just west of Stony Plain. They claim that changes have caused poor visibility, traffic congestion, and a parking nightmare. To the Minister of Transportation. There's a blind spot at the intersection because of the uneven pavement. Will the minister listen to these citizens' concerns and correct the problem?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, if there is a problem at 16A and Beach Corner, as he's talking about, we will have engineers out there looking at it, I will get a report from them, and we will make sure that we correct the problem if there really is an unsafe problem. I'm not fully aware of the problem, but if there's an unsafe problem out there, we'll be looking after it.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why did the minister put a roundabout at this intersection that is only good enough for small trucks to turn around and not for semis with 53-foot trailers?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know about the particular roundabout he's talking about, but let me fill you in a little bit about roundabouts. The same thing happened in Sylvan Lake. We have a roundabout that was put in at the junction of 11A and highway 20. Originally, I got a bunch of letters saying: if you put this roundabout there, we'll never vote for you again, and on and on and on. Since then I've had a whole bunch of letters saying: "Wow. Does this ever work well. It works great. Thank you very much for pushing ahead with it." That particular one, the circles are designed to drag the trailers over . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've got hundreds of residents writing letters otherwise about this intersection. That is poor planning. So far we have only heard that the minister is reviewing this issue. When will the minister finally get around to fixing this poorly planned and dangerous intersection?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Holy moly, Mr. Speaker. I've heard it all now. Why, oh, why would people give hundreds of letters to the opposition and none to the Minister of Transportation? It doesn't make sense to me.

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

#### Clean Energy Research

**Mrs. McQueen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of the experts I met with during my recent mission to Europe were very impressed with our government's financial commitment to CCS technology but had questions about how we are funding and supporting other types of green energy research. To the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology: can you explain what other areas, outside of CCS, we are funding?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, many of our European friends are very impressed with the amount of resources we are putting toward CCS. In fact, the investment in green technology in this province is going far beyond just CCS technology. We're working on tools to reduce energy intensity, as was mentioned earlier. In the oil and gas sector we're working on water and water research. We're working on nanotechnology, which I've talked a lot about in this House, on solar cells and photoelectric cells. We have a demonstration project right here in Edmonton on municipal waste.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. McQueen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: how are we ensuring that we address this critical gap between the lab and the street when it comes to clean technology development?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, that is something that many jurisdictions around the world are working with and struggling with. We have taken some of the best practices from around the world, like our innovation vouchers, and we've used that to connect to the lab, to prototype the lab to the marketplace. Our new connector service is extremely important for small up-and-coming companies. I mentioned earlier, in my previous answer, about the municipal waste project demonstration and where CO<sub>2</sub> is being injected into older gas wells and older oil wells. We're going to enhance oil recovery. These are business-case scenarios that work for real businesses.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. McQueen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, again to the same minister. We are a province of 3 million people, and clearly these are issues that are being looked at all over the world. How are we making sure that we are not duplicating efforts of other research groups around the world who are also looking to solve these technical challenges? Who are we collaborating with?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, very interesting in the sense that we are obviously getting a lot of, you would say, international press on some of the things that people think we're doing wrong. We're also getting a lot of attention about the things that we're doing right, especially in greenhouse gas emissions or the environment and reclamation. This has attracted attention from the University of Hamburg, the Helmholtz institutes, and Rice University in Texas. We have a lot of collaboration around the world that is ongoing. They're coming to Alberta to seek us out so that we are not duplicating efforts around the globe.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

#### Temporary Foreign Workers

**Mr. Hehr:** Mr. Speaker, studies, reports, audits, and this government's own information confirms that the temporary foreign worker program is leaving newcomers to Alberta vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: when will this minister end the abuses by ensuring that there are no more second-class citizens in Alberta's workforce?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a good question because it's a matter that's very, very important to me not only as minister but also personally. Resources are now put in place not only allowing but encouraging foreign workers to report any and all conduct that may be unbecoming in the province. Not only are we putting out the information in English, but we are now capable of accepting complaints in more than 150 – that's one, five, zero – languages. Every time a complaint comes in, it is being duly investigated.

**Mr. Hehr:** The minister claims that he can do nothing about this program, but a suggestion I have is: why doesn't he go to the federal government and renegotiate our immigration accord to eliminate this toxic program?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, I object to the language. A program that gives people in different countries a chance to come to this fabulous province and earn a good living and, by doing so, assist our economy and its growth is definitely not toxic. There is nothing toxic about foreign workers either. They are individuals that are protected the same way as all Alberta workers are protected. But it is a federal program. Some aspects of it are administered by the province, and I'm doing my utmost and our front-line workers are doing their utmost to make sure that all workers are well protected.

**Mr. Hehr:** I agree with the minister's comments in that the people are here doing great jobs and great work for our community. They're good enough to serve lunch at our counters, to help me get out of bed, to do other things in our community. Why aren't they good enough to become citizens of this great province right off the hop?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, again a very good question. My suggestion to this member would be that, come the next federal election, he run as a Member of Parliament and raises that question there because the issuance of visas and permanent resident status is federal. However, I will be raising issues within the program to the federal government, the government who created this program in the first place and administers the program.

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

#### Rural Family Physician Recruitment

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm hearing and receiving calls from my rural communities. Community medical clinics are being converted into walk-in clinics in order to accommodate the shortage of doctors for all these patients these offices receive. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: why is Alberta Health Services pursuing this conversion when these efforts prevent my constituents from booking appointments ahead of time, especially considering they have to travel long distances to reach those clinics?

**Mr. Zwodzesky:** Mr. Speaker, as private practitioners physicians have the freedom to choose their style of practice and the office hours that they keep. Some of them are actually deciding to become members of the team approach called primary care networks, and those primary care networks are proving extremely effective. In fact, most of them, if not all, would boast same-day ask, same-day access type of service.

2:30

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, and thank you to the minister. This just magnifies the difficulty we have in retaining qualified family physicians in rural communities. To the same minister: what are we going to do to encourage retention and attract doctors to rural Alberta?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, there are several things that are being done. There are several incentives within the program that are all part of the rural physician action plan. For example, we do have programs for rural physicians specifically wherein education and research are supported, training opportunities are provided while locum opportunities allow them to take a breather, take a day off, take a vacation, and so on. We also have the business cost program, which provides funding directly to help them run their offices, and in several cases many rural physicians receive a special premium for medically insured services that they provide.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of foreign-trained doctors who are looking for accreditation. I'm wondering what the minister is prepared to do to work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to get that accreditation so that they can fill the shortage that we face in rural Alberta.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, not long ago I met and have had several conversations recently as well, I should say, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I raised this very issue. I know that our medical residency programs have actually increased every year since about 2004. This year, for example, there will be 50 of these spots. We also provide funding to help encourage some of these international applications to be filed and to help them navigate the system in Alberta. So we're doing a lot to help with the issue raised.

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

#### Manufacturing Outsourcing to Korea

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last October 6 a South Korean steel fabricator signed a deal with Imperial Oil worth \$250 million to manufacture at least 200 production modules for the Kearn oil sands project at Fort McMurray. These plant modules manufactured in South Korea will be provided by July 2011. My first question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. How many construction and steel fabrication jobs were lost here in Alberta as a result of this \$250 million order being placed in South Korea, not south Edmonton?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to thank this hon. member for setting this up so perfectly for me. First of all, I've been itching to be able to stand up and report to this House that Statistics Canada has reported today that the number of Albertans on EI right now in Alberta has dropped by 14.8 per cent. That is 10,040 fewer unemployed Albertans, and we are leading Canada right now in recovery. That perhaps addresses your question in some part.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many of the EI recipients have been unemployed for so long that they have exhausted their benefits, I'd better ask the minister of finance. Does Imperial Oil get to deduct the construction and shipping costs of these modules from South Korea from the royalty payments that they pay here in Alberta?

**Dr. Morton:** Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder what world the hon. member is living in. It's called the global economy. Does he want to actually put a wall around Alberta and say there is no procurement? What does that do to a province like Alberta that exports oil and gas, cattle and wheat, coal and timber? We're an exporting country. It's about free trade. Does he want to repeal the free trade agreement, too?

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, this is the minister that wanted at one time to build a firewall around Alberta.

Now, again to the minister of finance: does Imperial Oil get to deduct the construction and shipping costs from South Korea from their corporate tax payments?

**Dr. Morton:** Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than happy to provide bus fare for the hon. member to go right down Jasper Avenue to the buyer and seller forum . . .

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** One way, please.

**Dr. Morton:** One way, perhaps. There are 500 people from all over the world, Ontario, and Quebec here to do the supply chain into the oil sands. It's good for Alberta. It's good for all of Canada. You want a little wall around it. Welcome to the global economy is what I say to that.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays, followed by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

#### Canadian Forces Liaison

**Mr. Johnston:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the first time in many, many years Alberta has an elected representative acting as liaison with the Canadian armed forces. That liaison also happens to be the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. All my questions are to our new liaison to the Canadian armed forces. Isn't this role already filled by the MLAs who have a presence in their constituencies?

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fitting that this question does come from a member who spent a considerable amount of time serving his country in uniform. I congratulate the member. I would also say that, in fact, the role that MLAs are playing, representing the over 12,000 men and women who create the footprint in the province in Alberta and a billion dollar economic consequence to this province, has raised the point that we should have that kind of liaison to the Canadian forces, and indeed I commend those MLAs for doing that. That's part of the reason why the role that I see as the liaison is a co-ordination effort.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnston:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is this an added component to the Deputy Premier's role, or is there some overlap with the government's research or postsecondary agendas?

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, because it was new, we did take a little bit of time to try to ascertain exactly what other provinces were doing with their cabinet liaison roles. We've kind of developed this based on what the Canadian forces would like us to have as this kind of a role. What we found during those consultations is that there is a considerable amount of overlap with our department from the perspective of apprenticeship training, the postsecondary system, from leadership training as well as, interestingly enough, on the research side. Alberta companies are working on a number of innovative projects both on the health side and from the Campus Alberta side but really interesting is body armour, Acticoat bandages, and IED imaging.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnston:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question: when will these potentially life-saving innovations be out in the field helping our soldiers?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, we're working on, actually, a first of its kind agreement with the Department of National Defence on trying to bring some of these very innovative solutions to the field. Certainly, the military is very interested in this given the amount of casualties we see from IEDs. We are developing a much closer relationship with the Canadian Forces in the research component as well as the training component. We hope to see some very good results in the very near future, and obviously that's for the benefit of all Canadians.

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

#### **Health Facilities Security Services** (continued)

**Mr. Prins:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have already heard today, security personnel are an important component of our medical delivery system as they ensure that medical staff, especially emergency room staff, are able to attend to their patients in a safe and controlled manner. My constituents have been telling me that Alberta Health Services is planning to reduce or eliminate security personnel in hospitals in Lacombe and Ponoka. My question is to the minister of health. Why are you pursuing this policy, Mr. Minister, and how will you ensure the safety of health care workers in my community given that they're often under threat of violence from patients who may be suffering from mental disorders or alcohol?

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

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're always concerned wherever the issue of safety of patients or safety of staff and other workers at our facilities comes into question. In fact, as I understand it today, this new model is going to address those very issues in a much more vigorous way. That will include more co-ordination, a more streamlined approach to it, and an equitable securities service provision province-wide. This is a good thing because it should lead to a broader protection for more people. However, I do recognize that every community is different, and I have pointed that out to the Alberta Health Services decision-makers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you. Again to the minister of health: will you

ensure that the level of security offered by the new providers is as good, if not better, than before?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the intention of the new model that will be coming out very soon. We know that safety is of utmost importance to workers and to others involved. We also know that the new protective services model will offer a combination of different types and forms of service deliveries in terms of protective services. People will be able to use a combination of community peace officers and contract security officers, who are supervised by team leaders. The number of positions will obviously vary from site to site, but I will keep that in mind in my future discussions.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental again to the same minister: how soon will our medical staff in Lacombe and Ponoka know about these new measures?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta Health Services told me last night, I believe, that on or about May 1 of this year they will have this system fully implemented. I think it's important to recognize that there are some spots in the province where perhaps a slightly different approach or a different model might need to be considered, and I think the hon. member has raised two that might be considered in that regard. Again, I will pass that on to Alberta Health Services to ensure that our health facilities and the people working in them feel safe and secure and protected.

2:40

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that was 114 questions and responses today coming from 19 different members: nine from the Official Opposition, seven from the government private members area, two from the fourth party, and one from the third party.

Earlier today one of the members participating in Members' Statements extended the time frame from two minutes to three minutes and 20 seconds, which is now going to cause us potentially a problem coming up with Standing Order 7(7). So I will not advise members that it's 3 o'clock when it is 3 o'clock; I would advise members that it's 3 o'clock when it's 3:01:20.

We will proceed with Members' Statements in 15 seconds.

#### **Members' Statements** (continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

#### **Seniors Advisory Council Chair**

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to welcome the new chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. The council is a government appointed body that reports through the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports on matters relating to Alberta seniors. The council gathers information on issues important to seniors, which in turn is used to develop advice on policies, programs, and services for seniors. The council also co-ordinates the annual province-wide Seniors' Week celebrations in June, where Albertans show their appreciation for seniors and their contributions to our communities. In addition, the council participates in research projects and supports community-based workshops for seniors and front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, during my time as chair of this council I had the opportunity to see first-hand how the work of the council and its

members can make a difference in the lives of seniors in Alberta. This includes the government's decision to increase the income thresholds for financial assistance provided to low-income seniors through the Alberta seniors' benefit and special-needs assistance for seniors' programs. I also had the privilege to chair the provincial Demographic Planning Commission, which met with Albertans to capture their views on the needs of an aging population.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the members of the Seniors Advisory Council, both current and past, for their many contributions and services. As chair it truly has been a privilege to work with the hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Her support has been instrumental to the council's success and is deeply appreciated.

I know the Seniors Advisory Council under the expert guidance of the new chair, the hon. Member for Strathcona, will continue to engage with seniors and continue to bring their challenges, needs, and ideas forward to this government.

Thank you, sir.

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

#### Fire Service Exemplary Service Medals

**Mr. Bhullar:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge recipients of Alberta's fire service exemplary service medal awards. I had the pleasure of attending ceremonies in Edmonton last week where the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs presented the medals, and I had the honour of presenting these awards during the ceremonies in Calgary. Presentations were made to firefighters to recognize special achievements or distinguished service.

Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, firefighting is dangerous and difficult work. Firefighters risk their lives daily so people in communities across Alberta can feel safe and secure. They make tremendous sacrifices. Their selfless dedication is a true reflection of Albertans willing to support and protect their neighbours. Albertans admire and appreciate the dedication and service of these individuals, so on behalf of all Albertans I extend a heartfelt thanks to these individuals for helping make our community and families safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

#### Tartan Day

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and share with this Assembly the exciting news that April 6 is Tartan Day. Tartan Day is recognized all around the world as a celebration of Scottish culture and heritage. During these events participants engage in several Scottish themed activities, including highland dancing and pipe bands.

As some of you may know, a tartan refers to the pattern of colours and designs used on Scottish kilts. Each clan in Scotland has its own unique tartan, and they are often treated like a sacred coat of arms. Being of Scottish ancestry myself, my clan's tartan is blue and green. In fact, the famed Black Watch wear the Campbell tartan.

Alberta also has two official tartans, Mr. Speaker, a dress tartan and a regular tartan. Our regular tartan is green, gold, blue, pink, and black, with each colour representing a different part of Alberta's landscape. The green represents Alberta's forests; the gold, our wheat fields; the blue, our clear skies and lakes; the pink, our wild rose; and the black, our coal and oil. The dress tartan includes the same colours as the regular in addition to white, which is in recognition of our winters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the invaluable contribution of Scottish settlers to our history and our cultural makeup. For example, young highlanders were instrumental in the founding of Edmonton House, which is Fort Edmonton, sited on this very location. Culturally their contributions include sports like curling and golf. It is worthy to note that during the period of 1905 to 1970 of our 432 MLAs that sat, 109 were of Scottish descent.

I would now ask all members of this House to join me in wishing everyone a happy Tartan Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Water Management and Allocation

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's World Water Week, and our province is on the brink of a water crisis. In the north the people of Fort Chip and Fort MacKay are afraid to drink the water of the Athabasca River because of contaminants from oil sands development, in central Alberta farmers close to coal-bed methane development can light their tap water on fire, and in the south last year 10 counties declared states of emergency due to drought.

This fall the Minister of Environment will be amending the Water Act to use market-based measures to allocate water. This will expand the current water market system in southern Alberta to cover the entire province. The recommendations we've seen so far will preserve the right for senior licence holders to make decisions about who gets allocated water, remove government oversight and regulation of the transfers, and only allow the public to comment on certain water transfers. Instead of a system that prioritizes water use for ecosystem health and basic human needs, this government will let the right to water be sold to the highest bidder. If there's anything that Albertans know, it's that the highest bidder is not your average, hard-working Alberta family.

By implementing water markets across the province, this government is continuing on with business as usual, commodifying Alberta's resources to promote industrial growth no matter what the cost. Albertans know that the first in time, first in right system is no longer working, and we desperately need an alternative. The government, however, is not planning on consulting Albertans until the summer, when they've already drawn up their plans for the new legislation. The government has already ignored its treaty obligations to First Nations by starting the Water Act review without their free, prior, and informed consent.

Decisions about water are too important to rush. This government needs to involve all Albertans in the water review through a robust and meaningful province-wide consultation process that presents a range of options to Albertans, not just water markets. Most importantly, this government needs to realize that water is not just another resource to be bought and sold on the market. Water is a basic human right. Water is essential to life. Instead of letting money decide where water goes, this government needs to allocate water by priority uses to protect our water for Alberta families, ecosystems, and future generations.

Thank you.

#### Presenting Petitions

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just delighted we still have guests here to witness this. I'd like to present a petition signed by thousands of Albertans who are asking that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to "direct

Alberta Health Services to immediately stop the contracting out of Protective Services; and to direct Alberta Health Services to maintain quality in-house security services to better protect patients and staff.”

Thank you.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have 12 postcards and the required five copies of them from teachers expressing their extreme displeasure in the decreased funding for education based on class size and the downloading of the extra dollars required from the arbitrary decision for the teachers’ salaries onto the school boards.

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

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to present a petition as well on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, which reads similarly to the previous petition.

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to direct Alberta Health Services to immediately stop the contracting out of Protective Services; and to direct Alberta Health Services to maintain quality in-house security services to better protect patients and staff.

This petition has 824 signatures from all parts of Alberta.

Thank you.

## 2:50 **Tabling Returns and Reports**

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

**Mr. Blakett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the appropriate number of copies of my written responses of March 19, 2010, to the questions raised during Culture and Community Spirit’s estimates and business plan debate on February 22, 2010.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Do you have a tabling?

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings. The first is the appropriate number of copies of an e-mail I received from an Alberta foster parent who forwarded to me a copy of a message she sent to several people in Children’s Services and the Premier last May. Her concern is with cuts to funding for adoptive parents. I referred to this in my question earlier today.

My second tabling is the appropriate number of copies of an online petition started by Veronika Muendel, calling on the government to keep the liquid cytology cervical cancer screening labs in Lethbridge, Red Deer, and the U of A hospital. The petition has gathered 1,432 names. Many of these have included comments such as: “If it wasn’t for having this lab, I for one wouldn’t have known that I had cancer cells, and had them removed as fast as possible.”

Thank you.

## **Tablings to the Clerk**

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology, response to Written Question 30 asked for by Mr. Chase on March 15, 2010.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Danyluk, Minister of Infrastructure, responses to questions raised by Mr. Hinman, hon. Member for

Calgary-Glenmore; Mr. Mason, hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood; and Mr. Allred, hon. Member for St. Albert, on February 23, 2010, the Department of Infrastructure main estimates debate.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Goudreau, Minister of Municipal Affairs, pursuant to the Special Areas Act the Special Areas Trust Account financial statements dated December 31, 2008.

## **Projected Government Business**

**The Speaker:** The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At this point I would ask the Government House Leader to share with us the expected government House business for the week following our constituency week breaks, which would commence Monday, April 12, government business commencing April 13.

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

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 13 under government bills for second reading we anticipate Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act; Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2010; and Bill 14, the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010, depending on progress. In Committee of the Whole Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 10, the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010; and Bill 11, the Witness Security Act.

On Wednesday, April 14, under Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act; Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 14, the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010; and for third reading Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 10, the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010; Bill 11, the Witness Security Act, depending on the Order Paper.

On Thursday, April 15, for third reading bills 9, 12, 13, 14, and as per the Order Paper.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, just as a supplement to that, the House reconvenes on the 12th day of April. The 12th and 13th will also be MLA for a Day, so it will be busy with respect to that, but as importantly we will do a special brief ceremony in honour of the late Mr. Babcock, who was the last connection that Canada had with World War I. So there’ll be many military people here as well as we deal with that matter.

## **Orders of the Day**

### **Government Bills and Orders**

#### **Third Reading**

#### **Bill 15**

#### **Appropriation Act, 2010**

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

**Dr. Morton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to move third reading of Bill 15, the Appropriation Act, 2010.

Since February 9 we’ve had six weeks of constructive debate on the estimates. I believe that the majority of the members have concluded that the estimates strike the right balance, and it’s time to pass the Appropriation Act so that the government of Alberta can get on with its business when the new fiscal year begins on April 1, which is one week from today.

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to get an opportunity to speak to the appropriation bill. It's going by so fast, you've got to move quick here, and I didn't move fast enough before.

In third reading we are speaking to the anticipated effect of the implementation of the bill, in this case the anticipated effect of the budget, which is what the appropriation bill is. There are a couple of observations I have about the process this year. In fact, the minister of finance alluded to it in his opening comments, that they felt they'd really spent enough time on this, and they'd like to move on.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Not surprisingly, I have a very different take on that in a couple of different areas. I continue to underline my concerns with the way the estimates debates are set up in Committee of Supply. Although, certainly, some of my colleagues are fans of moving it into the committees and the more informal setting, I'm not particularly a fan of that, but more than that is the lack of time to debate.

Some people could jump to their feet and say: you know, we can prove that you've actually got more time now than you did many, many years ago. I would say: yes, and what was the budget then? We're now debating a total budget of many billions of dollars. I think it's sort of in the \$35 billion range at this point. I think that when I first started, it was \$17 billion. We essentially have the same amount of time, so we're debating twice as much money in the same amount of time. When I started in 1997, there were under 20 departments, and we're now dealing with 26 departments.

The way this is set up right now is that it's essentially one department each time a committee meets, and two committees meet every night, which makes it difficult for people who want to represent their constituents on more than one issue at a time without dashing back and forth between committees. Of course, there's a speakers list, which the committee chair is holding, and your chances of getting on the speaking list in two committees in one night are slim to none.

So we are debating far more money in the same amount or even less time, and now what we've had is – and the government occasionally says: oh, well, if you're complaining about debating the Health budget, which is, again, several billion dollars . . .

**Dr. Taft:** Close to \$15 billion.

**Ms Blakeman:** . . . close to \$15 billion in the same amount of time that you're debating a much smaller financial commitment from some of the others. The response is: well, I mean, you could just forgo debating the other departments and split your Health debate into two nights. Well, you know, I'm charged by my constituents to be here and to pay attention to all ministries. Granted, you may not give them all the same weight, but I don't think it's appropriate to not examine the budgets of a department just because the government refuses to give more time to a larger department. So the effect of what we are seeing now is that we're debating the effect, the outcome, of a budget process which is twice as much money in the same or less amount of time, and significantly more departments are being debated.

Then the new process, that I noticed this year, was a reluctance and/or an attempt to influence and/or a flat-out refusal to answer the questions that we were not able to have enough time to get on the record and have a back-and-forth discussion with the minister. It has

become, unfortunately, traditional that certainly members of the opposition and occasionally members of the government backbench will find that the clock has run out on them, and in the last 90 seconds they will say: "Well, here are the rest of the questions I had. I'll just read them into the record." The ministers and their staff would take those questions and would produce them as written answers and mail them to us usually some time in the summer. Seeing as we're supposed to be voting on the final version of the bill today, getting responses to questions in three or four months' time is not incredibly helpful.

3:00

What we were seeing is that we actually had a staffer from a minister's office come over and meet with some of the Official Opposition staff, and he indicated that he really just didn't see what the value of these questions was. He didn't understand it himself, so he really didn't think that we should be asking them, and did we understand that some poor sod in the minister's office or department was going to have to answer these questions? Well, yes, I do understand that, and I'd like an answer. That's why I'm asking the questions. I don't have enough resources, either personally or in our caucus, to be able to be making up questions just as a make-work project for ministerial staff. I ask the questions because I want the answers.

In response to the observation from this individual that he didn't see the value in these questions and didn't understand how it all pertained to everything, I thought: well, am I not remembering things accurately? It seems to me that I'm getting a heck of a lot less information in the budget documents than I used to get. I went to the library and pulled the debates for Health, which is a big ministry, but it's also a consistent ministry. It hasn't disappeared and reappeared. For example, you know, those of us that have been here long enough know that consumer and corporate affairs, the purpose of it and the legislative responsibilities, are now under Service Alberta, but if you were trying to compare the consumer and corporate affairs budget, you'd be hard-pressed to do it.

Education got grouped in with Advanced Ed and then taken apart again. Culture, near and dear to my heart, completely disappeared when it got taken into community development along with seniors and gambling and AADAC and horse racing and a whole bunch of other things. Health was a department that was Health in 1985, it was Health in 1995, it was Health in 2005, and it's Health today.

As I started to compare these, I thought: "No. I am right." There was significantly more information available about where the money was going, how it was being broken down, how many FTEs there were. Way back when it even said how they were distributed, like for each program how many staff worked there. These are some of the questions where I now find myself saying: "Well, what are these programs that are funded under this one line item? How many people worked there?" Well, you can find where the FTEs are if you go to a completely different set of books, and it's in the back of the government business plan. You can actually get a listing of the FTEs by department but not broken down by program.

If you want to know how many people were actually working in a particular program, if you happen to know what the program is, believe you me, you're not going to get it out of these budget documents. We have such a roll-up now that in some of the departments you're getting maybe 10 breakdowns, and that's it. Well, actually, in Health you've got \$9 billion in one line item. No explanation. Nine billion.

**An Hon. Member:** It's not that much, Laurie.



**Ms Blakeman:** I'm absolutely serious. In this budget document on page 235, for anyone following along at home, vote 8.0.1, base operating funding for Alberta Health Services, \$9,037,593,000. That's it. No explanation of how that breaks down. I don't know how many people that covers. I don't know what programs or services are delivered under that \$9 billion. It's \$9 billion in one line item.

So back to the nice young man that came over and said that, well, if we could just come up with, you know, five questions that we'd like to write down, he could make sure that they would get answered for us, which rather made our staff giggle, the thought that we would only have five questions. This is what we're now trying to deal with: a lot more money in the budget, more departments, less time to debate it, less information in the budget. Do I really want to be standing up there and begging a minister to tell me, you know, what the programs are that are funded under this particular line item, how many people are working there, and all of the other kind of really plain, factual information?

You know, there's nothing nefarious there. There are no tricky questions there. I'm not going to be able to jump out and sucker punch somebody based on giving me some very straightforward information from breaking down some programs into a number of different line items. There's nothing tricky there, but for some reason there's a big conspiracy theory here that we have to hide all this information and roll it up and roll it up and roll it up in line items until I'm sure the government would be delighted if they could manage to come forward with a budget that had one line item and it was the whole damn budget and that's it, thank you very much, go home.

What's the effect of this budget? The effect of this budget is that we are able to show Albertans less and less information every single year. They're able to access these documents and glean less and less and less information every single year.

You can also roll into this the supplementary supply budgets. Now, it will be very interesting to see in this budget year of 2010-11 if there actually is a supplementary supply budget. Boy, that will tell us some stuff. In the past, you know, as this House has often heard me debate, we've had two supplementary supply budgets – that's been very common – with over a billion dollars allocated in those. That's \$2 billion extra a year, and for that we get a whole three-hour afternoon to debate it. I don't understand why the government is so reluctant to let maybe members of their own backbench – I don't know – certainly members of the opposition, members of the media, members of the public actually look at the budget document and be able to tell what's going on and how the money has been allocated. That's part of the transparency and accountability.

If you won't give us the information up front, it does make it much harder for us to come back to you during one of your wonderful quarterly updates and be able to hold you accountable through that information if we couldn't tell what was going on the first time. This is not for any lack of intelligence on this side. You know, I regularly sit in a caucus with two people who have "doctor" in front of their name, one from an academic background and one a medical doctor. I mean, I'm not sitting here with stupid people, and I'm not sitting here with lazy people.

**Mr. MacDonald:** You notice I'm not in that group.

**Ms Blakeman:** No, no. I included you in the second group. Come on.

That's the effect of what I see as the point we've come to with this bill. I don't understand what the problem is. I don't understand what the government is afraid of. The government has an over-

whelming majority here. They're going to get their budget passed; there's no question about that. What is the problem in giving everybody else enough information to be able to verify what the government is saying? Wouldn't that be easier, actually?

If the government makes a statement, we can all look at the documents and go: "Yeah, there it is, right there. No problem." But it does cause people to see conspiracy because we look at these budget documents and go, "I have no idea what's included in that budget," and the minister or the Premier says: "This is the way it is. Just trust us. Take our word. It's in there." Well, no, I'm not willing to trust you or take your word.

I mean, this afternoon we had an exchange between the Member for Edmonton-Riverview, who's the critic on Health and Wellness, and the minister of health about: "Verify for us, give us the proof, show us exactly where the claim is being made by Alberta Health Services that they have found efficiencies of \$700 million. Show us where this actually is." We get a very roundabout statement: "Well, don't worry about it. In the five-year plan you'll see where it is." I'm waiting for that one. Maybe that's where we get the one-liner that explains the entire budget and breaks down absolutely nothing.

I continue to wonder what else is going on here, and you guys aren't helping me. You're not assuring me. You're not making it easy for me to believe what you're saying is true. You make it really hard. You know, the media says to me: "Laurie, you know, try and get all your questions spoken out loud during those exchanges with the minister because we're following along. Make sure that they table the responses in the Assembly." In the past, when they've just mailed it to our offices, the media were following along. They saw a question; they see no answer. They don't know what the response was, and they have no ability to dig around and find it because it wasn't made public.

3:10

So I'll give you credit on this one. By having them now tabled in the Assembly, they become a sessional paper, and citizens from Alberta and the media, members of the opposition can get access to the written responses from the ministers. I hope those are good, clear responses because everybody is going to be looking at them now.

That's the observation that I make from this budget, and there have been a number of others. See, this is the other part of this whole process that just strikes me as neutered to the point of silliness. You know, the government has organized to have all of the various estimates debates in Committee of Supply voted on on one day, one big vote. The concession there – and I was one of the ones negotiating it at the time – was to allow any member, actually, to request that a department be pulled out. If we wanted to support the whole budget but just could not support what was going on in Infrastructure, for example, we could vote no to the Infrastructure budget and yes to the rest of the budget. Well, I'm sure that when we did that, it actually didn't cross our minds that we'd end up with a situation where we didn't like what was happening in individual departments but we didn't like the whole budget either, and the government made sure that none of these votes were debatable at the time.

We now have this interesting little exercise that we go through where we pulled out all of these departments. We vote no, no, no to them, and then there is the final budget. In this case, in trying to allow the government to get on with its business and make sure that people get paid and that certain programs that we think are really important that protect vulnerable Albertans and, you know, invest in our economy and things like that could move forward, we supported the overall budget. You know, it really does become a very odd

exercise when you're just pulling these departments out and there's no additional time to talk about it or to talk about why you've pulled it out. It's not as though you've got that time back in that original Committee of Supply estimates debate, in which the Official Opposition is getting an hour of back-and-forth.

I had a situation where I was asking a 30-second question in context, and the minister was giving me a four-and-a-half-minute response, God bless him, but at the end of an hour I hadn't even put half of the questions that I had on the record. You know, nobody was deliberately being obstructive in that particular case. My questions were fairly short, the minister's answers were very thorough, but at the end of an hour I'd managed to get about nine questions on the record. Considering that I'm talking about the Environment portfolio, what is probably, certainly for our rebranding exercise and our image and our economy, incredibly important to Alberta, that's all I could get out of it. Then the third and fourth parties get 20 minutes. Then it goes to any other member that wishes to speak, which tends to be the government backbenchers. So you're not able to get a heck of a lot of information in that whole exchange. This is a flawed process that gets more and more flawed.

Two last things I want to put on the record are both concerned with safety. I've had another request from my snowmobiling buddy Rudi Haak, known as Haakeye, wondering why we do not make helmets mandatory in Alberta for any off-highway vehicle. I agree with him. The rate that we are killing kids riding on all-terrain vehicles because they're not required by law to have helmets I think is truly a huge problem.

The last issue is about . . . [Ms Blakeman's speaking time expired]  
Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure for me to rise and speak to this bill in third reading. I have to say that one of the things that I wanted to do was to talk about the fact of talking to my constituents about the balance that we have in terms of our spending, the balance that we have in terms of, frankly, some of the areas where we've shaved some of the spending in 13 different departments. I think it's important that Albertans understand that if you were to remove the things that we did on the health budget, overall we're well within the population plus inflation type numbers that we hold as a policy for this government. Certainly, Albertans hold health care as probably their number one priority, and I think it's important that we recognize that.

I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member's comments, that environment is very high on the list of priorities for this government and how we are projecting ourselves to the world. I think the budget reflects the priorities of Albertans. It certainly reflects the priorities that I see and hear from my constituents, and I'm very pleased about that. I've had some very positive responses from them as it relates to what we're doing.

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

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Bill 2 Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move third reading of Bill 2, the Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

This bill, if passed, would paraphrase the Health Professions Act by requiring professional regulatory organizations to consult with the ministers responsible and consider their comments prior to removing or approving a program of study for registration requirements. This omnibus bill would ensure that this provision is included in the Architects Act; the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Act; the Land Surveyors Act; the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act; the Regulated Accounting Profession Act; and the Veterinary Profession Act.

If passed, Bill 2 would also update the language in the Agrology Profession Act and the Regulated Forestry Profession Act, both of which have similar provisions already in place.

I appreciate the participation of Assembly members, and I thank all members for their thoughtful comments and discussion.

I move third reading of Bill 2, the Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak briefly to Bill 2. We're opposing this piece of legislation. It's unnecessary. It doesn't have support of professional associations if they speak candidly. Frankly, it doesn't have support of all members of the government caucus either. This is an example of redundant, pointless legislation. I have no idea who is driving this or why, but I do know and we do know that there's not much support for this out there in the community; there's not much support for it here in the Assembly either. I'm sure it'll pass because the government will use its heavy hand to force it through, but the simple fact is that this is just an unnecessary piece of legislation.

It feels like make-work activity here. Maybe that's what happens when you have so many members in a government Assembly. This is probably more of a candidate for the eyes and review of the Member for Battle River-Wainwright, who I think is going to chair a red tape review or stupid rules committee or something. Maybe this bill should come back next year to be eliminated because it, from all our information, is quite unnecessary, so this will not gain our support.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is any other hon. member wishing to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 2 read a third time]

## 3:20 Bill 4 Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Red Deer-South on behalf of the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 4, the Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010, is an important piece of legislation to industry. It is not adding to the regulatory burden for industry. Rather, it provides protection to industry by harmonizing our legislation with the federal government's, which was amended in June of 2009. These rules already exist as mandated by the federal government.

Matching provincial legislation to federal legislation as much as possible helps to achieve standard conditions for the movement of

dangerous goods within provinces and across Canada. By mirroring the federal legislation, we are able to ensure our place in enforcing the rules and monitoring industry. If we did not mirror the federal government, we run the risk of losing our jurisdiction over industry in Alberta and our ability to enforce the rules as we see appropriate. This legislation actually provides some protection to industry here. The changes are minor and mainly administrative in nature. This legislation will help ensure to industry that it continues to be business as usual in Alberta.

I'd like to thank the members for the debate and support this bill has received so far.

It's now my pleasure to move third reading of Bill 4, Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre on the bill.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in third reading on Bill 4, the Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010. When the members of my caucus had spoken to this bill earlier, we had raised a couple of concerns around the time limit for prosecution, and this is a sort of ongoing theme that I've seen a number of times now. It seems that when it's in the government's favour, then it becomes two years at a maximum, but when the government wants to control the process or they prefer it a different way, it flips around. In this case what we've got is two years or when the alleged offence first comes to the attention of the director, whichever comes later. You can end up hanging some people out to dry here for a very, very long time if it comes to the attention of the director some way into the process and they take some time to investigate it.

I'm seeing this particular clause turn up more and more often. It isn't the first time I've seen it. I have a concern about that because I don't see the particular justification for it. You know, this is a petroleum province. We transport that product back and forth across this province all the time, lots of it. We need strong environmental protection, strong cleanup, accountability, the resources to enforce it, the monitoring and enforcement around it. I think some of the clauses in this bill work against that.

The second piece that we had raised at the time was the director ordering the \$10,000 administration fee payout. I really question this. I'm sure it's legal. Well, no, I'm not sure it's legal. It's not as though this government hasn't put forward legislation that, in fact, wasn't legal before. But this is like a get out of jail for free card. It's like, you know, a discount coupon that seems to be issued here because if the director is of the opinion that a contravention has occurred, they can go directly to the person and say: "Look, you can pay this administrative penalty right now. If you don't, then we're going to go through the whole process. If you're found guilty at the end of it, then you're into a much higher penalty." I found that really odd. They can pay this administration fee. It's not a fine. It's not a levy.

What is it they do in the courts where they plead guilty without appearing to plead guilty? No contest or something? That's what's going on here. I mean, either you did wrong or you didn't. Sorry, I don't know what the legal term is, but you know what I'm talking about.

**Mr. Hancock:** Nolo contendere.

**Ms Blakeman:** Okay. There you go. I pretty much had it right.

Yeah. They can pay the fee outright, or they can appeal and take

the process. But if that goes against them, well, they're in big trouble.

It's probably, you know: if I got caught with this, no, I wouldn't be saying that. Well, let's say someone gets caught with this, and they look at this on a balance and go: "You know what? This is the cost of doing business. I can far more likely convince the director that this is an administrative error. I'll pay the 10 grand, and I'm out of here."

Those were the issues that we had with this bill. I mean, I'm not going to go to the mat on this one. In particular, the first issue that I raised I'm seeing happening repeatedly in what the government is doing. I raise my eyebrow in question of what the real outcome of that will end up being, not to the good of the Alberta public, I am arguing.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in third reading, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there any other hon. member wishing to speak on Bill 4?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a third time]

## Bill 6

### Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move third reading of Bill 6, the Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010.

This bill introduces changes that will help protect Alberta's emergency partners, especially search and rescue teams, from liability claims. Search and rescue groups are an important part of our emergency system, and they need to know that they can do their jobs without worrying about unnecessary lawsuits. The amendments will also support municipalities by formalizing regional co-operation among communities. This will help municipalities provide a cross-jurisdictional response to a disaster, better serving their residents during a crisis. By supporting these amendments to Bill 6, we're demonstrating the government's commitment to providing safe and strong communities.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support that Bill 6 has received from both sides of the House and anticipate support with third reading. I thank all members for their comments and discussion.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre on Bill 6.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am, again, pleased to rise and speak in third reading on Bill 6, the Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010. Now, this bill I am pleased to support. I think this is designed to better protect search and rescue workers and the organizations from lawsuits. Considering the very close to home tragedies that we've seen with the avalanches in B.C., this particular act probably has much more meaning for us today than it might have when it was first introduced. This had been an issue, I think, that had been raised, certainly, in the media, the protection that was available for search and rescue organizations and their liability. This should allow for protection for them as well as the regionalization of emergency management responsibilities.

3:30

I'm expecting that those organizations will get protected. I'm expecting that we will have better regionalization of those emergency management responsibilities. I know that my colleagues have already spoken to this bill in favour of it. We in the Liberal caucus have always maintained that local decision-making is generally preferable, and this bill certainly enhances that opportunity here.

Just one last plea that I have is around search and rescue. One of the most important things for us living here and tending to play across the mountains in B.C. is avalanche awareness and training.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Particularly for snowmobilers.

**Ms Blakeman:** Well, for snowmobilers and others that are going to be in the backcountry where they're in that area.

I'm aware that this government withdrew or minimized its funding to the Avalanche Centre some time ago, and I wish they would reconsider that. I think that's an excellent organization that does excellent work and was more deserving of support. I know that the argument at the time was: well, you know, that's a B.C. problem, and we're in Alberta, and we don't need to be funding that. Yeah. But a lot of Albertans, as we know, go across that Great Divide into B.C., and it does affect us. Our access to that kind of information, training, equipment, and all else that goes with it is very important to us.

I appreciate what's being done here around the search and rescue groups. I know that they will appreciate it. I actually have a dog at this point that probably could do search and rescue, and I don't have the time to do the training, but my hat's off to those search and rescue groups that do work with dogs. It's a tremendous commitment from the owners. I know that they train every single week, and then when they're asked, they get on a plane with their dog and fly all over the world in order to dig through and hopefully find people still alive but sometimes not. I'm really glad to see that organizations like that are getting some support through this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does any other hon. member wish to speak?  
The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose to close the debate.

**Mr. Bhullar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members who participated in debate on Bill 6. I'd like to thank members from both sides of the House that have in fact spoken in favour of this bill. This bill will help protect Alberta's emergency partners, especially search and rescue teams, from liability claims. These groups are an important part of our emergency system, and they need to know that they can do their jobs without worrying about frivolous lawsuits. The amendments will also support municipalities by formalizing regional co-operation amongst communities. This will help municipalities provide a cross-jurisdictional response to a disaster, better serving their residents during a crisis.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd once again like to thank everybody for speaking to it, and I anticipate their support.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no others wishing to speak on the bill, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a third time]

### Bill 8

#### Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2010

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

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise for third reading of Bill 8, the Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2010. I think we've covered most of the issues around this act. I don't think there have been too many significant ones. I'd just remind everybody that this Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act is generally amended every single year. It ensures that Alberta maintains a fair, equitable, and competitive tax regime.

Most of the amendments are primarily of a housekeeping nature, Mr. Speaker. Three of the particular measures that were of more significance than of a housekeeping nature were a clarification of the rules which allowed corporations to file returns in currencies like the U.S. dollar or the British pound in responses to changes that were made to federal legislation; the second one was changes to the regulation-making authority in the act to ensure that new refund interest rates can be made applicable to prior periods; and the third one was a change that brings Alberta legislation in line with the federal fairness provision, allowing the minister to waive interest or penalties in certain situations.

I believe I've addressed most of the questions or concerns. I urge all members to support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments from the Member for Battle River-Wainwright. We will support this piece of legislation, but I do want to make comments about some things that I wish were in it that are not. That could be because similar kinds of issues have been brought forward in previous versions of this legislation.

The Member for Battle River-Wainwright quite properly noted that pretty well every year this bill comes before us so that we can address a range of corporate tax issues. In the past we've addressed things like royalty deductions and scientific and research and experimental tax credits and those kinds of things, and I wish that roughly parallel matters were in this year's version. Maybe they'll be in next year's. The new parliamentary secretary – is that the right? – assistant for finance might take note of this.

My comments relate to two issues. This member, in particular, will know that this is something very close to my heart, and that's the sustainability of Alberta's prosperity, the sustainability of Alberta's economy. I have a deep, deep concern that we're living on a kind of energy bubble in this province and we're not doing enough to either save for the future or to diversify. I am concerned that initiatives around sustainability aren't there, and I'd like them to be there. Some of those might have to do with how we handle corporate taxes.

I'm just going to ask in the context of this piece of legislation for the parliamentary assistant to perhaps take some initiatives to look at a couple of issues related to sustainability so that when this bill comes before us next year, we might see something different. I think it would be very valuable for this member to actually take a look at the long-term trends of corporate profits in Alberta compared to other provinces and other jurisdictions of the world. We could either look at corporate profits before taxes or corporate profits after taxes. But either way, if the member takes a hard look at this – and maybe he and I can sit down at some point outside of this Assembly and share some information – I think he'll find that corporate profits in Alberta measured as a percentage of the GDP or measured on a per capita basis are absolutely enormous, far, far beyond other provinces'. That's not necessarily a bad thing. I mean, profits get reinvested. Profits create jobs. We'd certainly much rather have profitable corporations than losing corporations. But there is a question of balance here.

The first time I took note of this issue was actually in a report by the TD Bank. It was one of their reports that called Alberta a northern tiger or western tiger. I think it was northern tiger. They made note in there about Alberta's corporate profit to GDP ratio being something like 22 per cent. In other words, 22 per cent of Alberta's whole gross domestic product was corporate profit. They commented on how high that was compared to, say, Ontario, which is a huge corporate centre, or anywhere else in Canada. It caught my eye, and it kind of worked away in my mind. I ended up doing some other research on this, and, lo and behold, the TD Bank is right. We do allow our corporations in this province to make huge sums of money, and they've been doing that for a long time.

3:40

There's a dynamic here that needs to be considered. Big profits are great, and they might indicate really well companies or wonderful innovation or something like that. But if there's an effective marketplace where there's genuine competition, profits are always brought back down to a mean because everybody else starts competing and bringing those profits back down to an average. What we've seen in Alberta, I suspect, is no correction on that. In fact, we've seen corporate profits over the last 20 years rise and rise and rise and rise, not just in dollar terms but as a proportion of the economy.

I'm not sure if I was very clear with the member there or anybody else – the minister of finance might be listening – but I think that it's time to have a debate in this province around corporate profits. I link that to the issue of sustainability because one of my concerns as a citizen of this province is that the incredible wealth of Alberta is going somewhere. We have a GDP here that's per capita way bigger than anybody else's, but I don't know where it's going. I don't see it. I mean, we spend quite a lot on government services, but we're not out of line with anybody else there. Albertans are prosperous, but I'd really like to know where this great huge amount of wealth in Alberta is going. I'm concerned about that, not because I need more wealth particularly, Mr. Speaker, but because we need to be accumulating some of that to save for the future. This is an issue, in my view, of sustainability.

The second question that I wanted to raise in this context of corporate profits is around economic diversification. I did note in my opening comments that when this legislation has come before the Assembly in previous years, we've addressed things like royalty deductions and tax credits and things like that. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar today raised a very interesting issue, which is the fact that we now have Imperial Oil and Exxon contracting to South Korea to build huge vessels, enormous vessels, that will be used in the Fort McMurray area. They're going to be loaded on ships, brought over the Pacific, barged up rivers, trucked through the United States – Idaho, Montana, and so on – all the way to Fort McMurray while we have people in south Edmonton and probably in Red Deer and Calgary who are some of the world's best metal fabricators looking for work.

You know what? Where does that fit into corporate taxes and corporate royalty deductions? We let Imperial Oil deduct the costs of that from their royalty payments, so we're actually paying, as the citizens of Alberta, for hundreds of millions of dollars of work to go to South Korea. I think we need to rethink that. I know that there are metal fabrication shops in Alberta looking for work. I think if we want to build the long-term diversity and strength of this economy, we don't just want to roll over all the time for Imperial Oil and Exxon and the other companies. Sometimes we need to take a stand and say: "Hey. For the privilege and right of doing business in Alberta, there are some conditions. One of those might just be

fabricating your material here, or, at least, we're not going to give you a royalty credit, royalty deductions, and a tax deduction for doing it in South Korea." That doesn't make sense.

Those were two issues. Just to quickly summarize – maybe the Member for Battle River-Wainwright and I can sit down at some point – I would like there to be a debate on the scale of corporate profits in this province. Secondly, I would like there to also be a debate about how much we allow huge corporations to deduct from their royalty payments or their tax payments for work that they're contracting to other countries. It just doesn't necessarily make sense. It needs to be justified to me, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that, maybe we'll have that discussion before this bill comes back next year. For this year I'll tell you that I think we expect to support this.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no other hon. member wishing to speak on the bill, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a third time]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 13 Securities Amendment Act, 2010

[Adjourned debate March 23: Mr. Olson]

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon to discuss Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2010. [interjections] Shall I continue, Mr. Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, please. You have the floor.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you. This further harmonizes the passport system that originated from the 2004 memorandum of understanding between the federal and provincial governments, excluding Ontario. Certainly, Bill 13 makes amendments to support Canada's conversion to the international financial reporting standards, creates a framework for regulating credit-rating organizations, and allows the Alberta Securities Commission to impose sanctions for late filing of disclosure that are similar to what occurs in B.C., in Vancouver. There are also, as I understand it, amendments to ensure that Alberta's registration regime is harmonized with other provinces.

Certainly, whenever members of the general public or the investment community talk about securities, they always talk about the national securities regulator or what we have or have not worked out across the country. Some provinces have taken their issues to the courts, and that's fine. That's their prerogative. But whenever we think of securities and security legislation, the number one issue is the fact that currently there are 13 provincial and territorial securities regulators across Canada rather than a single national regulator.

Mr. Flaherty, the hon. Minister of Finance in the dominion government, has been quoted as stating that Canada is the only industrialized country without a single securities regulator. The *Globe and Mail* reported that Canada is one of only two countries in the 103-member International Organization of Securities Commissions without a national overseer.

Now, over the last few years all the provinces, excluding the province of Ontario, have begun to implement a passport system which mutually recognizes the rules within each provincial regulator in order to facilitate transactions across each and every border. The federal government has been advocating for a national regulator with resistance, as I said, from B.C., Alberta, and Quebec. British Columbia has recently softened to the idea, but Alberta and Quebec continue to oppose any implementation of a national regulator. This whole national securities debate and discussion will unfold with different legislation.

3:50

Certainly, with Bill 13, as I understand it and our research concludes, these amendments will allow for the harmonization or mutual recognition of securities regulators in Canada. Amendments have been made every year since 2004 to securities legislation across the country to bring the language of the legislation onto a common baseline. I understand there is a lot of back and forth between provinces over legislative changes. As one province would amend their legislation, then others would have to re-amend their own to bring it in line with others and so on. The passport system is continually updated and harmonized as other jurisdictions amend their respective regulations.

Now, the Alberta Securities Commission regulates individuals and entities in Alberta that advise in securities, trade in securities, or raise money through issuing securities. The basic element of a securities regulator is to protect investors. We know through international financial events that have occurred in the last two years that some investors – no other way to put it – have been fleeced by regulations that have not had the interests of investors first and foremost but had the interests of a number of promoters, some of whom now have a chance to consider their actions from the confines of prison. Hopefully, some of those high-profile cases will send a strong message that all laws will be vigorously enforced and that those that break them will pay the ultimate penalty, which is the loss of their freedom.

That being said, according to Department of Finance officials Canada's securities regulations officers are very good at regulation. Canada has a good record on this front, whether it's the banking sector or the investment community. We have a very good record, and we need to maintain that record. All governments as regulators, or the ones that make the law and the ones that are willing to enforce the law, can ensure that both investors and promoters have confidence in the system. To date when we have each province and territory with a commission of one sort or another, each dealing with their own securities regulations, it seems to be working. We'll see what the future unfolds. But, certainly, Mr. Speaker, when we look at Bill 13, it's something that, hopefully, each and every member of this Assembly will support.

I certainly at this time would like to thank the hon. minister of finance for the opportunity that has been provided to our research staff to have a discussion on this bill. With that, I will conclude my remarks. Hopefully, we will see this bill passed, and hopefully in the future there will not be any scandals in this country or this province like what is currently unfolding on Wall Street and some of the other major financial capitals of the world. We have to have a sound regulatory process. Hopefully, everyone can work together and design and implement and enforce the regulatory process. That's, again, good for investors and good for promoters. I'm confident that can be done and this country can continue to be rock solid as far as the financial investment community is concerned.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other hon. members to join the debate?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a second time]

#### Bill 14

#### Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010

[Adjourned debate March 23: Mr. Blackett]

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We are willing to support this bill. It's a minor change but I'm sure one that any municipality that has to pay for its own police force will appreciate because it's correcting a hitch in the git-along that happened when there was some other legislative work done and we ended up with fines.

**An Hon. Member:** What was that? Sorry.

**Ms Blakeman:** A hitch in your git-along. You're from Alberta. You know what that means.

It resulted in a situation where fines that were levied upon drivers misbehaving on the highways, for example, were allocated to the municipality in which the deed was done rather than the fine going to the municipality that was paying the police officer or bylaw officer who was issuing the fine. We have a very particular way of allocating finances to municipalities to pay for their police services. I don't know that everyone always agrees with it, but at least it was improved from when I was the Solicitor General and Justice minister critic way back when, in which it was quite unfair.

Anyway, this is a fairly minor change that does tie the fine to the municipality that provides the funding for the police force. It basically realigns the Traffic Safety Act with the Police Act. I know that the minister had approached me, I think, hopeful at one point that it could have been under miscellaneous statutes, which is a minor change. Nonetheless, it is a change, so not appropriate for miscellaneous statutes. I'm very happy to support it in second reading as a stand-alone bill: Bill 14, Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a second time]

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

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

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

4:00

#### Bill 10

#### Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010

**The Chair:** Are there any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that my

colleague the critic for Justice has spoken to this bill. I'm struggling a bit more with it. I had hoped to see something happening under this that would deal with the enormous surplus that has been created in this fund, and that's not being addressed in what we have before us. Instead, it's designed as a disincentive, and it's really meant to increase the power of the province to go into civil court and get the proceeds of crime, which will likely further enhance the victims of crime fund. My frustration for that is that so far we seem to have a government policy of just hoarding money in that fund rather than using the money to benefit Albertans. God knows, there are enough of them that really need the money from this fund.

Now, there seems to be a way of distributing this fund that does deal with the sort of established or – I don't know if it's appropriate to say – more common ways that we think of a victim of crime. For example, my colleague was a bystander and was hurt in the commission of a crime, and, you know, he receives payment out of that fund to assist him. That we seem to have gotten a handle on.

But when we look at things like funding for sexual assault centres, I had to campaign long and hard in order to get the government to provide operational funding to sexual assault centres because at that time they didn't get operational funding. They had to patch together, stitch together a patchwork of different project and program funds in order to be able to pay for what they were doing, with the most bizarre rules and regulations. You know, they could get money to pay for counselling for someone but only if they were going to court. If you walked in and said, "Well, I don't know if I'm going to go to court on the sexual assault that I've suffered," well, then, you know, they couldn't pay for your counselling. It's just stupid.

I'm a little frustrated by this bill in that, you know, it's the result of a Supreme Court ruling where they found in relation to Ontario's Civil Remedies Act that it was constitutional and within the province's jurisdiction and right to establish mechanisms by which to recoup money from crime. They can sell property and seize things, and they can also kind of realize capital gains and things like that. It's expanding the scope of the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act, allows for broader purposes. This is more of what I was looking for: that it would allow public bodies such as municipalities to apply for the costs of crime, including recovering the cost of destroying or modifying dangerous or illegal property. Again, that's about getting the money, not about spending the money, and I do not understand why we continue to hoard and gain.

When I was the Justice critic, they had a surplus of \$3.5 million – and I think it went up to \$4 million – in the victims of crime fund at that time. We're now – what? – eight years down the road or 10 years down the road, and it's \$45 million, I think. It's 10 times that amount. Why are we hoarding this money? Now this is going to give the government the ability to go and get more of it.

You know, I understand the point behind it. I know that my colleague is supportive and has put us on record as a caucus as supporting this. I still have not had my questions answered about why this fund doesn't implement some of the things that we clearly need to have implemented and done in this province around victims, around prevention, around bullying, around hate crimes, around education, all those opportunities that could be enhanced through this fund, and still the government sits on it going: "No, no, no. We can't spend it on that program, only on this one." And the money continues to rack up.

I'll support the bill, but I sure don't understand why we can't see something in front of us that dealt with how the money would be expended for the benefit of the province and for prevention purposes and victim support more than what we've seen.

Those are my concerns around that bill. Thank you for letting me put them on the record.

**The Chair:** Does any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?  
Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 10 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

### **Bill 11** **Witness Security Act**

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Dr. Taft:** Mr. Chairman, it would be difficult to disagree with this bill, I think. When we're dealing with issues of protecting people who have the courage to step forward and support justice by disclosing information or otherwise sharing material with the Crown prosecutor or others that will lead to an arrest and then prosecution, I think we need to support those people. If at times those people are endangered because of the stands they've taken, I think that as a society and a government and a Legislature we need to make sure those people are protected.

I think that at a time when we're seeing increasing concern with organized crime in Alberta – with gangs, with related issues, sometimes gangs with national and international ties – we need to make sure that we do everything we can to prosecute those people and to drive them out of this province. If that means supporting witnesses who will testify or share information against them, then let's do it.

The way we look at this bill, this legislation establishes a provincial witness protection program, and it's a good idea. My comments on this are that short and that clear. I can tell you that I enthusiastically support this bill. I think it's the right move, and I'm confident our entire caucus does.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Does any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?  
Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 11 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**4:10**

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd move that the committee rise and report bills 10 and 11.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

**Mr. Lund:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 10, Bill 11.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Having heard the report, does the Assembly concur in the report?

**Hon. Members:** Concur.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed? So ordered.

### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

#### Bill 15 Appropriation Act, 2010 (continued)

[Adjourned debate March 25: Mr. Horner]

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we've had a lot to say about Bill 15. There are a lot of issues outstanding with how this government develops its budget and what's exactly in the budget. Certainly, whenever we are looking at ways for this government to reduce its deficit, there are a lot of suggestions that could be made. One is the size of the cabinet. We've talked about this earlier. We could also reduce the number of MLAs. We're going up to 87. It's sort of ironic that at the same time that we're going to expand the number of MLAs, we want teachers to work harder, we want nurses to work harder, we want doctors to work harder for less, but we're going to get more MLAs.

Alberta Health Services. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview talked about that yesterday at length and again today, the \$700 million in efficiencies. It's in the speech, but you're going to have to show us.

One thing that we never heard from the government since – and

we had a vigorous debate in budget estimates. We were promised a lot of information in writing from the minister of finance – I'm still waiting – on how we could control our farm fuel benefit programs to make sure that farmers that are eligible are getting the money, not individuals that are ineligible. That's a hundred-million-dollar program. If we could find \$30 million in efficiencies there, that would work.

Biofuels. The megabucks that are going into that: perhaps we could have a value audit on that, Mr. Speaker.

The travel and the hosting. Now, we are looking at the tab coming in for the party in Vancouver. Are we just transferring some of the travel and some of the hosting costs to other people within the department so it doesn't show up in the *Alberta Gazette*? [interjections] I'm sorry, sir? The Minister of Transportation: it's the first time all week I haven't heard him whenever he spoke.

Now, we could certainly stretch out the budget, Mr. Speaker, the budget for capital projects. The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere talked about that yesterday. I think there are efficiencies in that budget if we were to spend a little less . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, it's 4:15. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but in accordance with Standing Order 64(5) the chair is required to put the question to the House on the appropriation bill on the Order Paper for third reading.

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a third time]

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

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the progress today I would move that we adjourn until Monday, April 12, at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:16 p.m. to Monday, April 12, at 1:30 p.m.]







## Table of Contents

Introduction of Guests .....	663
Members' Statements	
Father Michael Joseph Troy, CSSp .....	664
Connor Yuzwenko-Martin .....	664
Earth Hour .....	665
Seniors Advisory Council Chair .....	673
Fire Service Exemplary Service Medals .....	674
Tartan Day .....	674
Water Management and Allocation .....	674
Oral Question Period	
Funding for Human Services .....	665
Vancouver Winter Olympics Advertising Costs .....	665
Health Facilities Security Services .....	666, 673
Children and Youth Services Budget .....	666
Funding for Foster Care .....	667
Alberta Health Services Budget .....	667
Crowsnest Creek Diversion .....	667
Community Grant Programs .....	668
Education System in Finland .....	668
Residential Building Codes .....	669
Health Services Decision-making .....	669
Oil Sands Emissions .....	670
Beach Corner Road Intersection .....	670
Clean Energy Research .....	670
Temporary Foreign Workers .....	671
Rural Family Physician Recruitment .....	671
Manufacturing Outsourcing to Korea .....	672
Canadian Forces Liaison .....	672
Presenting Petitions .....	674
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	675
Tablings to the Clerk .....	675
Projected Government Business .....	675
Government Bills and Orders	
Third Reading	
Bill 15 Appropriation Act, 2010 .....	675, 684
Bill 2 Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 .....	678
Bill 4 Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010 .....	678
Bill 6 Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010 .....	679
Bill 8 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2010 .....	680
Second Reading	
Bill 13 Securities Amendment Act, 2010 .....	681
Bill 14 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010 .....	682
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 10 Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010 .....	682
Bill 11 Witness Security Act .....	683

## **Bill Status Report for the 27th Legislature - 3rd Session (2010)**

**Activity to March 25, 2010**

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 Alberta Competitiveness Act (Stelmach)**

First Reading -- 4 (Feb. 4 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 123-24 (Feb. 16 aft.), 135-37 (Feb. 16 aft.), 137-42 (Feb. 16 aft.), 257-67 (Feb. 23 aft.), 286-98 (Feb. 24 aft.), 317-20 (Feb. 25 aft.), 403-09 (Mar. 10 aft.), 414-15 (Mar. 10 aft.), 434-40 (Mar. 11 aft.), 487-89 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 519-27 (Mar. 17 aft.), 556-61 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 660-61 (Mar. 24 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation]

### **2\* Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Woo-Paw)**

First Reading -- 64 (Feb. 10 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 124-25 (Feb. 16 aft.), 430-34 (Mar. 11 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 489-92 (Mar. 16 aft., passed with amendments)

Third Reading -- 678 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010]

### **3 Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2010 (Weadick)**

First Reading -- 64 (Feb. 10 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 125 (Feb. 16 aft.), 137 (Feb. 16 aft.), 317 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 413-14 (Mar. 10 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 492 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010]

### **4 Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Amendment Act, 2010 (Olson)**

First Reading -- 188-89 (Feb. 18 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 280 (Feb. 24 aft.), 410-12 (Mar. 10 aft.), 489 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 529-32 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 678-79 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010]

### **5 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2010 (\$) (Snelgrove)**

First Reading -- 213 (Feb. 22 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 247-49 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 280-86 (Feb. 24 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 312-17 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 1 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 1, 2010; SA 2010 c1]

### **6 Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010 (Bhullar)**

First Reading -- 213 (Feb. 22 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 280 (Feb. 24 aft.), 412-13 (Mar. 10 aft.), 489 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 527-29 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 679-80 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010]

- 7 Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Redford)**  
First Reading -- 311 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 402-03 (Mar. 10 aft.), 492-503 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 533-37 (Mar. 17 aft.), 561-62 (Mar. 18 aft., adjourned)
- 8 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2010 (Griffiths)**  
First Reading -- 334 (Mar. 8 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 429-30 (Mar. 11 aft.), 503 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 532--33 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)  
Third Reading -- 680-81 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)  
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010, with exceptions]
- 9 Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Johnson)**  
First Reading -- 576 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 615-16 (Mar. 23 aft., adjourned)
- 10 Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010 (\$) (Redford)**  
First Reading -- 486 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 518 (Mar. 17 aft.), 618-20 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 682-83 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
- 11 Witness Security Act (Drysdale)**  
First Reading -- 486 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 518 (Mar. 17 aft.), 620-24 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 683-84 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
- 12 Body Armour Control Act (Quest)**  
First Reading -- 486-87 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 518-19 (Mar. 17 aft.), 624-28 (Mar. 23 aft., adjourned)
- 13 Securities Amendment Act, 2010 (Morton)**  
First Reading -- 552 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 616-17 (Mar. 23 aft.), 681-82 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
- 14 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010 (Ouellette)**  
First Reading -- 552 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 617-18 (Mar. 23 aft.), 682 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
- 15 Appropriation Act, 2010 (\$) (Snelgrove)**  
First Reading -- 576 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 608-15 (Mar. 23 aft.), 627-28 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 643-60 (Mar. 24 aft., passed on division)  
Third Reading -- 675-78 (Mar. 25 aft.), 684 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)  
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010]
- 201 Workers' Compensation (Firefighters) Amendment Act, 2010 (Rogers)**  
First Reading -- 154 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 213-27 (Feb. 22 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 577-85 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)
- 202 Mandatory Reporting of Child Pornography Act (Forsyth)**  
First Reading -- 154 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)  
Second Reading -- 336-48 (Mar. 8 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 586-89 (Mar. 22 aft., adjourned)
- 203 Municipal Government (Local Access and Franchise Fees) Amendment Act, 2010 (Fawcett)**  
First Reading -- 311-12 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)
- 204 Fiscal Responsibility (Spending Limit) Amendment Act, 2010 (Anderson)**  
First Reading -- 271 (Feb. 24 aft., passed)
- Pr1 Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act (Weadick)**  
First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)

**Pr2 Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010 (DeLong)**

First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)

**Pr3 Lamont Health Care Centre Act (Horne)**

First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)

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