



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Third Session

# Alberta Hansard

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

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

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	Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Employment and Immigration
	Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
	Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Minister of Health and Wellness, Deputy Government House Leader

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon and welcome back.

Let us pray. Guide us so that we may use the privilege given us as elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. Give us the strength to labour diligently, the courage to think and to speak with clarity and conviction and without prejudice or pride. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, today in the Speaker's gallery and in the members' gallery and in the public gallery are a number of special guests. The Royal Canadian Legion, Alberta-NWT Command, takes a keen interest in promoting Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day program. We're very appreciative of both their financial support and their involvement in this annual event, which began yesterday afternoon and will conclude later this afternoon.

In the Speaker's gallery are Mr. Bill Fecteau, the Legion's command chairman. I'm going to ask him and the other individuals that I identify to all rise. Mr. Fecteau is accompanied by the students' chaperones: Rod Stewart, president of the Vegreville branch and past command vice-president; Joyce Stewart, past president and executive committee member, Vegreville branch; Ted Latimer, district 8 commander, Alberta-NWT Command; Donna Latimer, a member of the Onoway branch; Karen Bruens, past district 3 commander, member of the Vegreville branch; John Ferguson, past president, Canmore branch, and member of the Cochrane branch; Gloria Rogers, president, ladies auxiliary of the Alberta-NWT Command; Sharon Fedak, first vice-president, ladies auxiliary of the Alberta-NWT Command.

Seventy-eight students joined us yesterday and today – that's a record number – as participants in the MLA for a Day program. Yesterday the participants spent time with the Royal Canadian Legion, debated a resolution in this Assembly last night, and toured the Legislature Building. This morning they were here in this Chamber sitting in your chairs, and a very special seminar was held for them. They also visited with a number of members in their offices today and joined us for lunch prior to Oral Question Period today.

These young people are seated in the members' and public galleries, and the Legion members are in the Speaker's gallery. I'd ask all of them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The hon. Minister of Education.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two very special guests: Krys Kunicki-Tadman, a constituent of mine, a wonderful friend, and a tireless volunteer, along with her cousin Krystyna Tichnow, who is here from Poland visiting Alberta for the very first time. Along with visiting a number of places in Edmonton and around the province, they'll be enjoying a tour of this beautiful Legislature Building later this afternoon. Given the tragic events which took place in Krystyna's homeland on the weekend, may we extend to her and her family both our heartfelt welcome and our heartfelt sympathy. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour and privilege of introducing to you and through you to members of the Assembly a hundred enthusiastic, bright, and inquisitive students from St. Mary/St. Monica school in my constituency. St. Mary/St. Monica is a school that I brag about a lot when I'm talking around the province to people about education. We have a hundred students accompanied by their teachers Thérèse Coates, Michelle Armstrong, Jesse Diachuk, Tracee Laba, assistant Amanda Sergeant, and student teachers Brian Vaughan, Stephanie Hay, and Samantha Dudar. I mention student teachers particularly because St. Mary/St. Monica stylize themselves as a professional learning school because they do so much to help educate teachers in our province. They are seated in the members' gallery and the public gallery, and I'd ask them all to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a great friend, colleague, and, of course, our leader of the Wildrose Alliance Party, Ms Danielle Smith, and her wonderful executive assistant, Ms Shannon Stubbs. If they could please rise. Danielle is travelling the province meeting and listening with Albertans across this great land, and it's an honour to serve with both of them. I'd ask that the Assembly please give them a warm reception.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to introduce to you and through you to our Assembly parents of our current page Rayleen Nicolajsen. They are here observing Rayleen in her role as a page during her last session here at the Alberta Legislature. Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery are her father, Steen Nicolajsen, and her mother, Colleen Nicolajsen. Steen works as a quality control officer and service co-ordinator for Ackard Contractors, and Colleen is the account administrator at North Pointe Community Church, which is in Edmonton-Castle Downs. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of our Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Elniski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly my good friend and constituent Mrs. Patricia Bencz, the executive director of the Our House Addiction Recovery Centre. Our House is a long-term facility for men over the age of 18 who have been in addiction for an average of 20 years. They've spent about 160 days in other facilities before coming to Our House. Often these people come in with concurrent disorders. It's the 25th anniversary of the facility. It's a very tough job. Patricia, I want to thank you very much for doing it and would ask everyone to join me in the traditional greeting.

### Members' Statements

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

### Holocaust Memorial Day

**Mr. Xiao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour and a privilege for me to rise today – actually, it should have been yesterday – in commemoration of Yom ha-Shoah, also known as

Holocaust Memorial Day. This year Holocaust Memorial Day fell upon Sunday, April 11, in accordance with the Jewish lunar calendar.

Mr. Speaker, the Holocaust was one of the worst atrocities committed in the history of mankind. The lives of over 6 million Jewish men, women, and children were senselessly ended in addition to countless others who were systematically persecuted and annihilated at the hands of the Nazi regime.

On November 16, 2000, the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act was proclaimed by this Legislature so that we may do our part to ensure that these innocent victims will never be forgotten. While we cannot change history, we must all do our part to learn from the tragedies of the past and never permit them to happen again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Public Service Pension Plans

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Retirement is a critical time for every Albertan. Albertans make great efforts and work very hard to plan their retirement, setting aside funds to carry them through their golden years. Some use RRSPs, some have employer pensions. Members of Alberta's public service depend upon plans such as the Alberta teachers' retirement fund, the public service pension plan, and the local authorities pension plan.

These plans should have provided dedicated public servants with benefits sufficient to ensure a comfortable retirement. The Alberta Society for Pension Reform, however, claims that this government has let them down. In a statement delivered to all MLAs, a statement I encourage all members to read, these pensioners state that the Alberta government promised pension benefits of 60 per cent of preretirement income after 30 years of service and 70 per cent after 35 years of service. Members of the public service pension plan and the local authorities pension plan, furthermore, were promised that cost-of-living increases would keep up with the actual cost of living. Finally, and most importantly, the Alberta government guaranteed the payment of these pensions.

1:40

The society claims that the Alberta government has broken each of these promises. They go on to call these three government of Alberta pension plans among the worst government pension plans in Canada. According to the society the Tories took this retirement savings and used the money as general revenue to pay off the debt and build infrastructure, leaving the pension funds empty. Furthermore, cost-of-living increases were scaled back, co-ordinated benefits were slashed, joint life pensions were reduced, and during the '90s many workers were forced into early retirement, further reducing their benefits, in some cases up to 16 per cent. Now the government will no longer guarantee the payment of pensions.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would urge all hon. members of this Assembly and others interested to please visit the [albertapensionreform.ca](http://albertapensionreform.ca) website for more information on this issue.

Thank you.

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

### League of Ukrainian Canadians Anniversary League of Ukrainian Canadian Women Anniversary

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise today and acknowledge the upcoming milestone celebrations on

April 17 of two very important organizations, namely, the League of Ukrainian Canadians, Edmonton branch, 60th anniversary, and the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, Edmonton branch, 55th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, the League of Ukrainian Canadians was first established under its original name, the Canadian League for the Liberation of Ukraine, at a founding conference on December 25, 1949. The league held its original name until 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when Ukraine was proclaimed an independent country. The League of Ukrainian Canadians is well known for many political advocacy and public engagement initiatives to increase democracy and human rights for the Ukrainian people and also for raising the awareness of Ukrainian history, of which commemorating the Holodomor genocide in Ukraine of 1932-33 serves as one significant example.

Mr. Speaker, the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women also began at the founding conference on December 25, 1949, then known as the women's association of the Canadian league. The Edmonton branch was established in 1954, and in 1991 the organization was formally known as the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women. Over the past number of years activities have included the promotion of Ukrainian cultural heritage, education, humanitarian activities, and raising the spectre of women's challenges and issues in the Ukraine. The work of the Edmonton branch of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women includes advocating for the release of political prisoners, organizing the funding and building of the Ukrainian Youth Unity Complex, located in Edmonton-Decore, and the creation of the Verkhovyna Choir, a gem in Edmonton's cultural landscape.

Mr. Speaker, I commend all the individuals in the past, present, and future involved in both of the organizations and Edmonton branches for their tireless commitment and dedication to raising peoples' consciousness as it pertains to Ukrainian history, heritage, culture, challenges, and issues.

Heartfelt thank you, Dyakuyu, and God bless these organizations as they celebrate their milestone anniversaries in the years to come. Thank you.

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

### Request for Unanimous Consent to Complete the Routine

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier's director of media relations, Jerry Bellikka, posted on Twitter that I had denied consent to recognize the Holocaust. I also got a call from a reporter saying that an MLA of this government was shopping the same story to various media outlets. This accusation is defamatory, it is patently false, and it is disgusting. I would highly suggest Mr. Bellikka retract the statement immediately.

Mr. Speaker, a few short months ago my sweetheart, Anita, and I visited Israel for three weeks. It is a beautiful nation with wonderful people of all faiths. One of the highlights for us was our visit to the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. We walked reverently through that sacred place, taking in the heartbreaking display of the Nazis' evil and barbaric treatment of innocent Jewish men, women, and children. It was an amazing experience, one that Anita and I will cherish forever.

The Holocaust was one of the most horrific events in history. Six million Jews were murdered by Nazis out of blind racial hate and for no other reason. I want everyone to know that I, for one, will never, ever forget.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's communications team has a long history of being inept, but this is something more. I remember the

days when the Paul Martin and the Jean Chrétien Liberals used words like anti-Semitic, racist, anti-immigrant, redneck, scary, and sexist to describe the parties of Preston Manning and Stephen Harper. I never thought that this Premier's office would resort to the methods of Martin or Chrétien. People that have no new ideas or anything of value to add to the public discourse often resort to personal smears and fearmongering, and if history is any indication, Albertans will reject outright any party that resorts to such tactics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

#### Recognition of Slave Lake Constituents

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been said that the heart of a volunteer is their strength, their dedication, and their humility. For this reason I rise today to recognize the tremendous work of five of my constituents. Of course, all of them are really great.

On Friday, March 19, I attended the Alberta Association for Community Living President's Reception, where Barb MacIntyre from Slave Lake was announced to become the president-elect of AACL. Ms MacIntyre truly is one of a kind: always involved, always concerned, always doing something to advance AACL's agenda but also never afraid to give praise as needed to others or to nominate individuals from our community who have done some great things.

One individual at that same time was recognized. AACL presents yearly awards to individuals, organizations, and businesses that promote the concept and spirit of community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. Mr. Tyler Warman from Boston Pizza in Slave Lake was honoured because of his conscious, proactive decision to hire a staff member with a developmental disability and do whatever it takes to support them. Through his example Mr. Warman has become a leader in our community by proving that people with developmental disabilities can be valuable employees and team members.

On March 27 I was honoured to be joined by the Member for West Yellowhead to help present fire services exemplary service medals to three of High Prairie Fire Department's most distinguished members: Mr. Dan Gillmor, with 24 years of service; Mr. Kenneth Melnyk, with 26 years of service; and Mr. Anthony Belli, with 30 years of service. We are incredibly grateful to have Dan, Ken, and Tony protecting our community, anticipating our most feared moments when we are not able to help ourselves in a dangerous environment but rely on their courage and their strength, putting our lives in their hands.

To all five of my constituents: you are the heart of our community for being exemplary role models and leaders whom we can all be proud of. Congratulations, and thank you for all that you have done and all that you continue to do.

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

#### Organ Donor Week

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to recognize Organ Donor Week, which takes place April 18 through 25 of this year. Organ donation has always been important to me. That is why I introduced Motion 518 this session, which urges the government to require Albertans to declare on the back of their Alberta health card whether or not they want their organs donated.

Becoming an organ donor is not difficult. All you need to do is carry an organ donor card in your wallet and discuss your wishes

with your family. In 2008 there were 4,330 people on waiting lists for organ transplants in Canada, and of those, 215 people died while waiting for their organ transplant. Of the 2,083 transplants that took place, 1,541 were made possible because of organs from deceased donors. Organ donation is one of the last acts of charity you can make. In fact, one organ donor can save the lives of eight people and assist the lives of nearly 50 more. It is a way to turn a tragic event into a miracle for others.

There are more than 4,000 people waiting for an organ donation now, and each week five Canadians die waiting for the organ donation that does not come in time. I urge all members of this Assembly to consider organ and tissue donation and to discuss their choice with their families to declare their intent on their Alberta health card.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I'd ask all of you to join with me in recognizing the birthday anniversary of one of our members today. It's an anniversary for the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, and I do want the hon. member to know that she should fear not: her secret remains with me. Happy birthday.

Clerk, hold the clock. Prior to the question period today I'd like to make a brief statement.

1:50

#### Statement by the Speaker

#### Rotation of Questions and Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the chair wants to advise members of certain modifications that are required to the rotation of questions during Oral Question Period and to Members' Statements as a result of further changes in the composition of caucuses within this Assembly. Given the number of changes to the rotation and to the seating plan so far this session, the chair has attempted to integrate the new independent member into the rotation of questions and members' statements with a minimum of disruption to the existing order.

The Member for Calgary-Currie is entitled to the same number of questions as the other independent member, the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. The Member for Calgary-Currie will be entitled to one question a week. In the rotation scheme used in the Assembly, today is considered day 4, and the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo is entitled to ask a question. Tomorrow, April 14, is day 1, and the Member for Calgary-Currie will be entitled to ask the sixth question. This position had belonged to the Official Opposition. To be clear, the only change to the question period rotation will be the substitution of the Member for Calgary-Currie to ask the sixth question on day 1.

Similarly, the Member for Calgary-Currie will be able to participate in Members' Statements on the same basis as the other independent member. Accordingly, his first opportunity to present a member's statement will be on day 31 of this session, which is Wednesday, April 21. This position had belonged to the Official Opposition.

The chair has provided revised calendars and outlines for the rulings just provided to all members.

#### Oral Question Period

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

#### Health Services Executive Bonuses

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last year Alberta Health Services handed out executive bonuses when they had a

projected deficit of \$1.3 billion. The letters outlining the bonuses said, "Many of the typical individual and portfolio performance measures used to establish this payment were difficult to measure . . . and [not consistent] during this year of transition." To the Premier: how can the Premier defend a bonus of \$129,000 of taxpayers' money for one person when your documents show you cannot measure the performance of that person?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Health Services Board has taken decisive steps to overhaul the process of executive contract negotiations. The most important step is the establishment of a standardized contract for senior executives, which will cover all of the senior executives in Alberta Health Services.

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

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier support Alberta Health Services handing out bonuses larger than most Albertans make in a year as a reward for creating a \$1.3 billion deficit while public-sector employees are facing wage freezes?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could address that on behalf of the Premier. We have to keep in mind here that stuff that occurred two or three years ago is a matter of history. What's more important is how we're going forward. When we have individuals who are handling a \$10 billion budget, approximately, we have individuals who are looking after 400 different health facilities in the province, we have individuals who are helping to manage or work with approximately 90,000 employees across the province, it requires us to be very competitive in who we hire and how we hire.

**Dr. Swann:** Again to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: will the Premier order an immediate halt to the bonus system for Alberta Health Services' executives and restore some semblance of public confidence?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to executive bonuses we took a very big decision last year. We cancelled all senior level management bonuses within the government, which is \$40 million. Alberta Health Services is following up on the leadership that this government has shown and is going to renegotiate all of the contracts and look at a consistent approach to all senior executive positions within Alberta Health Services.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My first question is to the Premier. Given the information he's just given that there will be standardized contracts and given that he did the right thing and cancelled bonuses for other public executives, will these standardized contracts contain bonuses, or will he take a firm stand and ensure no bonuses are paid on any of these standardized contracts as they are negotiated? Which is it?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Health Services Board has a mandate to negotiate senior executive level contracts, and they will look at the most appropriate model used to bring about efficiencies and improve access to health care. That's why we have appointed the board. They have the responsibility. If it's going to be top down all the time to every organization like that, we won't get the kind of achievements that we require in getting efficiencies in the system.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My question, then, is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. It's a matter of public record that this minister will sign off on the contracts of senior executives in Alberta Health Services. Will this minister do the right thing and refuse to sign any contract that has a bonus?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, the bonus system, as I indicated, is part of being competitive to attract the very best people into the most senior positions. However, in view of the difficult economic times we're in, it should be noted that bonuses paid out at the executive vice-president level or at the senior vice-president level are limited to 20 per cent only of their total yearly contracts.

**Dr. Taft:** Again to the Premier: given that the public experience of Alberta's health care system is a huge deficit, long waiting lists, overcrowded facilities, and a staff and physician satisfaction survey that is absolutely devastating, why won't he do the same thing he did for his deputy ministers and other public servants and eliminate bonuses in the health services system? Why not? What are they doing?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the decision rests with the Alberta Health Services Board. They will look at the best way to manage their senior executives. This is an issue that we dealt with within government. It brought about a savings of over \$40 million. This came as a request from me and our government to our senior officials, who, by the way, did not contest. They just simply said: look, even though there's a contractual obligation, we're willing to give up our bonuses in order to achieve the savings in government that are necessary.

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

#### Small Business Assistance

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recent numbers show that insolvencies are up 9 per cent in Alberta and that there has been an almost 80 per cent increase in bankruptcy proposals over the past year. Now we find that Alberta is becoming a very minor player in venture capital markets, attracting only 6 per cent of venture capital dollars. We now have a situation where less and less money is going into building the economy. More and more people are suffering through the current crises, and all we get from government is increasingly hollow claims that Alberta will be the strongest economy and the first to recover. To the Premier: what will the Premier do to increase the availability of venture capital in Alberta?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, we have taken bold steps to increase the amount of venture capital invested in the province. It first starts with the money that's invested in research. Then it leads to further commercialization of those ideas. In fact, we've set aside a hundred million dollars to attract much of the investment to Alberta. There were recent announcements, and there will continue to be more in terms of money coming to the province. We're on the right track.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we are debt free operationally. We don't have any debt in the bank to pay. We're keeping our taxes low. We're not increasing them. That is what attracts business to this province.

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

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the Premier doing to deal with the fact that we have the highest per capita number of bankruptcies in the country?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, we also had the hottest economy a number of years ago, when oil was \$145, \$147 a barrel. Those are some of the issues that the government, of course, is dealing with, but now the economy has settled down. There are very good green shoots in the economy coming forward, and we're going to see a good recovery not only in the number of businesses moving to Alberta but continued flow of people to Alberta because they do see this as a land of opportunity.

**Dr. Swann:** Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier admit that his doing nothing approach is only causing more and more pain for Alberta families and small businesses?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of doing nothing, here we are a jurisdiction that said: no new taxes and no tax increases, no fee increases; we eliminated health care premiums for all Albertans. Those are all savings in the pockets of Albertans to be reinvested in the economy. I declare that compared to all jurisdictions in Canada, we have taken that leadership role, and we will continue. We will be the first to be in the black by 2012-13.

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

#### 2:00 Electricity Transmission System

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government uses words like "consult stakeholders and affected Albertans," but they believe the way to do this is to design fancy brochures, websites, and radio ads set up by their lobbyists, campaign teams, and party executives. Many Albertans describe the PC government as the old boys' club, nepotism, and party patronage. This government is telling Albertans that their Rolls-Royce power plan is a great deal and is needed, but Albertans are saying no. My question is to the Premier. If the Alberta Electric System Operator is an independent . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the question is with respect to the Alberta Utilities Commission. The Alberta Utilities Commission has the jurisdiction to decide where transmission lines are to be located. They also have the jurisdictional ability to work with landowners in terms of reasonable compensation for the construction of the power lines. They also have, of course, control of the cost of transmission because that is still one part that is regulated under the Alberta Utilities Commission.

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, it's clear that their new needs assessment program is what their party connections need, not what Albertans need. [interjections] Oh, hang on to your horses.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member signed a document to me not too many weeks ago agreeing that there would be no preambles. Why did he break his word? Proceed with your second question.

**Mr. Hinman:** Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: when the companies run ads to promote their power plans, does he believe that it should also be disclosed that the people in those ads are also members of the PC Party's executive?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, there was a comment made earlier, I believe, with respect to the fact that there isn't an increased demand for electricity in this province. That is totally bogus. Last March, when most of the province had about minus 35 degree weather, our demand on electricity in this province was in excess of 9,000 megawatts. When we were at minus 52 this last December – and most of the province was under the same weather system – our demand increased just within a number of months to 10,236 megawatts. So what that member has said is totally wrong.

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, the Premier needs to be informed a little bit better. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member has the floor.

**Mr. Hinman:** Given that the Premier knows so much, I'll ask him this question. Since this government takes very good care of its political allies, will this PC government let their campaign manager stick Albertans with a 30-year power purchase agreement so they can build an expensive nuclear plant here in Alberta?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure where the question is going, but in terms of the nuclear policy for the province, we have not denied anyone any fuel source, whether it be wind, water, coal-fired, or even nuclear power. For any applications for nuclear, decisions will be based on a case-by-case basis, and of course the federal government has the most jurisdiction in this particular area. Really, the province plays a very minor role in terms of nuclear power.

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

#### School Closures

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Parkdale, McCauley, Eastwood, Fulton Place, and Capilano schools are five schools that are on the chopping block tonight. At the same time, the Edmonton public school board is not getting any new resources to support the six schools that they are opening this September. The government is forcing school boards to shift resources from older schools to new ones. I want to ask the Minister of Education why he is forcing school boards to choose winners and losers when the families pay the price.

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, nobody is forcing anyone to choose winners and losers. What school boards do is make sure that they provide the best possible educational opportunities for all the students they serve within the resources that are available. It's totally wrong to say that there are no new resources for new schools as much as it's totally wrong to say that the closing of older schools that have lost their student populations is simply a money issue. It's about educational programming, and school boards are in the best position to determine how they can best provide educational programming for their students.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, given that it's absolutely clear from talking to the school board that they have to shift resources, both financial and personnel, from old schools to operate the new ones and that is the primary reason for these school closures, why won't the minister admit that his government's policy is forcing the school board to close these inner-city schools?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, I wouldn't admit that, Mr. Speaker, because it's totally wrong. It's not a given that we're forcing school boards to move their resources. School boards have a number of physical resources, called schools, and they have a number of financial resources, and they have, of course, students that need to be served. They have the job of making sure they provide the best possible educational programming for the students that they have to serve. That's why we have local school boards, to meet that local need.

**Mr. Mason:** Well, he's going to be the minister of busing, not education, in a minute, Mr. Speaker.

Given that the school board is struggling to find ways to support staff for these new schools, it sure looks like they're going through the motions with the school closure process. I want to ask the Minister of Education to ensure that the Edmonton school board in this case but school boards around the province have the resources to operate new schools so they don't have to close old ones. That's what's happening, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is putting the opening of new schools and the closing of other schools into the same package in a very inappropriate way. New schools have been asked for in areas where there is an abundance of students and where an abundance of buses are moving those students longer distances to go to school. They have the resources. If there are students for those schools, then they have the resources to hire the teachers for those schools. That is not a problem. Where school boards do have a problem is keeping open a large number of buildings, many of them old building envelopes, many of them inefficient, paying for the resources to keep those schools open and provide the broad base of educational programs that are necessary for the students.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

### Education Funding

**Mr. Boutilier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't sure if . . . [interjection] To the person across the way who said, "Quack, quack," you look like a duck.

Having said that, I spoke to students today from my constituency, three high school students. We've heard the government say that education is an investment, not an expense. As a follow-up, schools are being closed, programs are being cut, yet there's a contradiction: the government is blaming school boards. To the Minister of Education: can you please explain this contradiction? Why are you blaming school boards for the lack of funding by this government?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, I don't know of any school in that particular member's jurisdiction that's been closed. In fact, we're trying to open them as fast as we can. The reality is that we have school boards in this province, and we have school boards in this province because we believe that the connection to the local community is a very important part of the educational process. If we're going to have school boards, we cannot be constantly second-guessing the decisions that are in their purview to make and taking those decisions out of their hands just because people don't like the decisions that are being made. They have to balance it, and they have to make tough decisions.

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

**Mr. Boutilier:** Yes. Thank you. Given the comments by the

Minister of Education I want him to commit to this Assembly that he will not cut education in Edmonton or in Fort McMurray or in any one of the MLA's constituencies. Because he believes education is, in fact, an investment, not an expense, why don't you cut somewhere else, such as your own salaries, the 33 per cent you're giving yourself?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know where this hon. member has been for the balance of the session that's happened so far when we've spent time talking about it. There are only two budgets that I know of – there may be more – that have gone up in this province. One is health, and the other is education, clearly indicating to the public of Alberta where this government's priorities are.

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

**Mr. Boutilier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that he says that education is an investment, yet universities are being cut back, programs are being cut back, schools are being closed in his very own constituency, my question is: commit to this House that there will not be any further cuts to schools, laying off of teachers because of the commitment to education to those three young people that are in the gallery.

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

**Mr. Hancock:** What an absolute absurdity, Mr. Speaker, an absolute absurdity. Will I commit to this member that no teacher will ever be fired? It's just a few short years ago when we heard: how do we make sure that we have the best possible teachers, and how do we make sure that those that aren't the best teachers find other things to do? It would be absolutely absurd to guarantee to this member that there would never be any change in life or any change in the world. What I can say is this: education is a priority for this government. We've increased the funding, and all school boards have had access to that money.

**The Speaker:** I'm going out tonight to check if there really is a full moon.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

### 2:10 Health Services Executive Bonuses (continued)

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. On October 26, 2009, the former Minister of Health and Wellness addressed the Public Accounts Committee, and he said: "Under the new model that the board chair [of Alberta Health Services] outlined earlier, the board is responsible for hiring, but the final sign-off comes through my office. So I guess it's joint, but the final signature is [the minister's.]" My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Will he exercise his authority as minister and refuse to sign any contracts that have performance bonuses in Alberta Health Services?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, the bonus arrangement that may be in place between the CEO and the president of Alberta Health Services is between him and the board. If there are performance bonuses, and I suspect there are, with executive vice-presidents or senior vice-presidents, that's a matter of those vice-presidents and the CEO. What I can tell you is that there are very specific performance measures that are in place right now that deal with increasing access, shortening wait times, and providing Albertans with the



outstanding health care excellence that they are accustomed to receiving.

**Dr. Taft:** Well, how are those performance measures working so far, Mr. Minister?

Why is the salary of the Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness frozen, and why is that bonus frozen but this minister still allowing the senior executives of Alberta Health Services to have a bonus? Why the double standard?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, it's true that bonuses are frozen for senior members of the government. Alberta Health Services is, of course, an arm's-length organization. They operate very much with their own scenarios, and they're doing a pretty good job of handling some very difficult and challenging circumstances. However, the important thing is that there is greater certainty today, that there is more stability, that there is greater predictability, and the five-year funding plan coming forward will ensure it.

**Dr. Taft:** Mr. Speaker, this is the minister who boasted about being hands on and getting in there, and we know he's meddled and interfered and stepped into all kinds of decisions. Will he do the right thing and end this distorting system of bonuses that get paid to one very select, already incredibly wealthy section of the public service? Bring it to an end. Do the right thing.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I've indicated before and I want to stress this again: you have to engage the best people you can possibly find when you're administering about a \$10 billion operational budget comprised of taxpayer dollars, when you're managing over 400 health care related facilities and you have a workforce totalling approximately 90,000 people. Those people are working very hard, and so too are these top-level managers.

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

#### **Agricultural Assistance for Drought Recovery**

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Eight years ago we had the worst drought in the province's history, and quite frankly we've had a lot of dry years between then and now. This is making farmers very nervous, especially this spring, when we've started off very dry. To the minister of agriculture. Every single farmer in this province knows that we've never lost a crop in April, but they're nervous, they need confidence, and they want to know what your department has done to prepare for what may be another very bad year.

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

**Mr. Hayden:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has in fact been a very, very difficult year on top of several before it. This past summer, as an example, we experienced the worst drought conditions since the Dirty Thirties, and this past winter, according to Environment Canada, the prairie provinces received precipitation that was at a 60-year low. We are working with the programs that we have to try to assist the farmers in any area that we can with respect to risk management and other areas.

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

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this may be a very unique situation and another serious drought year, what

programs are in place to help farmers through this now in the spring and in the fall?

**Mr. Hayden:** Mr. Speaker, we have in place a number of risk management programs that take into consideration the crop yields, as an example, the financial situation over a five-year period that a farmer experiences, insurance for pasture, insurance for forage. Those risk management tools are in place. We also have programs in place for Alberta producers that are outside of what some of the other provinces offer.

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

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given the fact that AgriRecovery is specifically designed to help with drought disasters like the one we may have this year and it's being negotiated with the feds as we speak, what assurances are there in place that AgriRecovery will be there this year if farmers need it?

**Mr. Hayden:** Mr. Speaker, the drought situation that I spoke about previously shows in many areas in the province the most extreme conditions of drought that we've experienced, as I say, in many years. There has been tax deferral allowed by the federal government in approximately 50 of our rural municipalities in this province, which indicates the severity of this problem. We are working with the federal government on AgriRecovery, and I'm hopeful that we can conclude our discussions with the federal government and move towards helping the producers out there as quickly as possible.

#### **Legal Aid**

**Mr. Hehr:** Mr. Speaker, when this government had a choice to make between scaling back services for the rich or taking away services from the poor, even the least sophisticated observer was able to predict the outcome. In order to save approximately \$5 million, Legal Aid Alberta is predicting that more than 6,000 people will be turned away this year. Will the minister confirm this? Are 6,000 or more economically disadvantaged Albertans going to be denied legal assistance by your pilot project?

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

**Ms Redford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely not. Legal Aid and the government of Alberta almost two years ago decided that it was time to consider whether or not the traditional model for delivering legal aid in this province was really serving the interests of people that needed legal services but couldn't afford them. We decided that we wanted to launch pilot projects not to completely transform the system immediately but to see whether or not it might be possible to put a system in place where we could provide different levels of legal advice and legal support to people depending on what they needed when they came in contact with the legal system.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the hon. member's limits for an individual to receive legal assistance have now been dropped by \$6,000, how are these people now supposed to get this legal service if they're not eligible to get the service?

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

**Ms Redford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's exactly the

point. What we've done this year in conjunction with the Legal Aid board is that we've developed a system where we're going to support public defender positions, legal aid clinics, enhanced support to law information centres, and two pilot projects around the province which will allow people who need to access a lawyer to come to a clinic to get advice and then to decide how they want to pursue their rights. Now, if they do decide that they want to pursue their rights, then they will fall into the traditional legal aid system, will be able to get a certificate and have legal advice provided.

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

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given what I said before, that roughly 6,000 Albertans will no longer be eligible to even qualify under legal aid, where are these people now supposed to go to get legal services?

**Ms Redford:** Mr. Speaker, it's not the case that they won't be able to qualify. It's the case that they will not be able immediately to obtain a certificate because Legal Aid and the government of Alberta have decided in consultation with stakeholders that in some cases people are better served by receiving legal advice and general directional information through courts. The law information centres in Alberta, which were established two years ago, have served over 150,000 people in the past 12 months alone, people that needed legal information, legal direction, and access to a lawyer.

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

#### Pharmaceutical Strategy

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The second phase of the Alberta pharmaceutical strategy that was announced in October 2009 includes expanding the role of pharmacists and introducing a new payment model for pharmacy services. Although many pharmacists welcome the change to providing more professional services, the lack of communication about the new payment model, scheduled to be implemented this July, is causing some concerns. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Where is the ministry at relative to the comprehensive transition plan that is supposed to be in place to support pharmacies to make the proposed changes?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, a very solid question, indeed. We are at a very good place with respect to the overall pharmaceutical strategy. Once it's fully implemented, it will save Alberta taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. We've provided a \$75 million transitional fund to help get there. That includes about a \$5 million fund for rural and remote communities. It will also include an additional payment of about \$3 for filling a prescription in the first year, \$2 in the second, and \$1 in the third year. So there's a lot going on there plus the additional services model.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** To the same minister: when can pharmacists in Alberta expect to hear from Alberta Health Services about the transition plan and the role of the new payment model?

2:20

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, they're actually hearing a lot about it right now because we have a good program in place to ensure that they're kept up to speed. The transition allowances that I just talked about are effective April 1. As part of that, there is an expanded services model, which is just being finalized right now, that will

compensate pharmacists throughout the province for additional work that they do on patient consultations, on medication reviews, and on things like immunizations.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** What mechanism is in place to ensure ongoing, timely communication, consultation, and monitoring between your ministry, Alberta Health Services, and the pharmaceutical sector?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, we've implemented a pharmacy transition team. This pharmacy transition team deals with issues of identifying how to better serve the public and how to keep more money in the pockets of Albertans, for example, and how to compensate pharmacists for the good work that they're doing. It's a model that we place a lot of faith and store in, and it has built into it things like effective monitoring on a very regular basis.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

#### Funding for Apprenticeship Training

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month the unemployment rate for young men in the province of Alberta aged between 16 and 24 was 15 and a half per cent, twice the rate for the general population. My first question is to the minister of advanced education. Given that labour market analysis is indicating that we're heading for a shortage of skilled workers in this province, hopefully as the economy improves, why did the government allow the number of apprenticeship spots to actually go down here in Alberta last year? We've got unemployed people. Why aren't we training them?

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

**Mr. Horner:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that if the hon. member were to look at the statistics in a lot more detail, what he would find is that during the down period, which in some areas of the economy we're still experiencing, companies aren't hiring a lot of new apprentices. So first-year apprentice numbers and second-year apprentice numbers are down. Secondly, we don't choose when that student is going to show up at the doorstep. In fact, if they have their second-year ticket or their third-year ticket, they may indeed not go to school this year. If they were very fortunate and maintained their employment, they may decide to stay working.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's an interesting response.

Again to the same minister: given that so many apprentices have built up such a large number of hours towards the completion of their apprenticeship during this last period of high employment, why are you cutting your budget now, when these individuals should be trained so that they can get permanent work whenever the economy turns around? Bad policy.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, knowing the relationship that this hon. member has with many of our tradespeople, I'm sure that he's not advocating that we would force tradesmen to come to school at a certain period of time outside of their selected periods of time when they want to work, and we're not going to do that. Indeed, the apprenticeship program has always been based on the number of apprentices that want to get in that particular year at that particular time of the year. If there are no spaces at that particular time of the

year, they move to another part of the year. We're working with the apprenticeship board and all of our institutions to ensure that those spaces are there.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Again, Mr. Speaker, this government is forcing many of these apprentices into longer periods of unemployment through bad public policy.

My next question is to the minister of labour. Why is the department cutting . . .

**The Speaker:** Whoa. Whoa.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yes?

**The Speaker:** Were you unaware of the comments I made earlier about preambles?

**Mr. MacDonald:** I didn't consider that to be a preamble, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** But I did. I did, sir. So you've asked me the question, and it has been responded to.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

#### Medicine Hat College Degree-granting Status

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A young constituent of mine, in fact a number now, recently shared with me news that the University of Alberta is planning on cancelling the arrangement they have with the Medicine Hat College that has given Medicine Hat students the opportunity to complete their education degree at the college, never having to leave their community. To the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology: if this in fact happens, will students currently enrolled in the program be forced to go to Edmonton or Calgary to complete their degrees?

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A very good question. We are aware of the issue at Medicine Hat College, and I think it's important to note at the outset that no final decisions have been made on any of the two-year programs that were under discussion. One of the important aspects of Campus Alberta is the ability for colleges and institutions to partner with everyone across the system. There are always opportunities for students to explore to remain in their communities and learn, as the hon. member mentioned, or for the institution to partner together with other institutions to deliver that program. We're confident that that's going to take place.

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

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the point that the hon. minister just made, how will you ensure that Medicine Hat College continues to receive degree-granting education programs?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, we are actively engaged with the partners that are currently delivering the two-year program. We're going to continue to work with those parties to ensure that students are going to be able to follow their dreams on those degrees wherever they may be. That is, indeed, a part of the Campus Alberta process. We are working on a couple of scenarios that are being explored to ensure that the program will be ongoing beyond the 2011-12 date that is out in the media.

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

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it's my understanding that the U of A has received stable funding from the province, why would they be permitted to remove this program?

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, no decisions have been made on the removal of any programs at this point in time. This year we did take the first steps toward introducing a new funding formula that does provide additional flexibility for our institutions across Campus Alberta. It also gives all institutions greater flexibility to collaborate with each other and to meet student needs throughout the province. We certainly hope to encourage that kind of activity and behaviour throughout the system, and we'll be following up with that as we move forward.

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

#### Eastern Irrigation District Licence Amendment

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Eastern irrigation district has applied to change their water licence so they are no longer limited to just using their water for irrigation. Why? Because right now they're breaking the law. In their own application they admit they've already signed several agreements selling rights to use the water for other purposes. My question is to the Minister of Environment. Why has the minister failed to prosecute when it's clear that the Eastern irrigation district is breaking his own Water Act?

**Mr. Renner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear that water that is under the licence of an irrigation district is designated for agricultural purposes. The reality that the member needs to understand is that in the areas that are served by the Eastern irrigation district there is very little opportunity for access to off-stream storage other than that provided by the irrigation district. So there are some limited uses for acreages and the like that do not fit the exact law.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member. [interjection] The hon. member has the floor.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that it's generally the understanding that when there's a law, we expect it to be written well enough for people to follow it and given that there is clearly a limited supply of water in the area and given that the EID is clearly trying to profit off this shortage at the expense of the broader public need for the water through this application to change the law after the fact, why won't the minister act to prevent the illegal use of Alberta's precious and limited water supply and ensure that this application is denied?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, we are in the process right now of reviewing the policy with respect to the ability for irrigation districts to expand the use. We will be changing that policy to recognize that in very limited circumstances there are appropriate times that irrigation districts should be able to redesignate the water to appropriate uses in those individual circumstances.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the minister has actually made a number of empty promises to make the water policy public and to consult with Albertans on any changes, at least seven times over the last year and a half, and given that the situation I've just

described highlights the extreme dysfunction of the current system, why won't the minister tell Albertans today exactly when and where his policy will be made public and the time and place of the consultations that will follow?

**Mr. Renner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to advise the member and all members of that exact information. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to do so at this point in time. We do have a process that needs to be followed, and we do have work that is under way. I will advise the member and all Albertans when the time is appropriate.

#### Postsecondary Education Funding

**Mr. Chase:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta has the lowest postsecondary enrolment rate in Canada, at only 14 per cent. The consequences of this government's cutbacks to postsecondary education can be seen in the budgets recently passed by universities and colleges, who are forced to increase fees on students, cut programs, and run operating deficits. To the minister: is the minister satisfied with the strategy of simply downloading the province's deficit to our universities and colleges, who then pass it on to our students?

2:30

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we haven't downloaded anything. We're working in collaboration with our institutions and with our student bodies. In fact, as I said in the House in answer to questions of this hon. member before, we have been working very closely with the student associations throughout the province to talk about the tuition cap and how we protect it going forward. We had to fix some problems that were within the system dating back to 2004. So working collaboratively with the student bodies we fixed the problem and protected the cap, one of the few provinces in Canada that still maintains a CPI cap. This year tuition levels will be 1.5 per cent as compared to Manitoba, up to 5 per cent, as compared to Ontario, 3 per cent to 8 per cent, as compared to even Saskatchewan, which could be as high as 5 per cent. We think we're doing very well for our students.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that the minister's sentiments are shared by students going into pharmacy, engineering, and business.

Does the minister think it is acceptable for universities to charge students mandatory fees ranging from \$300 to \$450 because this government isn't willing to provide sufficient operating funding to postsecondary institutions?

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was searching for the letters that I received from, as an example, the Pharmacy Students' Association, which actually requested that we approve the request from the university for the increase as a market modifier because they realized the value of their investment and the taxpayer investment. They requested that we do that. I also have a letter from the engineering students at the U of A Faculty of Engineering suggesting that they believe that it was the right thing to do to fix the error so that we can move forward into the future. So to suggest that we're not collaborating and talking to the students is blatantly false.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I don't think you'll get the same letters if you take that route for medicine, law, and education.

Is the minister going to stand idly by while institutions like NAIT, due to lack of government funding, are forced to eliminate over a dozen programs, some of which had full registration and are unique in western Canada?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, any programs that are going to be eliminated have to get the approval of the ministry. In fact, as we understand it right now, the particular institution the hon. member is talking about is reviewing it, as I would suggest every institution in this province should be reviewing every program they're delivering to ensure that it's meeting the needs of the student, the taxpayer, and the economy, not the institution's, because we serve those three clients, not the institution.

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

#### ProServe Liquor Staff Training

**Mr. Bhullar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When reducing the regulatory burden for businesses, the interests of small businesses should also be given due consideration. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission made it mandatory for staff at all licensed premises to take a course called ProServe. Some say that this is an unnecessary regulatory burden. To the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security: does everyone working in a liquor store or restaurant have to take this training?

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission introduced ProServe in 2004 at the request of liquor industry stakeholders asking for a standardized training program. Effective January 1, 2010, ProServe is mandatory for all staff that are selling, serving, or advising customers on choices of liquor. Yes, it is mandatory, and as I say, it was requested by the industry.

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

**Mr. Bhullar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can a business owner, given the fact that so many of these businesses are owned by families, call in a family member to help in the case of an emergency and have that employee serve the public without taking this course?

**Mr. Oberle:** They can do that, Mr. Speaker. The staff that aren't serving, selling, or advising on liquor don't have to take the course. Certainly, they can call in a family member in the event of an emergency, but I would point out that it's probably in the best interests of the store owner to have everyone trained. There are various avenues of training, it takes less than a day, and it costs as little as \$25.

**Mr. Bhullar:** My final question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker: can a liquor licensee be penalized for employing someone without this training?

**Mr. Oberle:** Yes, they can, Mr. Speaker. The exception being new employees, who have to take the training within 30 days. Prescribed in the regulations there are penalties and fines up to and including the loss of a licence. I'd point out that the AGLC does not have a history of heavy-handed enforcement but rather one of working with their clients. I believe that they would do so in this case as well.

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

### **Education Funding** (continued)

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government abandoned its commitment to fund a five-year agreement with teachers. Now, with the 2010-11 academic year approaching and no extra money for teachers' salaries on the table, school boards, students, and families are about to feel the crunch. To the minister: with the Calgary board of education considering eliminating 150 positions to cover its \$21 million shortfall, what plans does the minister have to prevent layoffs?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have not abandoned our commitment. In fact, we're fulfilling our commitment. We fulfilled our commitment to the 5.99 per cent increase after we went through the arbitration process. That's been done. What we haven't done is put in a 3 per cent increase for salaries this year, the September 1 adjustment. What I've said to the school boards is that we need to work that out over a longer period of time and they should work with me, the school boards and the ATA, with respect to how we go into a longer term agreement.

In the meantime I've asked them to consider not laying off staff at the classroom level, the teachers and the support for the classrooms, and to manage it over a longer period of time.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can't extend a five-year contracted agreement and pay people gradually.

How can the minister continue to advocate for student-punishing Band-Aid solutions such as boards running temporary deficits or drawing on small reserves when the real problem is an ongoing funding shortfall from this province?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, there's \$340 million of operating reserves in this province among school boards. Not every school board has them, but across the system we have a very healthy financial statement. What I've said to school boards is that we need to draw on those surpluses or perhaps run a short-term deficit in order to help us work on a longer term agreement to deal with not just salaries but also other areas to make sure that the education system is strong for teachers, for the profession, for the school boards, and for the province.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Clawing back committed surpluses seems to be the new *raison d'être* of this government.

Given that school boards in Medicine Hat are considering eliminating full-day kindergarten programs to cover their shortfall, will the minister admit that by not honouring the teachers' wage agreement, this government is pushing Alberta even further away from meeting the recommendations of the Learning Commission and doing nothing to reduce our one-third dropout high school rate?

**Mr. Hancock:** No, Mr. Speaker, I won't admit that at all. Again, for the benefit of this member and for the benefit of anybody on school boards that hasn't heard me say it before, I'll say it again: we need a longer term approach. We're working on that longer term approach. That longer term approach will deal not just with salaries

for teachers but also professional development and curriculum and other things that are in the best interest of students, in the interest of teachers as a profession, in the interest of school boards, and in the interest of the province. We'll be working on that over a longer term, and in the short term we're asking them to draw on their very healthy reserves.

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

### **Special Education Review**

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After engaging over 7,000 Albertans, the Setting the Direction for Special Education final report was submitted to the minister over 10 months ago, yet we still have not heard any response from the government. To the Minister of Education: is the delay in the government response an indication that you're backing away from a commitment to a truly supportive and inclusive education system that Albertans obviously demonstrated they wanted?

**Mr. Hancock:** No, Mr. Speaker. I can understand the hon. member's frustration in that he chaired the task force and did an excellent job with the stakeholders in getting that report. But I would also say that it does take time to get policy approval and to put implementation plans in place. We're working very, very strongly interdepartmentally to make sure that Health, Children and Youth Services, and Education work together. This is a major shift in philosophy, from a diagnostic model to a learning-based model, and we need to take the time to do it right.

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

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given the fact that there have been no increases to the funding for special education since 2008, how do you explain the Edmonton Catholic school system's recent announcement to integrate every child in every classroom?

2:40

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we should be clear that it's not about integrating every child into every classroom. Inclusive education is about making sure that every child is included in education and has the appropriate learning opportunities for that child. That is different from the concept of any child in any classroom. That would not be possible.

The process that the Edmonton Catholic school board is engaged in, as I understand it, relates primarily to students with mild and moderate needs, and those children very often can be included in classrooms with appropriate learning plans and learning profiles. If they're engaging in doing that ahead of the . . .

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

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the same minister: since the boards are taking the initiative to move towards inclusive education on their own, is that a sign that the sector is anticipating cuts to special education?

**Mr. Hancock:** No, Mr. Speaker. They shouldn't be anticipating cuts to special education, nor should they necessarily be anticipating significant increases. What they should be anticipating is that we should look at the resources we have and make sure that we use those resources in the most appropriate way. That's what this design

is all about. It's not the fifth review of a funding formula. It's about looking at how we can do things better with what we have and how we can make sure that every child is included, has the opportunity to move from where they are to where they can be and achieve their full potential.

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

#### Funding for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [The members sang *Happy Birthday*] Thank you very much. Actions do speak louder than words, so thank you for that.

The minister of seniors' actions have shown a lack of support for people with developmental disabilities, and the lack of support is directly translating to decreased care. To the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports: will the minister immediately reinstate the funding that is needed so that the Calgary area PDD service providers will not have to cut services?

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

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the budget for the PDD program this year has not changed. It remains the same as last year, at \$597 million. I understand that there may be some cost pressures that we have to be cognizant of. I would say to you that maybe there's a way that we can do things a little bit differently so that we can make the \$597 million stretch. I'd like to say that \$500 million of that budget goes directly to our service providers for 9,200 people.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you. To the same minister. Part of the reason for the cut is to direct funds toward unfunded pension liabilities. How can the minister justify cutting front-line services and supports for this reason?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, there have been no cuts in PDD. The PDD budget remains the very same as last year. Like I said, I understand that there may be some funding pressures, but there have been no cuts. I've asked our PDD boards, I've asked my department and my divisions to look very carefully at their own budgets so that they can find the efficiencies that will help us make that budget stretch as far as we can so that the savings can go directly to the front-line services of our PDD clients.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you. Are some of those funds going toward unfunded pension liabilities, not necessarily from the PDD but out of your department?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that of the \$600 million that we have in the PDD budget, \$500 million goes directly to our service providers. The other \$97 million goes to direct services, to the PDD boards, and to my PDD divisions. I would say to you that we have one of the very best programs in Canada, most generously funded. If you compare us to B.C. and Ontario, our PDD clients receive more in funding than clients in those other areas.

**The Speaker:** Well, hon. members, that concludes question period, and a rather energetic one, I might say. There were 18 hon.

members recognized today, made up of nine from the Official Opposition, four from the independents, and the remaining five from the government caucus, for a total of 106 questions and responses.

In 15 seconds from now we'll continue with the Routine.

Hon. members, might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

#### Introduction of Guests

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Little Bow.

**Mr. McFarland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a couple who have come about 450 kilometres today. Dick and Izzy Ellis are from Champion, Alberta. Dick is the manager of all the solid waste and transfer stations and recycling program, and Izzy is a small businesswoman and an accomplished singer. They're here today on business. Dick is going to be meeting with some of our colleagues on a significant solid waste energy project that involves 60 municipalities in southern Alberta. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome from all of us.

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

**Mrs. McQueen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's a real pleasure for me to rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two outstanding constituents of mine, the hon. Shirley Cripps, past MLA for Drayton Valley, and her lovely daughter Christine Cripps-Woods. Today is an even more special day because one of the two MLAs for a day that I had the pleasure of hosting was Christine's daughter, Shirley's granddaughter, Erin Cripps-Woods. If you would please rise. Let's show her the traditional warm welcome.

#### Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Private Bills has had certain bills under consideration and wishes to report as follows. The committee recommends that Bill Pr. 1, Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act, proceed in the Assembly; that Bill Pr. 2, Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010, proceed with amendments; and that Bill Pr. 3, Lamont Health Care Centre Act, proceed with amendments. As part of this report I will be tabling five copies of the recommended amendments to bills Pr. 2 and Pr. 3. I request the concurrence of the Assembly in these recommendations.

**The Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur in this report?

**Hon. Members:** Concur.

**The Speaker:** Opposed, please say no. The report is carried.

#### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of reports to table today, the first one being that of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists annual report. The appropriate number of copies are here with me.

The other one, Mr. Speaker, is the 2009 ASET, Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta, annual report, with the appropriate number of copies.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. The first is a letter I received from the Edmonton public school board regarding the ongoing school closures. This letter, among other things, indicates that the school board was willing to pay at least \$580,000 to hire a consultant to conduct the sector reviews and organize the closures.

The second tabling I have is information provided to me by the Alberta Society for Pension Reform. Again I would urge all hon. members to have a look through that if they could, please.

The third tabling I have is a letter that I received from a constituent, Mr. Marc Ranson, regarding Alberta Hospital Edmonton. It's recognized as a world-class facility, and Mr. Ranson certainly hopes that that continues.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of tablings today. First of all, I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a letter from the Eastern irrigation district to Alberta Environment concerning its licence amendment application. The letter shows the purposes the irrigation district would like added to its licence include municipal, commercial, and industrial water uses. This document relates to the questions asked earlier today by my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of 78 postcards signed by Albertans calling on the provincial government to keep its promise to build 600 new long-term care beds. The postcards are part of a campaign sponsored by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which has gathered signed postcards from approximately 2,500 Albertans.

Thank you.

2:50

## Orders of the Day

### Government Motions

#### Committee Membership Changes

13. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that the following change to

- (a) the Standing Committee on Community Services be approved: that Mr. Allred replace Mr. Johnson;
- (b) the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services be approved: that Mr. Johnson replace Mr. Griffiths;
- (c) the Standing Committee on the Economy be approved: that Mr. Griffiths replace Mr. Allred.

**Mr. Hancock:** A brief explanation, Mr. Speaker. This supports the appointment of the Member for Battle River-Wainwright as a parliamentary assistant for finance and, thus, the desire to put him on the Standing Committee for Economy and the other resulting changes. I would ask for the support of the House.

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move an amendment to Government Motion 13. There are copies of the amendment at the table. I move that the motion be amended:

- A. By striking out part (c) and substituting the following:
  - (c) the Standing Committee on the Economy be approved: that Mr. Chase replace Mr. Taylor as deputy chair and as a member of the committee, that Mr. Griffiths replace Mr. Allred;
- B. By adding the following after part (c):
  - (d) the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services be approved: that Ms Pastoor replace Mr. Taylor;
  - (e) the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing be approved: that Ms Blakeman replace Mr. Taylor.

**The Speaker:** Just a second, hon. member.

Please proceed.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given the changes in some of our caucus duties and in some of our caucus membership I'm taking advantage of the government motion before us to put those changes through.

I also see on the Order Paper that we now anticipate having Government Motion 14 moved soon, which is anticipating the adjournment of the government business over the summer. Therefore, I'd like to make sure that I can offer some certainty to my caucus members as to what duties they will be expected to be performing and on what committees over our summer break. So I would ask the co-operation of the House in approving the changes that my caucus has put forward.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in speaking to the amendment, obviously, these changes are brought forward subsequent to the original motion having been put on the Order Paper and thus come forward as an amendment. I don't have any problem supporting this amendment.

I would have to say that I have not heard from the Member for Calgary-Currie with respect to any particular desire with respect to committee assignments in the House. We'll obviously want to accommodate him, should he come forward, in terms of some committee assignment. I would understand the Official Opposition wanting particularly to make a change with respect to the deputy chair position on a committee, et cetera. So recognizing that there will probably need to be additional changes, I would certainly support these on an interim basis.

**The Speaker:** Look, some might argue that it is inappropriate for the chair to raise some questions with respect to this, but the chair is going to. The chair has to protect the integrity of hon. private members. Where is there an appointment, then, for the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie on any of the committees? If I understand, this session may be rising shortly. I don't know that for sure. Notice has to basically be given. If this Assembly rises tomorrow, the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie is ignored until the fall. There's something in my body that says that this is not right.

Now, I don't want to get involved – I'm sorry – but I've got to get involved to protect the integrity of private members in this Assembly. I can understand that changes are there, and I can understand the desire in certain caucuses to do certain things, but there's always been a tradition in here that every hon. member must be able to

participate in at least one, perhaps two committees. If the Member for Calgary-Currie is not protected here, and there's no opportunity to deal with him until the fall, there is something wrong with that in my humble opinion. I'm sorry. I'll apologize for it. I'll even resign my position for having said it if the hon. members think that the Speaker has gone too far. But there must be a protection for the integrity of hon members.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments. I had some very similar concerns. This motion was coming forward today, and the amendments came forward at the last moment. I would be happy if you would entertain a motion to adjourn, allowing this to go over for another day. Then the Member for Calgary-Currie could participate as he has not to date. I mean, the events have just happened quickly, and obviously people are moving to make changes quickly in anticipation of assignments over the summer. I'm certainly conscious of that and would be happy to move, if you would entertain it, or to have someone else move to adjourn debate on this at this point, and we can bring it back tomorrow with perhaps another amendment.

**Ms Blakeman:** I'm happy to support that, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak for the Member for Calgary-Currie any longer. He's not a member of my caucus. I certainly did not want to exert power over him and make a choice as to what committee he might choose to sit on, but I do have to move forward and look after my own caucus colleagues, and that's what I've done. If the member needs time to consult with the Speaker and with the Government House Leader to look after his own interests, frankly, that's beyond my responsibility and beyond my power to influence. I need to work with my own caucus colleagues. I'm happy to wait.

Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

#### Adjournment of Spring Session

14. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 3(9) the spring sitting of the Assembly stand adjourned upon the Government House Leader advising the Assembly that the business for the sitting is concluded.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we can anticipate more success with this motion.

This is one of those perfunctory motions, which often were moved at the very beginning of a session, to set up the process for ending a session. I'm not sure I understand even the need for it anymore, but I'm told that there is a need for it. I'd ask the House to support it so that when we actually do finish the business of the House, we can adjourn until the fall session.

[Government Motion 14 carried]

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

#### FOIP Act Review

15. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that

- (1) The Standing Committee on Health be deemed to be the special committee of the Assembly for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of the Freedom of

Information and Protection of Privacy Act as provided for in section 97 of the act;

- (2) The committee must commence its review of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act no later than July 1, 2010, and must submit its report to the Assembly within one year of commencing its review, including any amendments recommended by the committee;
- (3) No additional remuneration shall be provided to the members of the committee for the purpose of this review.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appear to be on a roll. As the motion indicates, there is a statutory review called for by a special committee of the Legislature. We have now in place policy field committees of the Legislature. In looking at those policy field committees, the Health one appears to be an appropriate one to deal with it because of their interaction between the FOIP Act and the Health Information Act and for other reasons. The structure is in place to do this sort of work and, therefore, rather than striking yet another committee, to ask the Health Committee to take on this task seemed to be an appropriate direction.

**The Speaker:** This is a debatable motion.

**Ms Blakeman:** I certainly understand the need to strike the review of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. That is a requirement under section 97 of that act, that a comprehensive review be in place and commenced by July 1, 2010, and then its report be submitted within one year to the Assembly. I am less settled in my mind that using the policy field committee, now known as the Standing Committee on Health, is the appropriate vehicle for this. Generally, what we've had when the FOIP Act has been reviewed in the past is that an additional committee has been struck with representation from all of the parties.

3:00

I'm aware that this Standing Committee on Health, in fact, has not been called for any meetings in I think over a year, so its agenda is fairly empty, and it can accommodate the request to take on the review. I have some concerns about whether all members would be able to be notified and that there would be the wider knowledge of the calling of the committee. I'm aware that there have been some adjustments on the secure websites for the various members who are assigned to these policy field committees and that there was an agreement that all members could get access to a sort of general committee, but I think there are still some restrictions about whether members who are not assigned to the committee can get access to information that's to be distributed and agendas and such.

Also, I'm not as confident that the choice of putting this review into the Committee on Health is the appropriate place for the review to happen. The review itself must happen and should happen and is very important to happen as freedom of information and protection of privacy is one of the most critical services that the government offers to citizens, the opposition, and the media in this day and age. I think a number of people would argue that there need to be some changes and recommendations made to that act. I'm just not entirely comfortable with it going to the Standing Committee on Health. Maybe others can help allay my concerns around that, but I wanted to put that on the record.

I understand the need for clause (3), which is about no additional remuneration, which makes sense if it's going to a committee that is currently already staffed by members and that their remuneration is accounted for. I just think that we may have other members who are interested in participating in this particular review, and I'm most concerned not that they be paid but that they get free and open access to the committee. Any member can attend a committee, and



they have a voice but not a vote. I just have some concerns that this is not as open as I was hoping for.

Thank you for the opportunity to put those remarks on the record.

**The Speaker:** Others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate. What I find somewhat ironic is the fact that we're going to send to the committee the idea of personal information, yet as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre pointed out, some of our own MLA access to standing policy committee information is somewhat limited or potentially compromised. That's the first issue that I want to echo that the hon. member brought forward.

As for the selection of the Standing Policy Committee on Health I, too, would appreciate some more justification or explanation as to the choice of this particular committee. I agree with the hon. Government House Leader and with my own House leader that, obviously, this has to take place. FOIP is extremely important both for the protection of individuals' information and also for the governance of this province because information is absolutely essential in making decisions.

I am not quite sure, though, as I say, about why the Health Committee. For example, my experience of being a diligent member of the Committee on Community Services has indicated that while we work hard and we collaborate and do good work on behalf of the citizens of this province, it seems to me that that is a committee that could potentially also shoulder that duty. So I look forward to the hon. Government House Leader indicating his preference, based on the amount of duty that committee members have on the four standing policy committees, on why he believes this is the best fit for the FOIP review.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's appropriate, perhaps, for you as chair to shed some light on the differences between standing policy committees and select special committees. Contrary to what both of the members from the Liberal opposition have argued, in a standing policy committee, actually, the information that is available to members of that committee is available to any member of this Legislature. Simply show up at the meeting and sit at the table and put your time in, and you will receive any and all information that is available to any member of the committee. The only exception is that you don't get to vote if you're not a member sitting on that committee. But members of this particular caucus, being the Liberal caucus, will be on that committee.

If we were to appoint a select special committee, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that only members of that select special committee would have access to any information that is made available to the committee. Nonmembers of that committee would not be able to sit in on their meetings and definitely, obviously, would not have a vote either.

They're arguing for actually less access to information than they have right now. All you need to do is simply attend the meetings, and you'll have access to any and all information you want. If you get a select special committee, you're neither attending the meetings, nor are you getting any access to information. Mr. Speaker, I guess they have a little confused understanding of the two committees.

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to get in on this

discussion. I previously served as a member of the Select Special Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Review Committee, and I would submit first of all that the selection of the Standing Committee on Health as a substitute for this committee is a mistake. The work of that committee was fairly intense, and it had regular meetings for a fairly extended period of time. It was quite a bit of work, and it required people to really focus. We heard from different organizations and individuals, and there was, I think, a considerable amount of effort that went into that process.

The act calls for the creation of a select special committee. I question the appropriateness of or even whether or not, Mr. Speaker, it's in order to place a standing policy committee in the position of what's called for for this review committee under the legislation, so I am going to oppose this. I think that, you know, the Government House Leader has a responsibility to work with other House leaders and with the Speaker to canvass the caucuses and make sure that an appropriate composition is established for a select special committee. I don't know what the Health Committee has done to annoy the Government House Leader that he's going to make them do this, but it's important work. It's stand-alone work. What the Government House Leader is suggesting, in my view, is inappropriate.

**The Speaker:** Others?

Then the Government House Leader to close the debate.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of words. I think that any committee we establish is going to have a limited number of members of the House on it. This particular committee has two representatives of the Official Opposition, one representative of the third party on it. As I indicated in my opening remarks, there is a symbiotic relationship between the Health Information Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. There are a number of good reasons to do it in this format.

All members of the House now, as a result of some discussions that we had prior to one of the previous amendments to the standing orders – there was an agreement that I don't think was put in the standing orders but has certainly been put into practice – get notice of committee meetings. I know I get notice of all the committee meetings, and I assume everybody else gets that same notice and has access to the information at the committee meetings. It is actually broader access than we would have in a normal select special committee process. We don't get notices of the select special committee meetings, nor are we invited to participate in select special committees or attend select special committees normally.

This is, in fact, a good forum to do this. I appreciate the remarks from the leader of the third party, but this is a better way, in my view, than adding a number of members to yet another committee. We've got a structure. We've got a process. We've got a research process. We've got a methodology. It will work well. So I would commend it to the House to support this motion.

[Government Motion 15 carried]

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

### 3:10 Auditor General Appointment

16. Mr. Hancock moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly concur in the report of the Select Special Auditor General Search Committee and recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that Merwan N. Saher be appointed Auditor General for the province of Alberta for a six-year term.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Select

Special Auditor General Search Committee reported to the House. It's now my privilege to move the motion.

**The Speaker:** This motion is debatable if anybody wishes to. The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I want to applaud the committee's choice of Merwan N. Saher for our new Auditor General. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that Mr. Saher will receive more support from the government in conducting his business.

The week prior to our two-week break for Easter saw us having received pamphlets or a paper, I guess it would be, from the Speaker sort of pointing out that the Auditor General had potentially, according to the paper's author, overstepped his bounds and that he had gone beyond the simple mathematical accounting into potential policy development areas. I personally don't share that concern, and I am hoping that the government will honour Mr. Saher with the support that I have seen eroding for our previous Auditor General, who was forced, unfortunately, by a cutting of funding to either delay or completely avoid certain areas that he had wished to investigate. I'm looking forward to tomorrow's final release from the Auditor General, whom I have great respect for, and of course I wish him well in his retirement.

I'm hoping that in terms of the professed transparency and accountability and the important role of the Auditor General and as a member of Public Accounts, every form of support, including funding, will be provided by this government to assist Mr. Saher and the members of his department in successfully continuing the auditing role that we have grown accustomed to with our past Auditor General, Fred Dunn.

I have had the opportunity to wish Fred a successful and enjoyable retirement, but I would like to take one more opportunity to applaud the work that Mr. Dunn has done on behalf of all Albertans and at the same time wish Mr. Merwan Saher all the best with the hope that all parties, including the government, will support his efforts to hold the government to account on behalf of Alberta citizens.

Thank you.

**Mr. Snelgrove:** Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the appointment of Merwan Saher in a positive manner. As a member of the audit committee we have the privilege of working with the Auditor General's office as they establish and develop their business go-forward plans. I don't believe that many understand the very complex nature of them developing and coming forward with where they believe their best efforts are and how closely they work with the office of the internal auditors.

It was a privilege to work with Mr. Dunn. I can say, and I think Mr. Dunn would agree, that we didn't always have to agree on issues. The important thing was that he had complete, unfettered access to government books and had the opportunity to fulfill the mandate of his position in a very respectful way.

I can tell you from working with Mr. Saher on the audit committee that he has handled himself very graciously, respectfully, and competently. I think the citizens of Alberta will be well served by him. I look forward for as long as I'm in the capacity of President of the Treasury Board to continuing to maintain a very positive and productive relationship with the office of the Auditor General. I want to thank the committee members for their support of this gentleman.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Others?

[Government Motion 16 carried]

**The Speaker:** Just as an addendum to this decision, Mr. Saher will now become an officer of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta. He will be responsible to this Assembly via the Speaker, and it will be the Speaker who will sign his contract.

### Private Bills Second Reading

#### Bill Pr. 1 Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill on behalf of the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Dr. Brown:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West it's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill Pr. 1, the Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act.

This bill will establish a new charitable foundation for Lethbridge and southwestern Alberta. It is in fact modelled upon the Calgary Foundation legislation, which our Legislature previously passed as a private bill. I am in full support of it, and I certainly would encourage all of the other members in the Chamber to support this legislation. It is a facilitating piece of legislation which will enable Lethbridge and southwestern Alberta to encourage donors to participate in many, many charitable causes and good works in that part of the province.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would rise in support of Bill Pr. 1. What it does, I think, is reflect what's happening in our province, that our cities are growing and that we are incorporating the area around us. This would enable that exact thing to happen so that the dollars can be collected for this very, very successful community-oriented foundation. The money has gone to very many worthy causes in Lethbridge and certainly in southern Alberta. For those reasons I would support this.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Speaking in support of Bill Pr. 1, I just want to have on the record that this government has been down-loading a tremendous amount of their responsibilities onto nonprofit organizations and in this case municipalities to do the charitable service work that is absolutely necessary.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I would like to see the type of support beyond just the words and the legislation indicated in Bill Pr. 1 in terms of active funding support for organizations and municipalities. We've had a situation whereby the former agreement with municipalities in terms of capital funding has been delayed and placed over a longer time period. Therefore, the cities' and the municipalities' ability to deliver program services has been basically delayed as well.

We've also seen through cuts, for example to PDD, local nonprofit organizations scrambling to provide service for an ever-growing number of individuals. While I understand the intention and support the intention of Bill Pr. 1, it's extremely important that the government's role of supporting especially those most vulnerable be recognized and that an expectation that municipalities or local communities pick up to a larger extent their efforts in supporting

their local citizenry be recognized and shared as a government responsibility.

3:20

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. The balance between government support and subsidies and local initiatives and recognizing the strength of those local initiatives has to be taken into account or we're going to burn out our volunteers, our nonprofits, and the people who do this good work that to a large degree Bill Pr. 1 is destined to support.

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

Seeing none, the chair shall now call on the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill to close the debate.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity always manages to find the dark cloud in every silver lining.

This bill is a good-news story. It reflects a community that has already raised \$13 million under their existing act in a community foundation. They distribute over \$400,000 every year to good purposes. This is not meant to replace government services. This is the charitable works of people that are contributing willingly their own money, companies and individuals in that part of the province. It's a good-news story.

They want to modernize their legislation. They want to provide more flexibility to encourage private donors to give to these charitable purposes, and for that purpose they've set up a foundation which enables them to have the flexibility so that a donor doesn't have to go out and set up their own charity in order to provide for a specific purpose which they might wish to donate money to.

This is a very, very good news story, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge all members to support it.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a second time]

### Bill Pr. 2

#### Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010

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

**Ms DeLong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move second reading of Bill Pr. 2, Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010, and urge all members of the Assembly to support it. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Several weeks ago, after the 2010 Olympics came to a close, I think that all of us in this Assembly were extremely excited over the result of our team, so I absolutely would support this, which I believe will help our Canadian athletes in the future.

I did, actually, want to give some remarks on what I think this will do for our athletes and kind of bring it back to the 2010 Olympic Games. I wanted to do this in the House after the ministerial statement on the issue but was denied unanimous consent and thought I would put it into the record at this time as it is relevant to the question at hand, and it is a very positive news story.

Like most Canadians I found myself enraptured by the amazing spectacle that was the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. I can honestly say that, personally, I have never been so proud to be Canadian. From watching Alex Bilodeau win our nation's first gold

medal at home to witnessing the already iconic overtime win of Sidney Crosby to secure a world-record 14th gold at a Winter Olympics, I was amazed by how many of our athletes performed under pressure and how Canadians from coast to coast rallied behind them and behind our country.

I was worried at first, like many of you, when the games opened with the tragic death of a Georgian athlete, malfunctioning equipment at the opening ceremonies, and some early athletic disappointments. Cynics used these early challenges as an opportunity to criticize our Own the Podium program as proof that Canada was too cocky and prideful and was receiving its just deserts. Some international media even went so far as to say that Canada's games were turning into an utter failure.

However, as it is with most things in life, it's not whether we face adversity that determines who we are; it is how we respond to it that matters. Canadians responded. Our athletes performed at levels unequalled by any country at any Winter Olympics ever. Our people ignored the cynicism, volunteered, cheered, e-mailed and voiced support, took to the airwaves to promote, and waved the flag and sang the anthem with enamoured pride.

Some athletes didn't win gold but did our country just as proud as if they had. Who could have been more proud of Airdrie's own Mellisa Hollingsworth, who, in risking it all for a golden finish, lost control of her sled and a medal? She could have safely held back and secured a silver or a bronze, but that wasn't good enough for her. She taught us that it is better to have done all we can to achieve our potential rather than to hold back and settle for something less. From my viewpoint Mellisa's tearful and humble apology to her fellow Canadians was one of the turning points of the games. Her words reminded us that we, athletes and countrymen alike, were in this together, and nothing short of our best would be enough or would do.

And their best was exactly what our athletes gave. The final week of the Olympics was a stunning display of Canadian accomplishment, from the inspired and emotional performance of Joannie Rochette skating so beautifully for her mother, who had just passed on hours previous to her competition, to the fortitude of our men's hockey team, who managed to fulfill the hopes of an entire nation. Canadians piled up victory after victory on our way to a golden world record.

It is often said that it is not how you start in life but how you finish that matters. Maybe there is a lesson in that for our country. Our history has been a mix of good and bad, disappointment and accomplishment. We've seen petty differences divide us and great causes unite us. But whatever our history – and it is useful to be mindful of it – it is just that, history. What matters now is what we become. Will our nation squabble or will it build? Will we settle for mediocrity, or will we devote ourselves to setting an example of excellence for all the world to follow? If Vancouver 2010 is any indication, I think I know the answer. Thank you, Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege to speak on this Bill Pr. 2, which will allow for the Canada Olympic Park property tax exemption. I would like to thank the hon. colleague from Airdrie-Chestermere for regaling us with a little bit of a past-performance glimpse at how well our nation did at the last Olympic Games. I, too, will echo his sentiments that the Olympics and athletics in general bring our nation together, our communities together, make not only children and adults better, but I think they provide us with an opportunity to celebrate as a nation.

Sports also provide young, old, and middle-aged people with

opportunities for healthy exercise. The Olympic Games inspire people to get off the couch and get active and get busy in their communities. I think that is one of the things that will be accomplished by extending the tax exemption amendment to Canada Olympic Park. Hopefully, these athletes will continue to train there, strive there, thrive there, become medalists through their training there, and continue to inspire a nation to better itself and to become physically fit and to look at the possibilities.

I'm proud to speak in favour of this bill, and I'd like to thank the sponsor from Calgary-Bow for bringing this bill forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill had indicated my capacity for finding I believe it was a dark lining in a silver cloud. I want to sort of continue in that designation that I've been given but provide a little bit of background. When I was a young boy growing up in Saskatoon, there was a radio show called *Beefs and Bouquets*. I would like to hand out some beef and bouquets associated with Bill Pr. 2, the Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010.

3:30

First off, the bouquet. I would like to add a bouquet to the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow for putting her name to this bill. I'd like to offer a much larger bouquet to the government in general for its renewed support for the Olympic program. Six years ago there was concern about the maintenance of the Olympic facility. It seemed that the federal government in the last number of years, whether Conservative or Liberal, was not providing the funding for sustaining and maintaining Calgary's 1988 Olympic legacy. I want to provide a bouquet to this government for continuing to provide that support of funding. That was the bouquet.

The beef. The beef, Mr. Speaker, is the way the spending was done towards our Olympic promotion. I wouldn't be at all surprised if one of the several thousand dollars' worth of iPods that were given out on our luxury train contained pictures of the grizzly. Now, what I find ironic is that the grizzly, which is a national object of strength and is found in dwindling numbers in Alberta, would not receive the equivalent funding that the distribution of iPods received as part of an Olympic event.

So the beef and the bouquet of Pr. 2.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, maybe I could draw to your attention that we are talking about property tax exemptions for the Olympic Park. Thank you.

**Mr. Chase:** The area where we are talking about this property exemption amendment is for Canada's Olympic Park. Therefore, let me continue with why I support Bill Pr. 2, Canada Olympic Park Tax Exemption Amendment Act.

As the Liberal critic for Tourism, Parks and – yes – Recreation it is extremely important that we offer every opportunity for the Olympic Park property to flourish, and part of that flourishing is not being subject to taxing.

However, Mr. Speaker, as with the bouquet and the beef, new plans are being made, to which I hope to offer a bouquet, within this Olympic Park property, and that's the idea of a film studio. Now, here's a big bouquet to the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit, who is, I gather, supporting and cheerleading and potentially the key person putting this potential into reality. I'm glad he was listening to our hon. House leader, the Member for Edmonton-

Centre, our representative for Culture and Community Spirit, because we need to support the film industry. However, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that there is no suggestion under Bill Pr. 2, the Canada Olympic Park Tax Exemption Amendment Act, that a profit-making film studio, as opposed to a ski jump or the new hockey rinks that are coming up or the expansion of the gymnastic facilities at Olympic Park, would be subject to that same tax exemption. We want to promote the film industry, but commercial properties need to be taxed in a commercial fashion.

I indicate that reservation. I hope it's completely unfounded. Mind you, I would find it hard to consider that I would bring something that was irrelevant, unfounded, or not directly related to the discussion at hand. But I put that on the record, Mr. Speaker, because while celebrating our Olympic legacy and promoting our parks, including the wonderful oval that is located in Calgary-Varsity, we must be true to our word. Nonrecreational, non sports-related activities should not be exempted, even if they are located within this property designation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members for understanding the relevance of the points I have made with regard to supporting Bill Pr. 2.

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

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to stand up in support of Bill Pr. 2, the Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010. I think that there are a few important things to realize. Again, there are times when we step forward and move forward and it's positive, and other times we're taking steps back. This is a bill that's moving forward.

Why I say that is because competition really is important. Canada has been at a disadvantage in the past because of not having the access to money and the facilities that the athletes have needed in order to compete in the Olympics. We have done that and have stepped up and have given them some pretty good facilities and whatnot but often at the taxpayers' expense. It's a sad situation when we have governments that continue to think that we should tax anything that moves, anything that breathes, anything that exists and be able to hold it back. We're kind of digressing that way in Alberta here where we continue to increase taxes – whether it's municipal, provincial, or federal or user fees – and they are not being used in the best way possible. What's important about this is that this is a tax exemption, which allows the cost to be controlled in a better way.

It's exciting that way to realize how well we were competitive at the Olympics. Now we need to put that competitiveness into the fact of being able to build facilities and having more and greater access for our athletes. But we need to continue looking at this and realize, you know: where do we go from here, and how do we ensure that there's more money that is going towards our athletes that represent us? Then the question is: well, should that be taxpayers' money, or should we create exemptions and opportunities for business and athletes to raise that money? It is important. So it's exciting to see that we're looking at some tax exemptions, we're looking at reducing taxes and not wanting to think that governments can try and capitalize or control all these facilities.

To me it's important that we look at this and the fact that we're looking at exemptions and say: where else can we increase some exemptions and charitable donations towards the athletes or to training facilities or to clubs that are wanting to further increase the access for Alberta athletes and Canadian athletes to continue to train? It's exciting that we're moving in this direction. I know it's just a clarification bill because there was some worry that some

capitalists might come in and take advantage of this tax exemption area. This bill definitely clears that up to ensure that it isn't going to happen. Like I say, I'm in favour of this and am looking forward that this will continue to help Alberta athletes compete in the world and that we'll go forward and be able to continue to show that we can be competitive not only in sports but in business as well.

Thank you.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand up and support this bill. I think that as a Canadian I am no different from anyone else who probably, when the Olympics were first talked about a number of years ago, went: oh, yeah, whatever. I think one of the important things that happened, of course, was having the torch relay across the country, that got everyone really involved with this. As time went on and I realized that I wasn't going to go to the Olympics, there was an opportunity for people to watch the Olympics on the big screen at a movie theatre, so I bought what was called the passport and enjoyed, thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, at one point I had the entire theatre to myself, and the theatre manager brought me popcorn and coffee, so it was really quite nice.

3:40

I really am not digressing here. One of the things that did happen was the hockey game. The theatre was much fuller at that point. There were six little guys sitting about four rows in front of me. They could not contain themselves with the excitement that they got over watching the hockey game and screaming and yelling and carrying on. It was wonderful because of just the feeling inside that movie theatre: (a) it was Canadian; (b) of course, it was hockey. But it was also these little guys, that knew that they could grow up to be that hockey player that was on that big screen. It was interesting that at the end we all stood up and sang *O Canada* like everyone else had done across Canada. It was wonderful.

My point is that I think that in this country, where we have a huge obesity problem with our young kids, the more we can provide places for them to play sports – they don't all have to be Olympic athletes. That's not what it's about. What it's about is that people have a chance to join teams and to play different games. There are rec leagues that are highly competitive, but there are also leagues where people just come out to have a good time. What I think of often is the senior men's hockey. Today as I got one year older, I can appreciate that they don't have the same kind of bodychecking that they used to have when they were maybe 15. Nevertheless, they do play. We get our communities going as a community by being able to play sports.

I think one of the other things that is a very important distinction is the fact that the land would be exempt only if a nonprofit facility is on it. I think that's a very important distinction that is clearly put out in this bill.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Calgary-Bow for bringing this forward. I think it's a very important bill and one that for many decades to come will be felt by the citizens of this province for the good of all of us. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is any other hon. member wishing to speak on Bill Pr. 2?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a second time]

### Bill Pr. 3

#### Lamont Health Care Centre Act

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

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today and move second reading of Bill Pr. 3, the Lamont Health Care Centre Act.

The Lamont health care centre is a combined acute-care auxiliary hospital and nursing home facility located in Lamont, Alberta. It is operated by a board of management established as a corporate entity by a ministerial order under sections 4 and 5 of the Hospitals Act. The purpose of the bill is to allow for continued operation of the facilities subsequent to amendments under the Health Facilities Accountability Statutes Amendment Act, 2007, which will remove the opportunity for the board to continue after that act is proclaimed in force. The enactment of Bill Pr. 3 will ensure that the corporation, under the name of the Lamont health care centre, will continue to operate the integrated facility in the same manner as the board of management has done so successfully since 1992.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this bill. I think everyone knows where I stand in terms of health care centres and, certainly, as people age, how much they need a place to be able to go to, even sometimes if it's just to be able to talk about a small problem. There is a nursing home here and also the acute-care hospital, so it can create that continuum for people who perhaps just need a little bit now. But even if they have moved into the nursing home part, they have access to that acute care that they may require off and on as they age and go towards the end of life.

One of the reasons that I think it's very important that this passes is because if it does not pass, there would be a need to resign all the contracts, rehire all the employees in order for the facility to be incorporated again, and I think that that would be very, very disruptive to a health centre that has been very successful. Mainly for that reason I think it's very important that we all understand how important it is to pass this bill.

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

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 3 read a second time]

### Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

#### Bill 9

#### Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

[Adjourned debate March 23: Mr. Taylor]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any hon. member wish to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Mr. Hehr:** Someone else is going to go.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere, then.

**Mr. Anderson:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to speak in favour of Bill 9. I think that Bill 9 is a very important bill. It's a bill that the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater brought as a private member's bill last year, I think. It had apparently some work that needed to be done on it, and that's fine. That's, I think, a good indication of what the parliamentary process should be like, you know, that we have bills that are referred to committees, they're studied, they're debated, and if we have to kind of reset and make it a government bill and look at it again, I think that's perfectly legitimate. I would like to compliment the Member for Athabasca-Redwater on starting the process forward on this, and then we have this bill in front of us.

Our caucus has some disagreement on this bill. I'm going to be voting in favour of it, and I think there is going to be just one other that's going to be voting against it. I think we have 15 bills before the House, and I think on about one-third our caucus has a split vote. I think that comes from what I like to call the novel idea of having free votes in the Legislature. It's something that we need to examine because out of those 15 bills from the government side I've seen exactly not one of them stand up against them. It's kind of sad.

The content of this bill, speaking to Bill 9, is just definitely – I believe it's needed. It's needed for several reasons, really. You've got to have some controls, I believe, in place with regard to campaign finances for several reasons. First, you don't want any politician to be especially beholden to any corporation or individual.

3:50

We see this in the United States all the time. I mean, the special interests are so powerful there, and the reason they're so powerful is because, honestly, in order to run kind of a standard campaign in the House of Representatives, it takes close to \$500,000 for a competitive campaign down there every two years. So you can imagine how important it is, especially in these competitive districts, for these representatives. They have to have continued support from the same donors for years and years and years and years to make sure that they, you know, can be elected every time, they can be competitive down there. Obviously, there are very noble representatives down in the United States, as there are in democracies across this world, but I think there is a lot of influence peddling that goes on there because of the special interests.

We do see this with a lot of the pork problems that they have down in the United States with little projects and special exemptions and lobbies that affect the final outcome of the bill during the actual bill debate process. It's not to make the bill better generally. It's generally because in order to get a vote, a certain Senator or a certain House member will make a deal and say: well, I really need to satisfy this person or this lobby, so I need this in there, and then for that you get my vote.

Well, that's not, I don't think, the appropriate way a functioning democracy should work. Obviously, we should debate bills and policy based on their merits, based on statistical information, based on facts. Of course, those facts are often disputed. But, again, that's part of the debate, and I think that's healthy. By having campaign limits, I think you take out a lot of those donation limits, you take out a lot of that influence peddling that does go on in other democracies.

I singled out the United States and perhaps unfairly. This does happen in other democracies, obviously, where there are no rules to this effect. A lot of the new democracies out there don't have these rules, and there are a lot of problems that stem from that and a lot of corruption.

I think that, you know, having these types of limits is very, very important in any healthy democracy. We have these types of limits

provincially. We have them federally as well. We also just passed a bill that third parties have these limits as well during election periods. These are all examples of, I think, good legislation.

Constitutionally the province has jurisdiction over the municipalities to kind of provide a framework for municipalities. Obviously, the province has decided to give a good deal of autonomy, almost complete autonomy, to the municipalities to run themselves. I think that's a positive thing. However, I do think that there is a space where, when it comes to the overall framework of how municipalities are governed from an electoral point of view, it is important that the province exercise its authority and make sure that things are fair and that the people are being elected fairly, the process is fair for electing town and city councils, et cetera. That would include, in my view, election finance law for municipalities. I think that this is very important for that reason.

The other reason is this. Even if there is no corruption, even if people were to – say there was no limit on the amount of contribution, and let's say somebody donated a million dollars to a mayoral candidate for Edmonton or Calgary in the next municipal election. Even if that mayoral candidate went on to win and was a sitting mayor, even if that mayor didn't do anything at all based on that donation, I think the public would think that that mayor would be pulled into that special interest. It's kind of like we don't want to bring the administration of justice into disrepute. It's kind of the same. We don't want to bring our democracy – we don't even want the appearance of, you know, impropriety or the appearance of evil or not doing well or whatever. We want to stay as transparent and above board as possible so that people don't get cynical about the political system. They probably will get cynical about the system on other accounts, but hopefully not on this account.

I actually do think that if you asked the average Canadian about our political system with regard to campaign finance and special interests and lobbyists, I think if you compare the reaction – I have seen polls on this, but I don't have them with me, unfortunately – people do actually have a higher degree of confidence in the Canadian-Albertan system of actually putting caps on campaign contributions than the average person would in America, where virtually everyone down there when polled says that: yeah, special interests have an undesirable effect on the politics of the nation. I think, again, having this in there will actually strengthen the reputation of municipal politics, just as these election finance laws strengthen the reputation of provincial politics and federal politics.

Now, there is one difference. I'm glad to see that the Member for Athabasca-Redwater chose to go down this path. I don't think it's wise to make a spending cap on political campaigns. I think there's a fundamental difference between capping what you can spend on a campaign and capping what can be donated to a campaign by any one individual, and I think that's a very important distinction. If somebody can raise a huge amount of money from many, many donors because they have very popular policy and people want to get behind that policy on a massive scale by sending, you know, their \$100 or \$50 or \$500 cheques, that's a good amount of money, but it's not enough, I don't think, to sway a politician, incorrectly anyway. I would say that having that limitation is a good thing to do. But having that ability to get behind something with the kind of grassroots support in that way I think is a good thing.

I think that if someone can raise a million dollars or \$2 million or \$5 million because, you know, 10 per cent of the electorate donates \$50 to them because they think it's such a great idea – you know what? – I think that's totally above board. I think they should be able to spend that on advertising their campaign. I think that's wise because instead of forcing the municipal politicians to try to appease four or five developers or four or five people of a certain group,

they're going to try to have a more broad mass appeal to many different people and many different interest groups, et cetera. I do think that it's an important distinction to make. Again, I really do like the provisions of the bill in that respect.

I do know that there were some concerns expressed by the AUMA and the AAMD and C on this bill, in particular the predecessor to this bill, and I do feel that they have some warranted concerns. Perhaps the House could have consulted a little bit more broadly at the front end with this and maybe alleviated some of their concerns. But I will say this, that last year when the bill was first brought forward kind of as a first draft as a private member's bill, the push-back was quite substantial, and I've noticed that with the second version of this bill, Bill 9, the push-back has not been nearly so acute. I mean, there are some people that kind of have their noses out of joint. You know: why don't you trust us to govern ourselves? That type of thing. Fair comment.

At the end of the day I think for the reasons expressed that it's a good bill, that the government did go through the proper consultation process at the end of the day, and that we should pass this bill into law.

With that, I would again congratulate the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater. Those are my comments.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere for filling in when I didn't have my crib sheet in front of me. He did a very excellent job, and I was able to glean a little bit from what he said as well. I, too, would like to congratulate the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater, who brought forward this bill and worked through this bill and has seemed to come up with a fairly decent solution to what we would like to see at municipal elections, which is more fair, more thoughtful, more transparent local elections.

I think this bill goes a long way to ensuring that. It eliminates almost what I call the old Wild West days, I guess, of municipal elections which had very little accountability in terms of how much people could donate to a campaign, how much companies could, how much individuals could, how much developers could, how much architecture firms could. Whatever the company or the individual who had an interest in municipal politics wanted to give to a certain candidate, well, it seemed like the sky was the limit.

4:00

I'm not saying that there was anything untoward being done or whether or not special deals were made. That's not for me to say, and I would hope that none of that happened. But we must remember the Caesar's wife rule, that we here in politics have to follow. We can't only be pure; we must be seen to be pure. That means that it doesn't matter whether we say that no one is buying influence with us, that none of our electoral donors get extra sway with us. If we don't limit the amounts, if we don't publish these amounts, if we don't have some way of limiting them, people just don't believe you. They believe that you are in the pockets of the big-money people, and regardless of what you do or what you say or how you govern or whatever it is, people have the perception that politicians are in the pockets of people with money.

This bill tries to stem people's minds from racing to that conclusion, and I think that's a good thing. I think that for far too long it has been viewed that a way for people to have influence with politicians was to donate large levels of money. I think we'd be naive in here to suggest that that hasn't happened from time to time

in Canada, the United States, or otherwise, maybe even here in Alberta, but this act at least goes towards limiting that occurrence happening in the local election authority.

Like I said, these limits seem fair and reasonable. If people want to contribute to a campaign they can, up to \$5,000. It seems like a fairly reasonable level that wouldn't tempt a politician from doing the right thing. It opens up an individual who is running a campaign to seek a variety of donors and people who would back his or her campaign. It really works on a good basis of fairness.

I think it also allows for an incumbent not to have too great of an advantage. Many times in civic politics we've heard of some campaigns having a large head start on people who want to get involved in the political process. I believe this will go a long way to solving this difference and to narrowing the gap between people who wish to challenge an incumbent for a position. I think that's a good thing. Encouraging people to run in the democratic process is what legislation should be all about. Again, I applaud the Member for Athabasca-Redwater. I believe this is a good step.

There's one thing we could have also just possibly looked at. I've talked to some aldermen in both cities who thought this might be a good idea. It's that we could at some time possibly just adopt almost the provincial rules, where we deem the local municipalities in their local elections in a similar fashion to the way we do provincial elections in that we have a rule that possibly would provide a tax writeoff for those individuals who are donating to political campaigns, with limits on a yearly basis. That may be something for us to explore in the future.

We already have a system in place, but I think that with municipal governments becoming more and more important in the structure of the way Canada and Alberta are evolving – more people are living in our municipalities; it's the local government that touches their lives more so than us up here in Edmonton – it may be something to look at in the future. I leave that for us to ruminate on and to think about for the future.

I thank you for allowing me time to speak on this. Again, it's a good bill. It's a good start.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of questions and comments.

Seeing none, then the chair recognizes the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to be brief in speaking to this bill. I think it is a good bill, but there's one part that does disturb me, and I will speak about that at the end. What this bill does is it clarifies that volunteer services where the volunteer receives no compensation either directly or indirectly is not deemed a contribution for purposes of disclosure, which to me reads in a very backward sort of way because I think that the minute you've paid a volunteer, you've defeated the word, the definition of volunteer. Volunteers aren't paid. It's there, and it does recognize what a volunteer really is.

The other thing is that it clarifies that a candidate whose campaign is self-funded has a funding cap of \$10,000, is not required to open a bank account, file a disclosure statement unless he or she had a surplus from a previous election, which I think is all very fair.

One of the other things is that any person, corporation, trade union, employee organization, et cetera, can donate \$5,000 before it's actually having to be recorded. Now, these amounts sound large, but really for any of us and all of us in this House who have had to pay advertising bills when we are having campaigns even at the municipal level, they're horrendous. Just even trying to get your

name out there, just trying to get a banner on a newspaper is very, very expensive, and I'm not talking about radio and television. I think that these numbers are very fair in terms of starting out without having to be able to disclose them.

It amends the timelines requiring candidates' surplus trust funds to be held by the municipality. I think that's fair as well. I think there's also sort of a good suggestion in here that if there's money left over and you're not running again, you can donate it to a charity or back to the municipality. I would suspect that probably the charities would have a better crack at it than perhaps the municipalities.

One of the things that really troubles me on this – I know that it's been reviewed, and I know that it's been talked about at the municipal level, but I don't think it's been gone into in enough depth – is the fact that it clarifies residency rules in that a person may be a resident of only one place at a time for the purpose of voting. I certainly know that there are many, many people in this province that have lake-front property – in fact, it may just be a block off the lake-front – where their residential tax is probably higher than their house taxes in whichever city they live. I'm not sure how we get around this business of voting twice, but I really believe that if you're a taxpayer in a municipality or in a jurisdiction, you should be allowed to vote in that municipality. You're a taxpayer. You should have a say in how your dollars are going to be spent where you are a resident.

I would like to suggest that that one clause be looked at again. I would just leave it out there for a future date. I certainly recall as a younger person in Manitoba that my parents were allowed to vote in both places because we did have lake-front property, which was outside of Winnipeg.

I would just like to see, I think, this conversation resurrected at the municipal level. I guess I would like it reversed. I would hope that the conversation around this would in fact have that happen. I'll leave that out there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very timely bill and would support it. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, anyone under 29(2)(a)?

Then the chair shall recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

4:10

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and speak about Bill 9, but I'm not in favour of this bill, with all respect to the good Member for Athabasca-Redwater. I sometimes feel like government just does things to do things, to try and look busy.

I guess what I'm going to start off with as the first thing is that jurisdictionally it's called bureaucratic growth. They think that they need to be busy, so they start to do things, and it's not productive, and again we start meddling in areas that we don't need to be meddling in. To the President of the Treasury Board: you might have a better understanding of that.

The first thing that definitely came up a lot last year with Bill 203 was the fact that there wasn't any government-to-government consultation, and we've heard a lot about that. What Bill 9 was to do was address that. They went out and spoke with various stakeholders to see what the problems were. It's just interesting to me, what I want to call some of the double standards or the idea that we need to have one shoe fit all feet, and it just doesn't work.

The first thing, I guess, that I'd like to address on this bill is the example that we're going to have a \$5,000 limit. If you look at the different municipalities, whether it's a little area that has, you know,

75 people in a small village that are voting, 300 people, or Calgary or Edmonton, approaching a million or 600,000 or 700,000 people, it's a very different campaign for someone who has to run that. If you look at someone who is trying to put out three mailers to everybody in Calgary, what's the actual cost of doing that? It's immense compared to someone who's running in a little community with 300 people, yet we're going to apply the same campaign limits.

The part that concerns me the most, I guess, is: why is it that we as MLAs and our parties are allowed a \$15,000 contribution, yet here we're saying to another jurisdiction, that we're not running in, that we're going to limit you to \$5,000? I don't find it appropriate in this bill for us to impose a limit saying that this is the amount that should go there or the idea that at a certain amount, \$5,000, none of us are subject to bribery and that we wouldn't do anything for that but that at \$15,000 or at \$25,000 we would. It seems like what they're implying is that, you know, while this is the limit – they only want you to receive this much – it's above board, but if it's over that, it's not.

One of the policies that we have – and I think it's a very good one – and what's important in an election is the transparency and the having to record and make that public. That's the balance and check that's in there. If an individual wants to spend an enormous amount of money because they've been blessed and have that and they want to run for public office, I think that should be, you know, something that should be considered. Again, I'm not sure – and I'm sure someone will clarify this for me – but I believe that if, in fact, someone decides to run and they've got a little bit of a campaign war chest and they don't use it all, the provisions are such that if they're still thinking about running, they can keep that.

But I'm a little bit concerned. The real problem with that, though, is if someone wants to support someone to run in a municipal jurisdiction and they get a campaign fund – and some of them have some substantial ones – which other people look at and say, "Well, we can't go up against this individual; look at how much they have." I've certainly run a few campaigns. If you look at your competitor's bank account, you might think: "Holy smoke. Can we accomplish this? Can we go up against them?" I say, "Absolutely you can." Why limit your competitor because of what you have? That's part of the freedom of opportunity and for people to try.

The concern that I have is that if there is a campaign fund, we at the provincial level, most of us, are members of a party, so people can contribute to that party \$15,000. I know that they say: Oh, no; you can only contribute a thousand dollars to an individual. That's not true. You contribute to your party, and it gets funneled over to your campaign. If someone wants to donate \$15,000, it's very doable because we have the legal process of doing that, and it's recorded, you know, as a donation to the provincial party. But we have no mechanism here where we, in fact, can pass that fund, which has been created in that district, on to the next person who runs, and there it is by political party. Who's to say that if someone is running and they say, "You know, I want to step down" and if someone else of that same political philosophy wants to run, they can't acquire that fund and continue on? There is no contingency to pass it on to another person.

I don't see the reason or the purpose in prohibiting that because in political parties, which are above municipal government, we have that ability. Here is another limitation that doesn't allow a group of individuals that maybe are looking to change the political landscape in a community to create a fund where they can give it to different individuals and support them. So it's another what I consider flaw in the bill, where we're being short sighted.

I guess that when we were debating private member's Bill 202 about getting it right and how important it is – well, it's kind of



funny that here, on a subject that's not nearly as important, we could put out a private member's bill and then the government's bill the next year and not seem to be too concerned about getting it right, that if we've got to go at it three or four times, that's okay. But in here the purpose of legislation to me is to protect our rights and to protect those who can't protect themselves. We're falling short, I feel, in this province when it comes to our children and pedophiles and pornographic areas.

**An Hon. Member:** Relevance.

**Mr. Hinman:** Very much relevant, although that's the problem, that guys don't see it. That's why I have to keep speaking on it. You don't understand the relevance of passing bills even if they don't get it right. The reason why we're doing Bill 9 is because you didn't get it right with Bill 203, and the relevance will never be understood by you. That's why Albertans are going to get rid of you, because you've lost your connection with Albertans. Anyways, that's another problem.

It's interesting. You know, one politician that I have a lot of respect for, that was a true statesman that put his country before himself, ran six times before he got elected, if my memory serves me right. It's important, like I say, for people to build up those war chests so that they have access to it. That man's name was Abraham Lincoln. Ran many, many times before he finally got elected. Most people will say: well, if you've lost once or twice, that's political death.

**Mr. Hehr:** I think he might have lost 28 times.

**Mr. Hinman:** I didn't know it was that many. Churchill was another one who lost several times.

Anyways, we need to look at some of this. We kind of addressed volunteer time, yet some of the pay that this government pays to its political connections – this includes clarification on volunteer time, that it doesn't need to be accounted for as a political donation. A company with all its subsidiaries has a total \$5,000 contribution limit, he said. Again, I look at that. Well, it's the rate that you pay some of your bureaucrats. I mean, if they were to walk into an office and do a little bit of work and help on a campaign, that could be a \$10,000 bill. Should they be banned because of what they get paid working for the government? If they're working on someone's campaign, I would think that that would be a great limitation.

There are just areas in here. Like I say, perhaps the biggest one is: do we really need to be that paternal government that looks down on municipal government and says, "You know, you guys just can't do it right; we need to step in here"? Because then I ask the question: well, then, do we want the federal government to come to the provincial area and say, "You're just not doing it right, and here is the legislation that we want to impose on you"? The federal government has limited donations to a thousand dollars, so should they come in and say to the provincial government, "No, no; you have to live by what we have already passed"? It is constitutional separation of powers, but each level of government should be accountable to the people they represent, not the government above it.

We really need to take a long look at some of these and ask the question: is this really necessary? [interjections] Would someone like to have some time on the floor? I'll sit down and then get up again here.

There are just so many areas here that, though the intent is good – and, again, we all want to improve democracy. I think the key to democracy and improvement, though, is transparency and account-

ability. There is a slight improvement here on transparency, yet there are more restrictions than worrying about: are we completely transparent?

Again, if we really want true accountability, something that I will continue to bring up until we finally bring this to the citizens of Alberta, true accountability is recall. The most disappointing thing when I go and talk . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, therein lies the problem. They laugh about it because they don't want to be accountable. That's a sad day when we have elected people, and they're going to twist it and say by-elections. I don't know of a single person that crossed over to join this government that ever stepped down . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, address the chair.

4:20

**Mr. Hinman:** I will, Mr. Speaker, but sometimes a person can at least look to change the landscape, to see the foolishness that's going on and the smirks on their faces and the comments that they're making. It is shameful. Hon. minister of housing, it is shameful.

The fact of the matter is that accountability, Mr. Speaker, is the most important thing. I ask the question: how are you accountable, then, if you don't have recall? I'm always amazed that the people say: oh, the next time there's an election, I'm accountable. Well, who gets hired and what it says on their contract – I mean, even when we hire someone, we have 30 days where we can give notice.

The number one thing that I find when I talk to people at the door is that they say: "You know what? It doesn't matter who we vote for. You're all the same. Once you get in there, you do whatever it is you want to do, and we have to wait till the next election before we can do something." I will tell you, hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill, that that's why people disengage in democracy, because they don't believe that once every four years is enough. They say: "Why bother? Why listen to your propaganda for 30 days when, in fact, you're not going to honour it, and there is nothing that I can do about it as an individual?" That's what happens.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, address your speech to the chair and the bill.

**Mr. Hinman:** Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to. I don't know whether you consider it rude or not, but when they're asking me questions, it's a great opportunity to respond to them. I'll respond to you, then. If you'd like to relate that to the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill, perhaps he'll get that and receive it from the chair. It's doubtful, though.

Anyway, you know, a concern that most all of us have here, though, is to say: "Well, we want to engage and improve democracy. How do we get people to get engaged?" Yet I see this Bill 9 as one that's prohibitive because it limits people that want to go in there. It's an uphill battle. They say: "You know what? I can't go up against the incumbent. They've got all this money raised." Sometimes it's only a few individuals that realize that we can make a change. They come together, and they want to fund and help one. Like I say, the hypocrisy where we can receive \$15,000 but on the municipal level say, "No, we're going to limit you" I find hard to swallow, especially when you look at the large municipalities and the mayoralty races that go on. I mean, how do you send out a brochure to hundreds of thousands of individuals and tens of thousands of households when you're so limited?

Again, because Albertans have become more and more, I guess, disconnected from what they believe is a democratic process, we need to bring them back. Two ways are transparency, so people

really can see what's going on, see that when the government is advertising something, who's paying for that, Mr. Speaker, who's involved, what the political connections are on these people – we need to have all of those things, not just the money that's donated but perhaps all of the goodwill that's being donated behind the scenes and the consultation. We supposedly have, you know, a bill that has the lobbyists that are registered, yet it's very easy to circumvent that because you go to an event, and they come up and talk to you.

The long and the short, though, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill isn't necessary. I don't see the point in passing this. Again, it's restrictive on the freedoms of people who want to run. We need transparency. We need accountability. I find that if those two bills were to come forward, I could very much support those, but I'll have to vote against this bill.

I appreciate the time. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to learn a little bit more about this constitutional division of powers for Alberta municipalities, if he could extrapolate on that, because I sometimes look for entertaining reading to put me to sleep. If I get that *Hansard* later on and read about it, that will just do the job. So can you extrapolate on this constitutional division of powers for Alberta municipalities? That's a novelty to me.

**Mr. Hinman:** I'd be happy to address that. First of all, one of the things that we need here in the province is a constitution. We need to have one. That's kind of the basis, what democracy is based on. We're a constitutional democracy, which therein puts out the plan and whose responsibility it is to do what.

The best government is always the government that's closest to the people. So if you are writing up new constitutions, the first thing that you would look at is: what's the responsibility of each level of government? One of the problems that we have is the redistribution of tax dollars. I'll speak here on the province of Alberta because we're always upset with equalization payments that we see leave the province and the grief that that causes us because we have a booming economy, yet the money was leaving so we couldn't build the roads, the overpasses, the schools because we just didn't have it. Even with the amount of money that we have here in Alberta, it is a tough job to try to balance the budget.

If you look at the money that's being generated from each municipality, it actually comes from those local municipalities. I mean, we're blessed here in Alberta because of the resource revenue. But in Calgary alone in 2006 \$7 billion left the city in personal income tax. A very small percentage of that came back to the municipality of Calgary to do as they saw fit and needed there. With Fort McMurray, the number escapes me now, but just millions and millions of dollars left Fort McMurray in income tax. The same thing with the resources: the money came to the province, yet Fort McMurray doesn't receive very much in comparison to what they've contributed to the Alberta economy.

If we were to have a constitutional formula on the actual sharing of the tax dollars generated from an area, it would change the whole dynamics. It would take the politics out of governing. In fact, the economic reality would kick in, and in areas that are doing well, that money would come back.

We seem to get a few grasps of these things, for example the fuel tax. We were upset with how much was leaving. Years of lobbying, and finally a percentage of the fuel tax comes back to the jurisdiction that is there.

The reason why you need a constitutional democracy is that you need to outline whose responsibility it is and not have one level of government overstep and step into the next level, saying: oh, we're going to look after you in that area because we don't think you're doing a very good job. Here in Alberta we should understand that better than anywhere because of the number of times that we're subject to the federal area in areas that are not even in their jurisdiction, yet they come in, or we abdicate those responsibilities.

Such things as the pension plan. We've given that over to the federal government. There is an unfunded liability. Again, we're putting an inordinate amount of money in that's not going to be there when, in fact, Albertans need it. So this constitutional division of power is critical. We don't have it. It's not structured right.

Because of that the democratic deficiencies continue, and it's just not in our best interest. It's actually a pothole in that economic road where we can't go as fast as we can and the expansion isn't allowed. It's frustrating to different municipal governments because they not only don't have the freedom to run their own elections how they want to do it, but also the funding, the economic prosperity that an area is generating, leaves that area and doesn't come back. Then you have the next level of government wanting to impose their decisions on how it should be run: "Oh, we'll give you money back, but this is what you have to do; you need to put it into potholes" or "You need to put it into water processing" when, in fact, they don't need that. That's not their priority, yet it becomes that next level of government's priority.

Again, like I say, we're overstepping our bounds, I feel. I think that local people can make their own decisions on how they want to run municipal elections. If they can't, let them learn by their own mistakes rather than having the paternal government step in and say: this isn't good enough; here are the rules and regulations that we're going to impose on you. It would be much better if we had a constitution that outlined those areas in a better way.

Perhaps the hon. minister for immigration doesn't even know what a constitution is. I hope that enlightens him a little bit in the direction where he's going.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Solicitor General.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just sneak in here. It's a novel idea, this constitutional separation of powers. I just wonder if the member then would advocate, seeing as how we're going to set up an intraprovincial transfer system, that we allocate our schools and hospitals based on the cities that produce those income tax revenues and we don't put provincial facilities in towns that don't produce the income tax revenues. That's what you just argued for. Would you continue with that train of thought, please?

4:30

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, the five minutes for 29(2)(a) have ended.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity on Bill 9.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. I know how it hurts, and I feel the hurt of being cut off. [interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Calgary-Varsity has the floor.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. And what a wonderful, democratic floor it is to have.

Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010. This is another example of the government realizing that they got it wrong in the first place, so now we're going to try and fix it.

Now, we had this debate yesterday, basically, on Bill 203 and time limits and proclamations and fixing. But specific to Bill 9 what Bill 9 is trying to do is that after the fact, with consultation taking place after the previous Bill 203 was passed, all of a sudden Conservative government members realized that not only had they sidelined the AUMA, but those rural members realized that they had discounted the interests of the AAMD and C, that these whether they were urban or rural municipalities did not want to be treated as though they were children. They didn't want to be patronized. They didn't want to submit to a patriarchal management system in this case, what they were allowed to do and what they weren't allowed to do in terms of the local authorities elections.

Now, we've got a real mixed bag in this province when it comes to elections. Within our own provincial election process we have to be highly accountable in terms of every single dollar that we receive. We have rules laid out as to at what point a constituency association can turn over funding to a provincial candidate. For the most part our monetary system of accepting campaign donations is quite well regulated, but the same could not have been said of our municipal counterparts.

Unfortunately, the government with its previous Bill 203, that Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, is trying to correct – while I'm supporting it, it still does not have the same common ground as is necessary. Whether it's a leadership election for a party, whether it's a municipal election for a school board or for an alderman, councillor, whatever you wish to call it, we need to have all our rules accountable, transparent, and I would suggest the same or have the same validity to them so that the need to fix previous legislation, such as Bill 9 is trying to accomplish, would not be necessary.

I do appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that the government is trying to correct the mistakes made in Bill 203, which almost flipped the accountability of municipal elections on its head. It made it so restrictive that individual politicians would be restricted in terms of their campaigns. They were restricted in terms of the donations that could be provided.

Now, specifically in Bill 9, things that are changing are a candidate's own campaign funds. Up to \$10,000 is exempt from most of the rules pertaining to campaign funds. What that does is that if you have an inheritance or you have individual wealth accumulated through a previous business, you're in a much more advantageous position than somebody who, you know, has a strong sense of social justice but doesn't have as large a bank account. So we're still playing somewhat fast and loose with what people are allowed to earn or bring to their campaigns.

Volunteer services are not considered campaign funds and so do not need to be accounted for in disclosure statements.

Limits for contributions are determined on a yearly basis, not a campaign period basis.

The potentially negative thing about this bill is that it restricts where a person can vote. For example, they'll no longer be able to choose to vote in the municipality of their summer home. For a government that in this latter case believes in democracy and individual rights, prohibiting a person from voting only once in the area that they wish to influence the outcome to me seems to be rather restrictive. I don't believe in the opportunity, obviously, of, you know, not only voting but voting often. That doesn't make sense. But if a person is already contributing, based on their major residence, to the well-being of that municipality and the majority of their taxes are going to that area, they should be able to say: well, I enjoy my experience those months out at Pigeon Lake or Lac La Biche or wherever it is; therefore, I would like to get more involved in the local politics and in the choosing of the representative in my

summer village. But we're saying: no, you don't have that right.

In the same way, Mr. Speaker, we're saying to university students that you only have the right to vote at the address that is attributed to your parent who is paying your tuition. Again, we're not being forthright in offering choice. Yes, you can only vote once, but you should be able to vote where you feel the greatest impact on you personally takes place. If that's on a university campus or if that's a summer village, you're voting once in a municipal election. You should be allowed that opportunity.

Now, last session Bill 203 was passed with great consternation from municipalities, as I've included. We and I'm sure every member here have received feedback from the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, St. Albert along with a number of counties that already have comprehensive disclosure rules in place. Bill 203 basically ignored the good work and the accountability that was already there. So I would ask the minister proposing Bill 9, the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater: which municipalities is the individual concerned about that necessitates this particular bill? Or going back last year to Bill 203 in the first place, you know, the old expression, "If it isn't broken, why are you fixing it?" applies.

Going through the various sections of the bill, section 1 amends the Local Authorities Election Act.

Section 3 stipulates which municipality a person can vote in if they have multiple residences. I've noted this restricts their right to choose. They have no right as to their tax designations, but they can be funding both a summer cottage and helping that district as well as helping the municipality where their main residence is. As I say, they don't have a choice. The municipality a resident can vote in will be determined, in order of priority, by their driver's licence, the address on their tax return, or their mailing address. There are concerns about having a lack of choice about which municipality a person can place their vote in. Why did the government not consult about this provision?

4:40

Section 4(a) exempts volunteer services from being considered a campaign contribution. Here we have the unlevel playing field. Whether it's as federal politicians or as provincial politicians, we have the ability through our campaigns to provide tax receipts for goods in kind or services in kind, yet there is no recognition of financial or energy contributions of volunteers. Section 4(b) is simply an administrative change. Section 4(c) sets out the distinction between person and candidate, which is important because it allows for the distinction between a candidate's own contribution to their campaign versus other contributions they receive. These latter changes are positive.

Section 5. This section sets out the rules that govern a candidate's own contribution to his or her own campaign. The candidate will be able to contribute up to \$10,000 to their campaign without having to open either a campaigner account or to have to disclose the amount that was contributed or to disclose their campaign expenses to the municipality. Prior to this amendment a candidate's contribution to their own campaign was treated the same way as any other contribution, which meant that it was limited to \$5,000.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, is resolving that previous problem. The amendment is fair, but then the cap of \$10,000 is only meaningful when a candidate doesn't receive any outside contributions. They could easily contribute \$20,000 to their campaign. There doesn't seem to be a way to make sure that people are being honest. I can't believe that this is an intended or even an unintended consequence of the intention of this bill, which is now attempting to clear up the problems that existed with Bill 203.

Section 6(a). This change effectively raises the limits of contributions. Section 6(b) aligns with an administrative change in section 5. Again, section 6(c) is more in alignment so that there's a flow to Bill 9.

Section 7 does three things. It stipulates that disclosure requirements are necessary only if a candidate's campaign funds include funds from outside sources. It takes out the auditing requirements for campaign contributions exceeding \$10,000. It states that if a candidate doesn't run in the next general election, the candidate shall – in other words, there's a compulsion here – donate the surplus funds over \$500 to a charity of their choice or to the municipality the candidate ran in. This does not apply to a candidate's campaign funds if they were the sole source of those funds, which is fair. Again, in terms of level playing fields, we have as provincially elected officials the possibility of maintaining to a degree a war chest, but it would be my hope that the majority of individuals, whatever funding exists after their campaign is over, I would hope, would put it back into the constituency account to benefit the governance of the constituency.

Section 8 is primarily administrative changes.

Section 9 changes "is" to "may," referring to the application to a court. When charges of noncompliance are made, the municipality may be named.

Section 10 sets the time when these new rules will be in place, not until December 1, 2011.

Section 2 excludes the candidate's contributions, and it adds two clauses to the conditions of a councillor's disqualification from council: failing to file a disclosure statement in the appropriate time or not being relieved from their obligation by a court order. These are good things. In terms of specific enforcement, the requirements of accountability, these are positive changes.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are other members who will wish to address Bill 9. It is a step in the right direction. It goes a direction in terms of correcting the potentially enthusiastically speedy passing of private member's Bill 203 this past session.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for comments, questions.

Seeing none, the chair shall now recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow on the bill.

**Ms DeLong:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say a few words regarding Bill 9 and essentially refer back to one of my constituent's concerns in this area. I think that I would actually like to quote what he says here, the possibility of allowing part-time residents in another municipality to be allowed to vote there.

Cottage owners who spend up to half the year living at their cottage have no voice or effective representation through the elected councilors if we can't vote there, despite living there for significant parts of the year, paying taxes there and contributing to the local economy and local community.

It doesn't sound like a really big problem until you look at it from the cottagers' point of view. They are there as part of the community, contributing members to part of the community for a large part of the time, and often they have a very emotional attachment to their cottage, way more than the place that they have to live in in the city when they have to work. If it was only a partial problem – in other words, well, if they made a big effort, they could possibly vote there – that would be one thing, but to be totally excluded from the ability to vote where you look at your home being I do believe is a problem, and it could lead to a situation where you've got a council that would be essentially overriding the wishes of a large part of their constituency.

I just wanted to bring this up. There are concerns out there, and I would like us to really look at that. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Again, Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments and questions. The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I very much appreciate your reading into the record your constituent's concerns. I've had constituents who have property just outside of Sundre. There's a trailer park outside of Sundre. They are charged for electricity and water for this recreational property. In their case it's simply a trailer in a sort of recreational area. They have to pay taxes for water that they only receive at best five months of the year because the water table is so high that the freeze of the ground occurs early in the fall, and the ground is still frozen into late spring. While they pay municipal taxes, they're not receiving the value or the service. In order to get around this, they've previously been allowed to move their trailer off the spot, and then this trailer wouldn't be considered a secondary residence taxed at that rate.

It's not right, as you've clearly pointed out, that these people are disenfranchised. What are you recommending in terms of resolution for this disenfranchisement, hon. Member for Calgary-Bow? What should be done?

4:50

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Calgary-Bow if you wish.

**Ms DeLong:** I am concerned about this, and I think that it is something that we should look at very carefully and possibly reconsider.

**Mr. Marz:** Just a question for the member. Is the member advocating, then, that if a resident of my constituency, for example, had a residence in Calgary, where he worked part-time, or in Edmonton – for example, MLAs have condos up here – and perhaps has a cottage at the lake as well, they should be able to vote in multiple places, or should they declare what their principal residence is and vote in that one place?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow if you wish.

**Ms DeLong:** Although, you know, there is a difference in weight of vote in different parts of the province, I do not believe in voting in more than one location. So, yes, I do believe that we should be specifying a location to vote and then be restricted from voting in the other place.

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

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my constituency I have quite a few farmers that live in a house in the country. They've stopped farming, but they own a business in town. They get to vote in the country in the municipality, but they don't get to vote in the town where their business is. Likewise, there are many young families who are farmers who live in town because it's good for the kids, but their farm, their business is out in the country. I'm wondering if the member thinks it's important that we tie where the person votes to their residence, or maybe it should be optional where the business is. It's perhaps, quite frankly, where the member's interest is, not just where they live.

**Ms DeLong:** I don't think that I could come up with a very valid opinion when it comes to whether a business should be allowed to be a location to vote, but there is a difference when it comes to residence because people do have more than one residence. Just because mail goes to a certain residence, that doesn't mean that that is the most important residence to them, nor does it mean that it is the one that they care about the most or even that has the most value to them financially. I mean, I can understand the residence piece, you know, that we ought to be able to select which residence we vote in, but to go that next step and say – unless you're actually living in your business. I don't really understand that issue well enough.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have six seconds. Any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing no other, I will call on the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater to close the debate.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just call the question, please.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a second time]

### Bill 12 Body Armour Control Act

[Debate adjourned March 23]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak on Bill 12. I don't think anyone can argue that keeping Alberta safe is the number one priority. Yesterday we debated in the Legislature the importance of getting it right, and we talked about the importance of consultation. I would like to get some clarification from the minister on several issues if I may. Hopefully, the Minister of Justice will read *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker, I think what's important about democracy and the opportunity of having the last two weeks to be at home: you move around the province, you move around your constituency, and you have some debates about what legislation is important and other legislation that's not so important. I had the opportunity to talk to people. In fact, it was interesting. For Bill 12, which I honestly didn't think would create that much debate, I've had a lot of calls. We've had a lot of e-mails on that. I've had a lot of discussion on Bill 12. So for me second reading is to get some clarification from the minister. The notes that I've taken are notes that I've heard from across the province. It's from what people have called me about. It's some meetings I've had. So I would really like to get some clarification.

I would like to ask the minister: who have you consulted with on developing this legislation? As I indicated earlier, we talked a lot about consultation. I'd like to know who was consulted on this legislation, how much time was spent on the consultation. One of the things that's been interesting is: did you consult with those selling the body armour? Many of the people that we've talked to to get some clarification from them have not been called. They haven't been consulted. In fact, they haven't even been asked for their advice or their opinion. They heard about this Bill 12 but have not been called, haven't been consulted, haven't even been asked for their advice or their opinion.

It's important to note that there are a number of individuals employed in dangerous industries that are not exempt from the permit application process such as taxi drivers or local shop owners.

If a shop owner or a taxi driver feels unsafe performing their daily duties and wishes to apply for a permit, the bill does not touch on what criteria must be met by that individual in order to be approved or even considered for a permit.

Mr. Speaker, another concern is the registrar and its duties to report illegal activities. Now, I understand the Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security will administer the application process. My concern is that Bill 12 does not mention whether or not the registrar is responsible for informing police authorities if an application for a permit is thought to be connected with criminal or otherwise illegal activities. If an individual applies for body armour and is thought to be involved in a gang or crime ring, what requirements are in place for the registrar to report that individual?

Another question relates to the fee an individual would incur to apply for a permit. Bill 12 is very vague in stating in section 6(2)(b), "be accompanied with the prescribed fee."

Mr. Speaker, what or where does the bill deal with Internet sales? How do you plan on dealing with that? If you type on the Internet "body armour" or "bulletproof vest," it brings a host of companies where you can purchase body armour online. What is ironic and to me interesting is how many came up and how easy it is to purchase. What is even funnier is what is under legal terms of sale and website use. I'm just going to quote from one of them.

Legal Terms of Sale and Website Use

We only sell to law-abiding adults.

Body armor is a purely defensive item but, regardless, we are very sensitive to the possibility of vests being misused by criminals.

By buying a vest from us, you certify that you are a law-abiding adult with no felony convictions.

Now, that's ironic. If you go down further in reading that, it assumes no liability. It tells you about the shipping and handling. It tells you all about the bulletproof vest. It tells you all about the body armour. You can even send your size. So a criminal can type in here: yes, I'm a law-abiding citizen; my name is Joe Blow, and I want this. How are we going to control that?

5:00

Mr. Speaker, I also have some questions that I want to have the minister respond to. How many employees will your proposed registry have? How much will it cost? Couldn't these employees and these dollars be put to better use on front-line policing? Another question, and this is from a police officer: is a provincial stat offence going to stop gang members from obtaining body armour? Another one from a police officer: under exemption 4(h) who can set up businesses, and what is stopping organized gang members from setting up the business and selling it to other organized crime gang members?

Mr. Speaker, I know and I realize the importance of keeping our communities safe. I had the honour of chairing the task force, travelling this wonderful province and talking to hundreds of people about what's important to them to keep their communities safe and what they wanted to see. We put forward many, many recommendations on that. I support the concept of the bill; I truly do. But we need to get clarification. We talked about that in-depth yesterday in regard to getting it right.

I'd be more than pleased to have the minister respond to the questions. I think they're important. These are the questions, quite frankly, that Albertans have asked us. These aren't the questions that the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek pulled out of her hat and said: "Okay, well, I need to understand this." These are some of the questions, as I alluded to earlier, that the police have asked me to get clarification on. I'm sure other members of the House have received some e-mail in regard to some of the questions, things that have come in with regard to this particular piece of legislation. I can only tell you that it's important to get some answers.

I know that some of the police have written because I've got a copy of one of the e-mails that was sent to us that was addressed to the Premier, and it was addressed to Minister Redford. He says very clearly that he's a police officer. He says: I'm being blunt; this is typical political legislation to make headlines but does nothing to solve the problem and has unintended victims; I'm a cop in this province, and I'm involved in gang enforcement. Basically, he went on to ask some questions, some of those that I've brought forward, in regard to the questions that I'd like the minister responsible to answer if those can be answered, Mr. Speaker. It's what we discussed yesterday. It's about clarity. It's about getting it right.

I think there are some important cost factors that need to be answered in this particular legislation. I don't for a minute believe that in my four years as Solicitor General and in all the years, and I use this lightly, that I worked the streets – I've been involved with police on the streets on the issue of drugs and alcohol and child prostitution. There is no way on God's green earth that anybody is going to convince me that gang members or organized crime are going to willingly go and purchase body armour.

I like some of the things that are contained in the bill: allowing the police to do searches. My concern is, again, the innocent victims that are going to be taking up time in regard to trying to purchase body armour: the taxi driver, the pizza driver that's serving pizza in some of our unsavory districts in this city.

So I look forward, again, to getting clarification from the minister. Maybe this is one of these bills that is perception versus reality, one that it might be worthwhile to send off to one of our policy field committees and listen to what, you know, we hear when we go into one of those policy field committees. I sit on that particular policy field committee, and I would love the opportunity to be able to ask the people that come in front of us, whether it's Chief Hanson, who I have a great deal of admiration for and support, as I do the chief here. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, all of the chiefs in this province and all of the police in this province do an unbelievable job under very, very difficult circumstances. I think it's an opportunity for us to have them come forward. We can ask them some questions. We can ask the legal beagles, that we have a lot of in this government, and get some answers from them.

I think it's important to consult with the people that sell this equipment. As I mentioned earlier, of the contacts that we made with people that sell the body armour, none – none – have been called. None have been asked. They're reading what they read in the paper.

I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Justice in regard to the questions that I've asked.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of questions and comments. The Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not the Minister of Justice, but I am a bit of a legal beagle, as this member has mentioned. I first want to commend this member for her complete and total dedication in her time here to law enforcement in this province. That being said, I do want to make just a couple of points. I do believe that we have got this bill right. I would submit to this member, respectfully, that we can't use just the fact that we may not imagine every type of law school textbook view as to what may happen as an excuse for inaction.

This bill does allow an individual who has a legitimate reason to have body armour to obtain a licence. It is not a registry. It does have some bipartisan appeal, as the Member for Calgary-Buffalo had indicated his support before. Again, I do see a dead horse in front of me, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to flog it.

I, too, have spoken to many members of the Calgary Police Service who have indicated to me that what will happen is that these gang members will actually use this body armour as a way to taunt people, as a way for status, as a way of identification when they have no legitimate reason to actually have it.

As well, there is similar legislation in British Columbia. This is not a registry; it's licensing.

The final comment that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we do not need to ask criminals or consult gang members about whether or not they like this bill. I'm about keeping the streets safe, and I'd say to the members of that caucus that they should be about doing the same.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Well, Mr. Speaker, now he's got me going because not once did I say to consult with gang members or did I say to consult with organized crime, you know, and I want that on the record. I talked about consulting with the people who are selling body armour. I think they should be part of the process.

Mr. Speaker, it's amazing to me that yesterday I listened all day in regard to Bill 202, the mandatory reporting of child pornography, about the importance of consulting, the importance of getting it right, the importance of getting the regulations right, all of that stuff. You know what? I support this bill. I just need some clarification because what's important is that these questions came from Albertans. These are questions that I heard from police officers. These are questions that I heard from people that are involved. In fact, some of his lawyer friends are even confused about this particular piece of legislation. It's just a matter of getting clarification. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's important.

We can go back. I can talk to the police officers that brought up to me section 4(h): "a business owner, or an employee of a business, who in the ordinary course of that business or employment purchases, sells, transports or otherwise deals with body armour." This came directly from a policeman about setting up the business: who is managing that business, and what's stopping Joe Hells Angel? Don't ever kid yourself. The Solicitor General knows of all of the businesses that are set up for laundering money and everything as legitimate businesses. The police, that he works for, know who they are. What's stopping the Hells Angels from setting up a business and selling to whomever they want?

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, it's well and fine that the hon. member has asked some questions of the Justice minister seeking clarification, and I expect that in due course of this debate those questions will be answered. That's reasonable and part of the process here.

I just want to clarify for the House, because my name or, at least, my title was brought up, that actually I don't work for the police forces. I provide oversight to the police forces in this province, and in the course of my duties here not one policeman that I'm aware of has expressed a concern about this.

5:10

By way of seeking clarification, I just wondered if the hon. member is aware that Chief Hanson, whom she mentioned in her previous discussion, Chief Boyd, and Deputy Commissioner Knecht all stood on the podium, as the Minister of Justice announced this bill, expressing their strong support for it. I want to clarify that.

Again, in no way to interject, I believe the Justice minister would provide you with the clarifications that you seek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Sorry, hon. member. The five minutes have ended.

Does any hon. member wish to speak on the bill? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to make a couple of very brief remarks. I'm not sure that I can really understand what we're doing. What are we doing in Canada, what are we doing in Alberta, what am I doing in Lethbridge talking about body armour, for Pete's sake? Why am I not protected in our country so that I can go out of my house at night and walk down the street and not have to worry about if I can get body armour or not? This is insane. Why are we not safe in our country?

Yes, the baddies might get body armour. But I heard some of the conversations that were going on with this bill before, and they were talking about their daughters wearing body armour. No. This is wrong. We should have more police forces out there. We should be able to leave our houses and be safe and not even have to worry about body armour.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions. The hon. Solicitor General. [interjections]

**Mr. Oberle:** Stow it, would you? I have a question for the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member is aware that we're talking about a situation of constantly evolving organized crime here. Quite frankly, I think everybody, including that former Solicitor General over there, would agree: you can't arrest your way out of this problem. It's a very broad problem. It involves several departments in our government; it involves education, social assistance, and all sorts of areas. It also involves being nimble to stay ahead of organized crime, who in every society in the world, not just in Canada, has been very nimble at getting ahead of the police.

So while you may criticize – and you have, and that's fine – the policing element of this, all I ask is that you recognize that you cannot arrest your way out of this problem. For every gang member you put in jail, two more will sprout. You know, it's a very complex problem. [interjections] If those guys would stow it and listen to honest debate . . .

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Yes. Thank you. I can appreciate the Solicitor General's remarks. However, I think my remarks are going to come from the same place as when I stood up the first time: what on earth are we doing admitting that we're losing out to the bad guys? This isn't the Wild West. This isn't John Wayne. Or maybe I should be saying, "Where is John Wayne?" because he did beat all the bad guys. Why are we not beating the bad guys? Why do I have to wear body armour in Alberta?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a). The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere has the floor.

**Mr. Anderson:** Well, I just wanted to ask the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East. I'm just curious what she thinks about the fact that, you know, members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House at one point or another have said, "We're against this gun registry, and we're against farmers having to register their long guns," et cetera, and rightfully so, and then they turn around and say that we need to register body armour.

**Mr. Denis:** It's not a registry. It's a licensing system.

**Mr. Anderson:** It's a licensing system, just like the gun registry is a licensing system. It's the same thing.

The point is, hon. member, that I'd like to know: what do you think about that apparent contradiction? It just seems like a total, bold-faced contradiction that they would be supportive of a body armour registry and the costs involved in that and not supportive of the gun registry and the cost of that. It makes no sense to me.

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

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you. It does appear to be certainly a contradiction, but let me just take this the next step further. I mean, if our police officers have lasers, the bad guys are going to have lasers. Now, in protecting someone who is protecting me and my family – certainly, we should be protecting anyone that's in our protective services, and unfortunately that could come down to even ambulance drivers when they're picking up God knows who. The point is: what are we doing admitting that the bad guys are beating us? I think it's wrong.

**Mr. Oberle:** I'd like to ask the hon. member where exactly it says in the legislation or where anybody said in the debate that we're giving up and declaring defeat to the bad guys. I think you've talked about wishing to feel safe in your community. If you look around, we have, compared to other countries or other jurisdictions, better crime statistics, right? We're certainly not at the lowest end of the totem pole in that regard. What we're trying to do is stay ahead of the bad guys, and we're talking about the bad guy that sits in a bar with body armour on, strutting it, letting everybody know how important he is. That's the guy we're targeting. There are legitimate exceptions for people that require body armour for their work.

We talked about drawing parallels. What is the parallel between this and the gun registry? The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere would admit that there are legitimate uses for long guns, and I agree with him. There are legitimate uses for long guns. Where there are legitimate uses for body armour, we're going to allow it. What we're talking about is nailing the organized-crime individual, who does not have a legitimate reason to wear one.

The precedents abound. We have all sorts of prohibited weapons that we do not allow in our society because they're deemed to be a danger to society; nunchuks, for example. [interjection] Hon. member, you're a lawyer, for God's sake. [interjection] You prove it. The hon. member would assert that there are legitimate reasons to own long guns, and I would agree with him. That's why we said that the long gun registry isn't right.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The five minutes under Standing Order 29(2)(a) have ended.

Any hon. member wish to speak on the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise and speak against Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act. I'm somewhat amazed that the discussion is going on here. You'd think that we were talking of weapons of destruction, and I don't even want to mention that. There are vests that are being used that aren't in the best interests of society, and many Canadians have lost their lives because of those. But we're talking body armour, not an explosive vest where people are going to be walking into facilities and killing other people. I think there's a huge difference between these two.

Let's go back to some basic problems of this government, again,

about getting it right or being intrusive in individuals' rights. That's the basis that we need to be looking at. Again, it's constitutional. We don't have property rights. [interjections] We don't have property rights, and it's a problem.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, please address the chair.

**Mr. Hinman:** I am speaking to the chair. I just had a kink in my neck, and I had to move it. I'm getting whiplashed here from the left.

We have a problem here in the fact that we seem to think that we can somehow have the safety to society by registering body armour: "Wow. We'll register it, and now all of a sudden we're going to be safe." We use the excuse that, well, now if there's someone walking around with it, we have a legitimate reason to stop that person. It gives them the ability to do that, and that's why we pass many laws. I don't always think it's in the best interests of the freedom of society. It's a safety issue.

The gun registry started off with the simple thought and the beauty of having a safe society if we just registered guns, that all of a sudden we're all going to be safe and that this is going to take a giant leap forward. Well, we had handguns registered for a long time. I believe it was in the '30s when we registered handguns. They're still a problem, and crimes are being committed. The problem that legislators seem to get caught up on is the fact that "Oh, if we pass this, law-abiding citizens are going to follow the law," and when 80 to 85 per cent of the people follow the law, it usually works pretty good.

5:20

But the problem is that it's those that aren't law abiding that cause the problem. The bureaucracy said, "Oh, we can do this gun registry for a million dollars." We've spent over a billion now, and it hasn't stopped crimes with guns. Now we're taking this huge leap and saying, "Oh, if we start registering or" – excuse me – "licensing," like it's some big new, novel idea that has nothing to do with registration – it's registration, just in a different cloak. To think that now gangs are somehow not going to wear them for fear of the police stopping them – the thing is, though, they'll probably be the most legitimate ones and be able to hire a lawyer to say, "I have these people that have threatened my life, and I need to get it." They'll probably have legal reasons to wear these licensed vests, where people that maybe live in a neighbourhood where they don't feel safe want to go out and get one. They don't want it registered or licensed because then the police might think: oh, this person is gang related. So the offence is: "Okay. Why would this individual want body armour?" Like I say, all of a sudden they go into questions.

This is just, again, bureaucratic bloat. This is the idea of safety that supercedes our individual rights, and it's wrong. We don't need to register, we don't need to license body armour. Again, there are just so many areas where we look at it, and it's just so troubling to me for us to think that by registering this, we're going to be able to identify gang members or stop them on the street and prohibit them or arrest them or fine them in doing this.

If we want to start to get to the root of the problem, it's when someone perpetrates a crime that we need to act strongly. That's where we're strong on crime, not soft on crime. It's when it's actually happened, when someone is, you know, perpetrating a criminal activity. That's where we want to be strong on crime. In B.C. I believe it's an offence to wear it during or in attempting a crime. That's a bill that is worth passing. It's an offence. Again, we kind of supposedly had this law that if, in fact, you use a gun,

there's an automatic five- or 10-year extension on the crime. That's strong on crime, when someone has actually carried it out. Then you get these individuals and you put them behind bars, and they're not just rotated out to perform another ongoing crime the next day because they can pay a fine and they're making money.

There are just so many areas here where we need to take a step back and realize that this isn't going to solve the problem. It's going to bloat the bureaucracy. It's going to cost taxpayers money, and it's not going to address the problem in any sense. We shouldn't pass this bill. Perhaps that'll be one of the better things. This government seems to be kind of stalling out. The whispers in the halls are that perhaps tomorrow or the next day we're going to recess for the summer, and that'll be a good thing because some of these bills that shouldn't be passed won't go through. It wouldn't surprise me if the government doesn't push them through quickly before they go for their summer break in hoping to establish . . .

**Mr. Anderson:** Spring and summer break.

**Mr. Hinman:** Spring, summer, fall. It'll be an extended one, to my understanding.

We need to look and ask the question: why are we passing these laws? Who is it really going to affect, and how is it really going to help? Again, we can't just be passing these laws because of the perception that this is going to make us look good or the perception that, "Oh, Alberta is stepping forward" or so that the police chiefs can say: "Well, you know, this is going to help safety in the city here. We're going to be able to pull over these people that are wearing body armour." Like I say, I think that you'll find that the people that should least be wearing it will be the ones that have the legal licence to wear it.

We're not going to help our situation here, so I would hope that we would reconsider this and that the nays would outvoice the yeas in this for the benefit of Albertans and to realize that we need a bill so that when someone is perpetrating a crime, that's where we're tough on it, not for having a body vest or wearing a body vest for whatever reason they may desire to do that. It's wrong to think that licensing these is going to make Alberta safer. It's not. It's wrong to think that gangs are now going to limit their use. It's not going to happen. They're still going to have them. They're still going to be walking on the street. It's not in our best interests.

I hope that we don't get into licensing this and having to hire a lot more individuals and licensing agencies and tracking and trying to follow through. Like I say, I hope someone who has a legitimate concern and wants to be able to silently buy one because of the area that they live in or something isn't going to go on a list and then all of a sudden be questioned by the police: "Okay. Who are they associated with? Why have they bought body armour?"

**Mr. Hehr:** Are you a Communist?

**Mr. Hinman:** Are you a Communist? Again, that brings up another interesting point, hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo. Government seems to love to have lists. I went and listened to some of the Holocaust memorials, and one individual that was speaking said that the Holocaust was the most documented thing in history. They know every person, every area because of a list.

When government has and develops all these lists, it usually isn't in the best interest of the people. It isn't in the best interest of freedom. The government, when they have a list, thinks they have power. They try to use and manipulate those lists. Lists are not good in government's hands. We don't need them. There are a few legitimate reasons: for a census. But why do we ask the questions



we do? We ask far too much. We're intrusive in this country, and we need to be backing off. We don't need one more list of those people that are legally identified to wear body armour.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments and questions. The hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just have one question for this member. He talks a lot about the Constitution. I'm wondering what sections of the Constitution he's referring to.

**Mr. Hinman:** I would urge the individual to get the BNA Act, 1867; the Westminster Act, 1931; the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, and do a little bit of his own research. That's one of the problems in this House. I feel that individuals are given papers, and they don't even know where they come from. If he doesn't know the Constitution, whether it's section 91 or 92, whether it's federal or provincial or where they are, that's his problem. I suggest that he go home and do a little bit of his own work and understand what constitutions are for and why they're important.

In a democratic Constitution our rights are to be protected. That's the most important thing: to protect our rights and not have lists and safety things and not to write up a Constitution to say that government knows best. That's what happens with a lot of those tyrannical governments. They write up a Constitution, and they say: "You know what? We'll provide you protection. We'll provide you shelter. We'll provide you food. We'll give you safety." That's exactly what we provide to people that we put in jail here, and many dictatorship governments provide that same thing. That's the onslaught, the reasons why they say that if you give us complete control, we'll give all these things. It doesn't happen. It's wrong. We want to have our freedoms protected here, not a Constitution where they take away our property.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a). The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we tried to get rid of the gun registry, so we got rid of that. Now we're bringing in the body armour registry. Do we need to bring in a knife registry, hon. member, to make things safe or perhaps a big rock registry or – I don't know – a steel-toed boots registry? You can do a lot of damage with those. At what point do we stop registering things and just spend the money policing our streets and actually doing the things that will keep our citizens safe? Why the need to spend all this money on bureaucracy to register something that can't hurt anyone? The people that would actually use it in a crime would never think to register. Are there any reasons? Can you think of any?

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, I think the biggest reason, like I say, is the falsehood in thinking that they're going to go forward. Just think for a minute what we could do here in Canada if we had a billion dollars to put police officers out on the street rather than registering a gun. We need to be tough on crime, and that's going after the perpetrators. We protect the criminal far more than we protect the victims. This registry, again, is protecting the criminal. It's not going to protect the victim. The reason why is because we're going to be putting good money into a very poor return on our investment in trying to protect the people of Alberta.

Again, like I say, the biggest boondoggle is to spend a billion dollars for a gun registry. Think what that would do if we had police

officers throughout Canada that were out there going after the perpetrators of crime and being able to do investigations rather than being able to scan through huge, long lists of gun registry.

5:30

Again, you know, you hear so many rumours. I hear, like, over 30 per cent of the lists of the gun registry aren't accurate. Again, how restrictive are we going to be or how careful are we going to be when people go in and register? I mean, right now we have a major problem with our health care, with false declarations and paying out there. It's going to be the same. There are going to be lots of people that will probably go in, say who they are, be able to get a licensed vest, and in fact it isn't theirs.

Again, are we going to pass a law that if someone buys a vest, they've got to track it and report in? I'm not sure that it's in here that they've got to report where that vest is. Is it in the law here that if I buy one and have it, I can sell it on the black market and have to register that? There are just so many things that can and will be expanded. We're just going to create more chaos, more problems, and not solve any.

Trying to register body armour is just wrong, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Fawcett:** Yeah. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the hon. member and his colleague have thrown out there some very absurd examples and seem to really miss the point of the difference between a registry and a licence and that sort of thing. I'm wondering if the hon. member is so ideological that he believes that we should not issue drivers' licences or people shouldn't have to register their cars or stuff like that. I mean, ideology can only be taken so far. There are certain realities that set in in society. I'm wondering what the hon. member thinks of that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) time has ended.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity on the bill.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. As a former teacher I can't help but see a connection between the sort of giddy atmosphere in this Assembly today and equating it with children sort of one day out from Christmas holiday or the summer holiday. But at least today there is less confrontation, and there is more give-and-take. Yes, there are some accusatory back-and-forths, but generally it's a better day than it has been on other occasions, so I look forward to contributing to the quality of the day and, hopefully, the quality of the debate.

I am mixed as to the degree that I support the legislation. Beyond a doubt I want to do everything in my power as a legislator to support police forces, and if even in a small manner this Body Armour Control Act would do that, I could see myself supporting it. But we've had some interesting arguments come up from a variety of different parties and individuals as to the effectiveness of this particular piece of legislation. In sort of side conversations from one of my Calgary-Varsity constituents, who's a representative in this Assembly, he seems to think that this is not the instrument to achieve the protection that's necessary, and because he's a Calgary-Varsity constituent, I tend to have great faith in his opinions.

I was rather pleasantly surprised, for example, by the hon. finance minister, who is a member of the Calgary-Varsity constituency. I've already praised yesterday his work on the sustainable land-use framework and hoped that the efforts he put into it were continued. I also am fortunate to have the hon. minister of aboriginal affairs as a Calgary-Varsity constituent. There is value – regardless of

whether you're from Calgary-Varsity, have that honour and privilege – in this House.

With regard to body armour and specifically Bill 12, I can't help but think that there are numerous times when all of us probably wished that we had body armour. I think it might even be more appropriate for my rural colleagues, who, going up to a farmhouse at night, aren't absolutely certain of the reception they're going to receive and might wish to be included in the group that was allowed to wear the body armour.

For example, when I first ran in Calgary-Foothills, it included some outstretched rural countryside, and that German shepherd came bounding up to my father and greeted him with a little bit of a nip as opposed to a lick. I'm sure my father would have wished that he was wearing body armour when he was distributing pamphlets.

I know that when I ran, for example, in 2001 against the former Treasurer Pat Nelson, the 2001 federal election sort of crossed over during the provincial period, and as I was door-knocking in Calgary-Foothills, the question that I was repeatedly getting was: are you a federal Liberal, or are you an Alberta Liberal?

**An Hon. Member:** They're the same thing.

**Mr. Chase:** And then there was that kind of comment: they're the same thing. So I jokingly said: well, if I were a federal Liberal, I'd be wearing a blue UN helmet and a flak jacket because I know the reception I might get from an individual such as yourself. I mean, that was in jest.

But the reality, as the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East pointed out, is: how far do we go in terms of providing safety to our community? I agree with her that we have to take individual initiatives in terms of protecting our own well-being and our own property without aggressively getting in the face of some other individual. I understand the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore and the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere are concerned about the effectiveness of a list in terms of being a deterrent.

Where I disagree in terms of the listing is with the long gun registry. That's something that a lot of police forces felt had some value because when there was a call, they at least could look on their computer and on their registry. If it was a domestic dispute or whatever and there was a registered long gun, they had a sense of what they were getting into. I agree that the expenses associated with the registry were exorbitant. I would rather have seen outfits like fish and game clubs, who enjoy the benefits of long guns, doing the registering and passing that information on.

In terms of the listing we could pass this law. I don't know that any police officer would be that much better protected in the carrying out of their duty because the fact that a person is a criminal tends to mean that they disobey the laws. All of a sudden if we make a law against the prohibited acquiring of body armour, does that mean that, you know, whether it's a list or a registry or whatever, somehow they're not going to acquire that armour? Maybe with the passage of Bill 12 Crown Surplus, for example, won't be able to sell flak jackets. I'm assuming that that would be a logical consequence. Or they might have to do some kind of an internal search as to what kind of convictions this individual who wishes to purchase the armour has.

5:40

I mean, we can go to protective measures which we can beyond a doubt agree to. Then we have those intrusion circumstances. For example, at a bar a person has to provide all sorts of identity, indications for a search as to whether they're allowed to come into that establishment. I believe in – and pardon the expression – a just society, but I do not honestly know whether this would serve police.

Now, having said that, it is indicated, and I'll just quote:

"Policing in our province does not exist in a vacuum," said Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson. "We simply cannot do what we do without the support of the Province. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of [the] Justice Minister . . . and Solicitor General,"

whose name will remain unquoted so that I don't offend our rules,

"in providing us with the legislation and tools we need to address the investigative and operational challenges we face – particularly in the fight against organized crime."

"As a police agency, we support any amendments where the goal is to protect citizens and officers who serve those citizens," said [in this case] Edmonton Police Chief Mike Boyd. "We are especially pleased to see the Province expand its efforts in our fight against organized crime across Alberta."

Well, I have great respect for both chiefs Boyd and Hanson, and they believe that this would contribute to their, I would suggest, enforcement or protective arsenal. I gather, you know, my mind should be absolutely clear, and beyond a doubt I would be, without question, supporting the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I value these concerns. I value the concerns of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, who worked on the community and crime task force but seems to have reservations about this particular piece of legislation. So I'm left in a quandary, but I don't want to prevent other individuals from expressing their concerns. Please, please do participate.

Thank you for the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes comments, questions. The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Mr. Hinman:** Yes. I appreciate the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, and I have a question. He made a comment that the police, if there's a domestic dispute or something of that nature where they're called to a house, look to see if in fact there's a gun there. My understanding with the policemen that I've talked to is that they never make any assumptions, that they go in every house assuming that they have a long gun or a gun in there.

So really, what is the value of having the registry when, in fact, it actually presents a form of security thinking – "Oh, we're okay to go in here; there's nothing registered" – when in fact the criminals who have those don't register them? It gives you a false sense of security. Often you let your guard down, and it jeopardizes the policemen's safety because they all might hear on that, "Oh, this house has no registered gun," so they're not quite as vigilant, I guess, in protecting themselves going in. Again, this is this false sense of security that's allowed.

The other problem that happens with registries. I've met a couple of individuals here in the province where a mad neighbour or ex-spouse or something reports and says: "You know what? That individual has unregistered guns in there?" Then they're brought in at 2 in the morning. The SWAT team comes down on there. This one individual's 80-year-old mother was living there with him. So what we do is we actually get into this police state where intrusion into the home is elevated, and we don't have that protection of privacy. I wonder if you've thought of those and the fact that: does that registry actually perhaps endanger the police and other people because of the fact they make this assumption that it's okay and, again, let down their guards? What might be your comments on those, hon. member?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, we are talking about armour, body armour, not about gun registries.

**Mr. Chase:** Yes. Thank you. With regard to a registry in general – whether it’s body armour, whether it’s a gun, whether it’s a vehicle – the police, when a call goes out, try to gain as much information as they possibly can as they’re rushing to respond. They always have to assume the worst because their lives and the lives of their partners and the lives of the people potentially they’re serving are always at risk.

The ability to access that information I don’t think lulls or provides a false sense of security, but it does provide them with information. For example, whether they’re running a licence plate on a highway stop or whether they’re running a backgrounder on an individual whose residence they’ve gone to, there is going to be a record as to how many other disturbances or how many other calls there have been to this residence. After a fact, it does provide them with some background research, which, if it’s possible to be even more cautious, would be helpful.

Mr. Speaker, I realize we’re talking body armour, but I can’t help but think of the communication breakdown in Mayerthorpe, where because the communication wasn’t provided, four young Mounties lost their lives because the information wasn’t available. If this information helps the police force in carrying out their duties, then I will probably at the appropriate time support it. But I understand the quandary.

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

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I just have to ask the question. There are two things to look at here. I do believe that it provides a false sense of security because you think you know and you let your guard down. It doesn’t increase your check and your guard; it actually reduces it. It’s just human nature that, “Oh, there’s nothing there,” and it actually lowers our guard on that.

The other question I have for the hon. member. We’re concerned here. We have a fiscal deficit here, a cash running debt of over \$7.9 billion. Would it not be better for our police force to be able to actually have people that are effective fighting crime than to spend any amount of money on a registry? I mean, we’ve got to be fiscally responsible here. Where’s the best, you know, return on investment for fighting crime? I just don’t see that with a vest registry. It just seems like we could utilize it so much better.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) has ended.

Does any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 12 read a second time]

### Private Bills Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

**The Chair:** The chair shall now call the committee to order.

### Bill Pr. 1 Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act

**The Chair:** Are there any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few comments are in order, I believe, regarding Bill Pr. 1. This bill has been reviewed by Senior Parliamentary Counsel and by the Standing Committee on Private Bills, which has recommended that the bill proceed.

This bill does replace the existing legislation, which was established in 1966, establishing the Lethbridge Community Foundation. As I stated in second reading, Mr. Chairman, the existing foundation has been very successful. It has acquired some \$13 million in endowments and continues to grow. The new foundation established by Bill Pr. 1 updates the legislation. As I mentioned, it is modelled after the Calgary Foundation’s legislation. That legislation established our own Calgary Foundation, which has been very successful. It was established in 1955, and presently has assets of some \$270 million.

5:50

There are three areas of change that are encompassed in the new act, Bill Pr. 1. First, and most obvious, is the name change to reflect the area that’s actually covered by the work of the foundation, which is southwestern Alberta in addition to the city of Lethbridge. Secondly, it updates the governance. And, thirdly, it adds protection for the donors in the form of additional disclosure and enhancing the information that’s provided to donors.

I would like to call the question.

**The Chair:** Shall the chair call the question?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 1 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 Pr. 2 Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010

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

**Ms DeLong:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I wish to advise the House that the Standing Committee on Private Bills recommended that the bill proceed with amendments, friendly amendments, by the way. I would ask that the chair now direct the amendments to be distributed.

**The Chair:** The amendment is now being circulated.

**Ms DeLong:** While it is being distributed, I thought I might say a few words.

**The Chair:** Yes. Continue, hon. member.

**Ms DeLong:** Thank you very much. This Legislature and, in fact, all of Canada owe Canada Olympic Park an enormous thank you. The success that we had in the 2010 Olympics, not just for the regular Olympics but also the Paralympics, was due to the work that was done at Canada Olympic Park over the last several years. Though we owe them an enormous vote of thanks, the Olympics are all about fairness, and it wouldn’t be fair if we were to give Canada Olympic Park some sort of advantage when it came to being a profit or a nonprofit. I just wanted to assure you that when we were

putting this bill together, we were simply streamlining the process for defining whether or not part of the park would be profit or nonprofit. That is simply all that this bill does.

I would ask everyone to please support this bill. Thank you.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East on the amendment.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I can get another clarification on this. The exemption from the property tax: how is that changing from before you brought in this amendment? Is this not being explicit, that it's only nonprofits that are exempt?

**Ms DeLong:** Yes, it is. It is very explicit, and that's what this bill does. It just makes that explicit. The process that is being created for analyzing whether something is for-profit or not-for-profit is just being made more explicit. It's not actually changing.

Right now COP actually pays \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year in property taxes, and it will be continuing to pay \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year in property taxes for things like any facility that has alcohol. Anything that is essentially nonprofit is excluded and will continued to be excluded.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity on the amendment.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Yes, speaking to the amendment. Again, I'm wanting to be supportive, but I'm seeking clarification. Activities of a profit nature take place on the Canada Olympic Park property site. For example, an antique collective from across the province, I gather, rents or leases space in Canada Olympic Park. That is a commercial venture, which I suppose you could say that if the money from the lease goes back to support recreation, then it would probably be a legitimate activity.

Where I'm having concerns would be this line in part A, section 3, section 2.

For so long as the Lands and Improvements or any portion thereof is held by CODA and used or intended to be used by CODA in connection with sporting and recreational purposes inclusive of the cultural, educational, administration, facilitation, support and advancement of sports and recreation, any Lands and Improvements shall be exempt from property taxation.

Maybe this is self-explanatory, but I . . .

**The Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member. It's four minutes to 6. We will now rise and report because of the time limit. Would you like to put a question quickly so that we can rise and report?

**Mr. Chase:** I would suggest that the strength of this amendment, which I'm sure you want to be included, should be allowed to have whatever further debate. I'll willingly sit down.

**The Chair:** We will adjourn the debate on this bill, and we'll rise and report.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee rise and report Bill Pr. 1 and report progress on Bill Pr. 2.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill Pr. 1. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill Pr. 2. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, those in favour of the report, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

The hon. Government House Leader.

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

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:59 p.m. to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]



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