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The 27th Legislature
Third Session

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

Third Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 4, 2010

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. We confidently ask for strength and encouragement in our service to others. We ask for wisdom to guide us in making good laws and good decisions for the present and the future of Alberta. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, today I would like to introduce guests who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. There's one individual that I am absolutely, totally fascinated with. This man was born in 1923 in Saint John, New Brunswick. His name is Don Murphy, and I'd ask him to rise, please.

Don joined the Royal Canadian Navy volunteer reserve as a boy seaman before the onset of the Second World War. From 1942 till 1945 he was assigned to combined operations with the Royal Marines. His wartime record includes the fighting withdrawal from Burma in the Pacific, amphibious landings in North Africa and Sicily, a submarine raid on Norway, and the D-Day landings in Normandy. His decorations include the star for service from 1939 to 1945, the France and Germany Star, the Africa Star, the Pacific Star, the Canadian volunteer service medal with clasp, and the War Medal for service from 1939 to 1945. Upon demobilization in 1945 he studied hotel management and catering before embarking on a 30-year career in this field in Canada, particularly in the north during this period.

In 1975 Don joined the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires here in Edmonton and has held a variety of field and headquarters positions ever since. From 1993 until 2008 he worked here at the Legislature, usually the night shift, arriving at 11 or 12 and working until the morning. Then he would drive to his home in Morinville, where he and his wife live. Don is now 87 and still works full shifts at the Edmonton Garrison and attributes his longevity to the fact that he has never retired but, rather, has kept active, continuing to serve his country and his fellow countrymen. He plans to work until he turns a minimum of 90 or when his wife, Toni, says: enough is enough.

Joining Mr. Murphy, a man who absolutely fascinates me, is his spouse, Toni Murphy – I'd ask her to rise – and Colonel John Slater, chief executive officer of the Commissionaires of northern Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut; and Adriana Cavaliere, the executive assistant to Colonel Slater. Please welcome our guests, in particular our hero. [Standing ovation]

And all those who think retirement is an option, please see Mr. Murphy.

Introduction of Guests

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 15 students who are attending Norquest College. Of course, that is located in the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre, and every one of those students lives up to that moniker of fabulous. They are joined today by their group leaders, Mrs. Carol

Spence and Ms Brenda Chwyl. I would ask them all to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 45 students from Bow Valley College, which is located in my constituency of Calgary-Buffalo. They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms Susan Jolliffe and Ms Erin Holmes. I'm pleased to say that I've been in the Bow Valley College numerous times, where these individuals are taking social studies, and they're from all walks of life, all parts of the earth. I can tell you that it's an honour and a privilege to represent them and to go into their school. It's great to have them here. If we could have the traditional warm welcome of this House for our honoured guests.

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 this House 91 friends of mine from the beautiful city of Airdrie: three teachers, seven parents, and 81 grade 9 students from my old school, George McDougall high school. I'd like to introduce their teachers really quickly: Mr. Scott Sharun and Mrs. Devon Sawby, who I went to school with. Her mother is now the trustee of Rocky View, and she was the former vice-principal. I was in her office all the time. Surprise, surprise.

Constable David Henry is also with them and parent helpers Mrs. Shannon Mauro, Mrs. Stacey Henn, Mrs. Danelle Richards, Mrs. Anna-Jane Warren, Mrs. Michelle Pirzek, Mr. Darren Buell, and Mrs. Sherri Koenig. I'd ask all of them and all of the students to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly four very special guests who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. I would ask them to stand as I introduce them. Mr. Paul Grod is national president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Mr. Grod has led several election observer missions to Ukraine over the past five years. He recently travelled to Ukraine with Prime Minister Harper and was a member of the Governor General's delegation to Ukraine. The second one is Taras Pidzamecky, national president of the Ukrainian National Federation. Mr. Pidzamecky is also the chief executive officer and general counsel for the Ukrainian Credit Union. The third person is Olya Sheweli, president of the Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada. And the fourth is Daria Luciw, national vice-president and president of the Alberta branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and chair of the Congress of Ukrainian Canadians, which is taking place, for the first time in 70 years, in Edmonton this weekend. I will be saying more about this in my member's statement later on. I would ask all my colleagues at the Legislature to give them the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly the president of the Edmonton Social Planning Council, Ken Stickland; the council's executive director, Susan

Morrissey; and also John Kolkman, their director of research. Many of you may remember John from when he was the research director for the Alberta NDP caucus. On behalf of our caucus and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta I'd like to take this opportunity to extend to all of them and everyone at the social planning council my sincere congratulations on the council's 70th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent nonprofit social research organization. The council is an integral aspect of progressive social research in Edmonton and has done a great deal of great work for many people in our city. This is truly a landmark occasion for the ESPC and one well deserving of the acknowledgement and praise it has been receiving. I wish the Edmonton Social Planning Council, the board, and staff all the best.

Mr. Speaker, my guests are seated in the public gallery, and I would now ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly John Buterman. John is here today as my guest and is representing the Trans Equality Society of Alberta. The Trans Equality Society of Alberta, also known as TESA, was formed in the wake of Alberta Health Services' decision to delist funding for gender reassignment surgery, or sex reassignment surgery, in 2009. TESA's mission is to be a witness to and a voice for matters concerning transgendered Albertans. My guest was waiting right outside the gallery on my way in here and was to be seated in the public gallery. I would now ask John to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

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

Remembrance Day

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Time stands still for no man. These words we know to be true. One exception surely must be Remembrance Day. On that day and for those who observe, a minute of silence seems like an eternity. The quiet of the moment and the dignity that it gives to great and good sacrifices only gives a greater measure of effect.

On Remembrance Day we celebrate the unwavering will and commitment to humanity so freely given by the men and women of this nation in times of war. This includes the gallant men and women currently serving in our Canadian armed forces and, of course, our cherished veterans, to whom we pay even greater homage at this time of year. The peace and prosperity that our province and our country enjoys today is possible because of their sacrifices. Remembering their sacrifices, tremendous bravery, and commitment to duty helps us to better understand and appreciate our place in the world and how we can continue to build a better future.

Across the province Alberta schools will be honouring Veterans' Week and Remembrance Day with assemblies, poetry competitions, art displays, and guest speakers. Students will learn about Canadians who sacrificed and served their country in unimaginable circumstances so that we would have the opportunity to live full, secure, and peaceful lives. They will hear the stories of lives lived and lost and will be reminded that duty often comes with the highest price.

This is one of the great ways that we can live up to protect the freedoms that they have worked so tirelessly to protect. Mr. Speaker, we can give the highest honour to all of our veterans by continuing to value the freedom that they gave us, but we can also continue their work to secure a better future for our province and country.

To all members of our military, to their families past, present, and future: we thank you for all that you have given in the name of your country and in the name of duty. Their valour forged our country's identity. Their lives bought our freedom. Their sacrifices humble us and make us proud. We will remember them.

Thank you.

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

Coach Don Phelps

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to reflect a little bit on the word "coach." As a former hockey player the word conjures up a pile of pleasant memories. To be a coach is a synonym for mentor and friend. It signifies trust, sacrifice, education, fair play, and the pursuit of excellence.

My coach, my mentor, my friend is Don Phelps. I had the honour and the privilege of playing for Don in the 1989-90 hockey season for the Alberta Junior Hockey League champion Calgary Canucks. Don has spent 60 years in hockey as a player, as a parent, as an executive, and, most importantly to me, as a coach. Don is both an exceptional strategist and knows how to motivate young athletes to do their best. Undoubtedly, Don could have coached in the Western Hockey League or the National Hockey League, but his commitment to both his community and his family was too important to him. He stayed for the sake of young, often misguided athletes like me, who benefited so tremendously from his support and guidance.

Don has coached over 2,000 hockey games in the course of his career, winning more than half of them. He has coached over a thousand boys, was named Calgary sportsman of the year, has travelled over 500,000 miles on buses, and has the most wins of any junior A coach in Canada. As if that weren't enough, he's running in the 2011 Boston Marathon. Don is the kind of community leader that inspires everyone around him to do more, to be more, to reach their own potential, and to help others to do the same.

Today I'd like to offer Don my personal thanks for the lessons he taught me. I'd also like to thank all the coaches all over this wonderful province who spend countless hours with kids helping them grow into responsible men and women.

For those who don't know it, this is Don's last season coaching the Calgary Canucks in the Alberta Junior Hockey League. However, as the season is still in its early stages, you can catch Don in hockey rinks from Fort McMurray to Lloydminster, from Sherwood Park to Canmore, from Brooks to Bonnyville.

Thanks, Don, and thanks to all the coaches and mentors out there. You're all champs in my book.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Ukrainian Canadian Triennial Congress

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the 23rd Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians, that will be held this coming weekend in Edmonton. This is only the second time this conference will be held outside of Winnipeg in the 70 years since it began.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress was founded by fraternal organizations established by early settlers, including the Ukrainian

Catholic Brotherhood and the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League. The congress is a national organization representing the Ukrainian-Canadian community. The UCC has evolved into a leadership position representing the Ukrainian community to people and the government in Canada.

Ukrainian organizations in Canada realized long ago the importance of the concept of multiculturalism. Perhaps one of the most outstanding contributions Ukrainian-Canadians have made to the wider culture of Canada is the concept of multiculturalism, which was promoted as early as 1964 by Senator Paul Yuzyk. Ukrainian-Canadians have developed their own culture in Canada showcasing world-class Ukrainian dancers, singers, and cultural groups, including performing and fine arts.

The Ukrainian community has traditionally regarded the retention of the native language as key to the preservation of its heritage and identity. For a number of years Ukrainian was kept out of the school curriculum, until the 1960s, when the Ukrainian language returned to the public schools in the prairie provinces and later in Ontario.

The conference is entitled Honouring the Past, Inspiring the Future and will feature dignitaries such as the Canadian ambassador to Ukraine, Daniel Caron, and the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada, Dr. Ihor Ostash. The congress will celebrate both the 70th anniversary of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in addition to the 120th anniversary of Ukrainians in Canada. It will also serve as a forum to develop the vision and mandate for the Ukrainian-Canadian community in the near future. There will be three full days for delegates and participants to connect with other members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community. The Shevchenko medal, the highest form of recognition granted by the congress, will also be presented.

Many members of the House are Ukrainian, and this event is undoubtedly an important one as it strengthens the ties many Albertans have with their heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming the Ukrainian Canadian Congress for the first time to Edmonton. Thank you. [Remarks in Ukrainian]

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

Calgary-North Hill Fundraiser

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last June the Calgary-North Hill PC Association held a fundraiser at the Calgary Vipers baseball game. In conjunction, I decided it would be a great opportunity to raise funds for two charities, KidSport Calgary and the Art Smith amateur sports legacy endowment fund.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the generosity of community members and organizations, hon. members of this House, and the Calgary Vipers, all of whom either donated silent auction items, bid on them, or made cash donations, we raised \$3,326. I'm sure this money will be appropriately and effectively used by these two charities to enhance amateur sport opportunities for all Calgarians.

I want to thank the Calgary Vipers' president, John Conrad, for his willingness to be involved in this event. Mr. Speaker, the Calgary Vipers provide families in southern Alberta with affordable and quality entertainment throughout the spring and summer months. I would encourage all members of this House and all Albertans to pick out a day next summer and head down to the ballpark to catch a game either with the Calgary Vipers or the Edmonton Capitals.

I would also be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't take this opportunity to congratulate Vipers pitcher Brant Stickel, who hails from Veteran, Alberta. Brant is a great success story for the Alberta baseball community, having played four years for the University of Calgary Dinos baseball program. This past spring he was invited to

try out for the Calgary Vipers, and Brant took full advantage of this opportunity and parlayed it into having his contract purchased just a couple of weeks ago by one of the most storied professional sports franchises, the Los Angeles Dodgers.

I want to recognize all that the Calgary Vipers and the University of Calgary Dinos baseball program do for young Albertans who are passionate about baseball and who aspire to pursue their passion at the interscholastic or professional level. Without their existence the story of Brant Stickel would be nearly impossible.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. ministers of Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Culture and Community Spirit for their presence at the event. Although he was not there, I also would like to thank the Minister of Environment for such great weather that evening.

Thank you very much.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Emergency Medical Services Response Times

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's emergency room crisis is also an EMS crisis, and we're hearing from paramedics. A paramedic that takes a patient to the emergency room must stay with their patient until he finally gets admitted. That means that for every paramedic that's tied up in an overcrowded emergency room, there's one less EMS unit on the road to respond to life-and-death emergencies. To the health minister: given that the time paramedics in Edmonton are spending in emergency rooms has increased to an hour and a half in the last 12 weeks, how much longer are the people of Edmonton now waiting in their lodges or homes for an ambulance?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, the issues related to EMS providers are symptomatic of larger issues that we've discussed in this House and that I discussed with doctors a week or so ago. However, I am happy to tell people that whereas the September average for people admitted into emergency waiting for an overnight bed was 63, last week it came down to 56, and today it's down to 49 over five hospitals in Calgary alone.

Dr. Swann: An hour and a half of EMS time waiting in emergency is not efficient use of our health care resources. Surely, you can do something about that. The problem is not limited to Edmonton; it's throughout the province. We're backed up because of a bed and nursing shortage, with growing red alerts, meaning that at certain times no ambulance is available to respond to a 911 call. How many red alerts in the last six months, Mr. Health Minister?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the confirmed number, but I believe there was something like 10 hours' worth of red alerts since the beginning of this year. I'll have to verify that number because I probably got it from the same source the hon. member did.

But what's important to know here is that we have opened at least 70 new beds in acute-care facilities in Calgary and approximately 70 new beds in acute-care facilities in Edmonton just in the last few months, not including continuing care in the community.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so confident that he's making progress with the crisis, why are the EMS response times not reported to the public?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, there is a list that's available on the AHS website. It reports information related to this issue, and I would encourage the hon. member to please have a look at it.

Secondly, I'll be talking with the emergency room docs again tomorrow. We're having a little telephone chat, and I'll get some fresher information from them. I think the strategy is in place. There is a plan, and it is working.

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

Cancer Services in Calgary

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The health minister is frantically running from crisis to crisis, forgetting that he also needs to plan for the future. Yesterday the minister said that he's looking at Calgary's need for cancer care. Well, the minister has been looking for years. To the same minister: the need for this expansion has been clear for five years, so what more does the minister need to know to act?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I haven't been looking for years. I've only been in the position for nine months. It might be fair to say that I've been looking at it for months – that would be true – but certainly not years, so please let's not exaggerate with a lot of falsehood here.

The important thing is that there is a plan that is being developed right now. Alberta Health Services is working with Alberta Health and Wellness on a good, provincial-wide strategy to ensure timely care and faster access to cancer care. That discussion and those meetings are going on right now, Mr. Speaker, and it will culminate with a very good plan.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta Health Services gave the minister their capital submission seven months ago. What is the minister's excuse for not yet having an Edmonton and Calgary capital plan finalized?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday and I'll indicate again today that we're working on the province-wide cancer strategy, and as part of that province-wide cancer strategy it's important to not only announce that new facilities will be built but to also ensure that we have the financial resources to staff them, to recruit for them, to pay for the operating. That's a fundamental part of our government's accountability.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, it looks like it's going to be 2011 before we have the 2010 capital plan, or will the minister commit to providing that plan while the House is sitting?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, let's put this in perspective. We have over 1,000 health facility capital infrastructure projects on the books right now, totalling over \$5 billion, so please don't tell me that we're not doing anything because we are.

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

Foreign Investments in Alberta

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the finance minister. Yesterday the federal government made an unexpected decision. It did not approve the takeover bid for Saskatchewan's Potash Corporation. As the finance minister said

yesterday, Alberta's Premier came out publicly and vocally in support of Saskatchewan's Premier in opposing the takeover. On the other hand, the minister of international relations talked about Alberta's long-standing commitment to a barrier-free trading environment. This administration is sending mixed messages. To the minister: who are Alberta businesses and foreign investors supposed to be listening to? The Premier, the minister of finance, or the minister of international relations?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I'd repeat again today that I congratulate our leader, the Premier, for standing up for provincial rights, standing up for resource ownership by the people of every province, including Quebec. Quebec defended Saskatchewan as well. So let's hear it for Alberta standing side by side with Saskatchewan.

Dr. Swann: The Premier has taken the position that the resources of Saskatchewan have to be protected. Could the minister explain where this government stands on protecting Alberta's resources? Where does this government draw the line between being open for business and giving away the store?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition says that they're mixed messages. The reason there are several different tiers of the message, sir, is that the Alberta petroleum and gas economy is completely different than the Saskatchewan resource. There's one source of potash there, dominated by one company. In Alberta you have an open oil and gas economy with multiple ownership by Canadian-based firms with U.S. investment. Direct foreign investment is an important part of the success of this province's economy.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, foreign governments are investing in Alberta: South Korea, United Arab Emirates, China. Foreign governments are not businesses. They are not subject to disclosure. They sometimes hoard resources, as in the case of China and the rare earth minerals. China also ranks quite highly on the corruption perception index. Could the minister tell the Assembly in what circumstances Alberta would oppose investment by foreign governments?

Ms Blakeman: Oh, he passed it off. Look at that. You didn't want to take that one, did you?

Mr. Horner: Well, contrary to what the chirping is over there, Mr. Speaker, there was no pass-off of the question.

In fact, what the hon. member is talking about is what the Premier's position is on this. On behalf of the Premier I'd like to reiterate that we stood up for our fellow partners in the New West Partnership. We stood up for fellow partners across this province about the ownership of these resources. In Alberta we have a very diversified resource; we have a very diversified investment in that resource. Some of them are Crown corporations invested in our province. I'm sure the hon. member would probably like to have the debate about whether or not we should be investing in them as well. Perhaps we'll have that discussion.

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

Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister of health has become the Minister of No Answers. His statements have gone from meaningless to downright confusing. Today he tells the

Calgary Herald that he doesn't see a lot of new things in our Wildrose health plan. To the minister of health: given that it's quite obvious your government doesn't have an independent health ombudsman like the Wildrose, medical savings accounts and publicly disclosed wait times like the Wildrose, a kinship palliative care program and decentralized service like the Wildrose, how can you say, Mr. Minister, that there is nothing new?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Well, Mr. Speaker, the short answer is: because there isn't anything new, other than some musings about privatization. They want public funding to follow patients. We already are doing activity-based funding models in continuing care. At least, they're being looked at. They talked about hiring more front-line staff. I can tell you that our physician head count grew by 23.1 per cent just within the last few years. I can tell you that we're hiring 1,100 new nurses, and I could go on with that, so that's not new. They call it a health ombudsman; our act calls it a health advocate. That's nothing new.

Mr. Boutilier: Once a Liberal, Gene, always a Liberal. He gives us no answer.

To the minister: when you say that there is nothing new in our Wildrose health plan, is it because your government has seen and ignored these proposals in the Mazankowski report, the Graydon report, the Kirby report, all of which are collecting dust on this minister's desk?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. [interjections] The hon. minister has the floor.

2:00

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I could hardly understand a word being said because the member himself was trying to shut down his own colleagues, and that's unfortunate. I'm very proud to be a member of the PC caucus. I've run three times as a PC member, and I have the full support of my constituents.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the nonanswer, I'll ask the Minister of Infrastructure, who may actually give a straight answer. In your press release, which I have here and which I'll table, on June 15 you confirmed a hundred-bed long-term care facility for my constituency of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, and I thank you, sir. Yesterday the minister of health in this House contradicted you, bragging about only a 48-bed. To the minister: can you clarify this confusion? Has the minister of health cut the number of beds in half, or is he still just simply confused?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, hon. member. I do want to say to you that it is a hundred spaces in Fort McMurray. Mr. Speaker, this government has invested \$13.8 million in Fort McMurray, ensuring that we do have a hundred beds, which include long-term care beds and affordable supportive beds. The process now is in the RFP. We have it down to three consultants, and we hope that that consultant will be chosen by the end of the year.

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

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It was very interesting to hear the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo criticize the minister of health for being a floor crosser.

Telus Consumer Health Platform

Mr. Mason: Telus has announced plans to market a new high-tech electronic medical records system. Presumably, Alberta Health will be an important target market. Can the minister of health tell us whether or not he has had any discussion with Telus about this new electronic medical records system or any other product or service marketed by Telus to Alberta Health or to Alberta Health Services?

Mr. Zwozdesky: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister feel that his acceptance of Telus's generous gift to him, specifically a weekend at a golf resort, should disqualify him from considering Telus for future contracts with his department?

Mr. Zwozdesky: No, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, I flew in on a Sunday night. I spent a few hours there on Monday morning. I flew straight back. I spoke about possibly getting somebody to come out here and help talk about physical activity because the night before I had spoken with Gary Player and he, unfortunately, wasn't available.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to avoid the perception of a conflict of interest on future contracts between his department and Telus, will the minister agree to pay Telus back the entire cost of this generous gift, and if not, why not?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, let's get this into perspective here. There was a hotel room, valued at something like 200 bucks or 2 and a quarter or something, and nine holes of golf, which was valued at about 140 bucks or 150 bucks. It's within that \$400 range or very close to it. I just felt that it was important to report it in the openness and transparency mode.

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

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Mr. Taylor: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We continue to hear about an overburdened health care system, and now we hear that Alberta has the third-highest high school dropout rate in the country. It's well documented that those individuals unfortunate enough to be living in poverty are more likely to visit our hospitals and more likely to drop out of high school. Last month when the Standing Committee on the Economy met, I proposed that along with increasing the minimum wage, the province should recognize the need for a poverty reduction strategy, which was unanimously agreed to by the committee members. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: has the minister had a chance to review those recommendations yet?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, yes, I have had a chance to look at the documents. I will be reporting in due course. I appreciate the member raising this particular issue; it is an important issue. I will be reporting not only to the member but to the House in due course.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that individuals who

break the poverty cycle are less likely to get sick, to drop out of school, to rely on government services such as employment insurance and given that these same individuals are more likely to pursue a postsecondary education, find long-term employment, and invest their time in community involvement, not to mention contribute taxes whereas before they were a destination for tax dollars, is the minister aware that financially it is actually less expensive to make an initial investment to bring an individual out of poverty than it is to leave them in poverty?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, a very similar question to those before to my colleague in Health. The fact of the matter is that this province has a poverty reduction strategy. We simply don't call it that. In a nutshell our poverty reduction strategy is employment. We have many programs that lead Albertans towards employment. Frankly, that member would be very hard-pressed to find Albertans who want to remain on government programs and who don't want to be employed. Do we have a strategy? Yes, we do. We have 59 offices that provide support to Albertans. That all leads towards employment. If this member insinuates that we should be providing . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member, please.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, employment is a key part of any good poverty reduction strategy, but it is just one key factor out of perhaps 10 or 12. Will the minister commit to engaging in broad-based public consultations involving all sectors of Alberta's society – business, the not-for-profit sector, the faith community, and on and on, especially people experiencing poverty – to create a poverty reduction strategy, much the same as was done in creating the various 10-year plans to end homelessness in and around this province?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, again, the member is behind the eight ball. I'm the one who reviewed the low-income benefits and literally met with thousands of recipients of low-income benefits. Very recently I met with municipal leaders who are engaging in addressing low-income issues in their municipalities. The fact of the matter is that I will be reviewing the report of the legislative committee. I will be making an announcement on minimum wage. If the member is only interested in my announcing a name of a strategy that already exists, I find that pointless. We have strategies in place under a different name.

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

Wait Times for Cancer Treatment

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week in question period some opposition members alleged that \$27 million in federal funding tied to cancer wait times is at risk of being lost. This accusation alarmed me, and quite frankly it scared some of my constituents because we've all been touched by cancer, and we know how important every single dollar is in going to fight cancer. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: why are we not providing Ottawa with the information they require regarding wait times for cancer treatment?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely false to think that we're not. I know that opposition members tried to make an issue out of this. They were absolutely, completely wrong. There

has been no lapse and no failure on the part of the Alberta government or on the part of Alberta Health and Wellness or Health Services, for that matter, regarding any required reporting of cancer wait times. That's all there. The official monitor of wait times is CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and we have supplied them with the data required.

Mr. Griffiths: Okay. Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm that the \$27 million provided in federal funding is not at risk, then, that we're meeting any contractual agreement.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you with great assurance that the \$27 million referred to is not at any risk. It was actually a part of a larger sum of money, \$62 million, that was received as part of an agreement we have with the federal government. We are in full compliance with the cancer piece. There is absolutely no risk of us losing that \$27 million.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then I'm wondering if the minister can explain what our wait times look like right now. What measures is the department undertaking to improve cancer wait times?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Well, Mr. Speaker, there will be a province-wide strategy coming forward, which I referred to earlier. But let's not lose sight of what has already happened here. We have already opened the radiation therapy corridor in Lethbridge. We broke ground on the one that's coming forward in Red Deer, and we have another commitment as part of the 500-plus million dollar project up in Grande Prairie, where that new hospital will have a radiation therapy corridor there as well. So there is a lot that's going on to help address the situation.

Legal Aid

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has jeopardized the section 10 Charter rights of Albertans through cuts to legal aid funding. The president of Alberta's Criminal Trial Lawyers Association believes that changes to legal aid have created, and I quote, two-tiered justice where the disadvantaged cannot protect their rights when others can; this is a disgrace. End of quote. Don't you agree that this situation is disgraceful?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only say that the question does sound a little familiar. I think perhaps we had this discussion last week in the House. I want to make it perfectly clear that the provincial government has not cut legal aid funding. We've maintained our commitment to legal aid. We ensure that everyone who needs to have legal representation in court has that. Courts are fully aware of what our obligation is. Courts are certainly able to direct us to do something differently. They have not done that. We are completely confident that we're providing the support that we need to provide in this province.

2:10

Mr. Hehr: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not what I'm hearing. In this 2009 review Legal Aid Alberta reported that the judiciary, the Crown, community service agencies, and the private bar all felt that further funding reductions to legal aid result in higher costs to the justice system. Are all these people wrong?

Ms Redford: Well, Mr. Speaker, that may very well be the case, but as I have said in this House six or seven times in the past two weeks, we have not reduced funding to legal aid.

Mr. Hehr: To the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Albertans receiving aid already live beneath the poverty line, and now they have to pay extra for courtroom assistance. Does this not shock the conscience of the minister?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that we do have a legal aid program that many of my aged clients can access. I'm not aware of a situation that when an aged client is in need of supports, those supports are not available.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Electricity Transmission Line Compensation

Mr. Marz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Land values vary greatly from one end of this province to the other, and many landowners don't feel that one price fits all situations regarding compensation for electricity transmission installations on their property. To the Minister of Energy: is there going to be recognition of the varying market values for land taken into account when determining compensation for these proposed transmission lines?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it's very important to point out to the House that the government of Alberta is not involved in the negotiations relative to the siting of lines. It's a negotiation between the transmission line proponents and the landowner. I've had the opportunity in the last couple of weeks to have discussions on the two north-south projects with both ATCO and AltaLink, and it's my understanding that those negotiations are going very well.

Mr. Marz: Well, I'm getting a bit of a different story, Mr. Speaker. My reported compensation offerings still don't compare with compensation already established for other industrial installations such as oil and gas. So what options do landowners have if they're not satisfied with what they're being offered by companies like AltaLink, other than just not signing an agreement?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that you're always going to have situations where there may be disagreements on what the value of the land is, but it's my understanding that the amount that is being offered has substantially increased from previous negotiations. I guess the thing we always have to remember is that there is a balance because those costs are put back into the rate base through the Alberta Utilities Commission to consumers.

To specifically answer the question, there is the Surface Rights Board, which falls under the purview of my colleague. That is the option when you can't reach agreement.

Mr. Marz: My last question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Mr. Speaker, when you start out with next to nothing, a substantial increase is still next to nothing. Does the Surface Rights Board use different criteria in determining compensation for transmission towers than they do for well sites even though they occupy and have similar effects on the land? If so, why?

Mr. Knight: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the Surface Rights Board does not distinguish between power transmission lines, well sites, or any other use with respect to dealing with compensa-

tion issues in front of them on the right-of-entry order. The board makes its decisions on compensation in accordance with the Surface Rights Act, and it's based on evidence and argument presented by the parties on each specific case.

Violence in the Somali Community

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's Somali community has been caught in a deadly crossfire. The community has lost 30 young men to gun violence since 2005. Little help has been forthcoming. To the Solicitor General. Alberta ranks 12th out of 13 among provinces and territories in police officers per capita. Is this ongoing violence towards members of the Somali community a result of the province's failure to provide adequate policing?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, no, it's not as a result of our failure to provide adequate policing; it's a result of gang activity. If you include the spectrum of law enforcement that we use in this province, we do not, in fact, rank the way the hon. member points out. If you've noticed the recently released crime statistics, Alberta's crime rates are going down. We are having an impact. We're going to keep going.

Mr. Hehr: To the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Most of these murders are unsolved. In the few cases that are going ahead, witnesses are too frightened to testify. This Assembly passed the new Witness Security Act in April. When will this act be proclaimed and the protection for witnesses put in place?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know in this situation through our meetings with the Somali community and the work that we have done under our safe communities initiative, these are very complicated cases to investigate. We know from what we've heard from police services who are investigating crimes that it is sometimes difficult in gang-related homicides to get people to come forward to testify. We know that there are systems in place within municipalities to ensure that if victims do want to come forward, if witnesses want to come forward, there is the opportunity for them to do that and to be protected in the course of the investigation. We wish the police success with their investigation.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Mr. Speaker, the Somali community has called on the Alberta government to form a task force to find ways to solve the problem and prevent more deaths. The answer: it would be too expensive; it would be too long. The cost in lives has been too expensive, and the deaths have been going on too long. Will the minister finally appoint the task force that this community has been asking for?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, we have had discussions with people in the Somali community across this province about some very difficult things that are happening in that community. The answer is not that it's too expensive or too long. The answer is that we in this province believe in safe communities. We partner with our police, we partner with community leaders, and we ensure that everything is in place to make sure that people can live safe lives. Unfortunately, things happen. We will ensure that we continue to work in partnership to support community efforts, to deal with diversion programs, to ensure that there are mentorship programs so that people don't make wrong choices.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

Affordable Housing for Rural Alberta

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister of housing has been all over the news in the last little while, a month or so, cutting ribbons, announcing affordable housing projects but all in big cities. It appears to me that this minister does not recognize the dramatic shortage of affordable housing in rural Alberta. With no plan for rural Alberta what will this minister say to the people in my area who cannot afford housing? Move to Edmonton? Move to Calgary? I'd like an answer.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to first thank the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake for that question, but at the same time she can actually look at where we have been. We've actually been from Lethbridge to Fort McMurray, from Edson to Vermilion, and everywhere in between. In fact, there are about 8,800 affordable housing units pursuant to the Premier's plan that have been built. About a quarter, 2,200, involve housing in rural Alberta. I'm very proud that we have a cost per door of about \$97,500, and we have been able to find a 19 per cent savings in our budget this year.

Ms Calahasen: Well, Mr. Speaker, Lethbridge, Fort McMurray, et cetera, do not qualify as rural Alberta. To the same minister: how can you assure this House that the RFPs that you will be providing for those opportunities are for developers in rural Alberta, giving them the same opportunity as those in big cities like Edmonton and Calgary?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I get calls from this side of the House to do the right thing. Well, we are doing the right thing. As part of our RFP about one-third of our RFP applications this year have been outside the province's seven major centres. Some of the qualities include sustainability, the need for the project. But, most importantly, affordable housing must be affordable for both the taxpayer and the client.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Speaker, the RFP isn't enough to address the shortage of housing in rural Alberta, like my constituency, and this minister knows it because we've spoken. What other options can this minister of housing provide for my constituents rather than just an RFP that takes too long to build and doesn't even provide enough support?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As this member knows from conversations that we've had, we have an RFP, but we also have a capital funding program. I give this House a bit of an example: 5,100 of 14,000 seniors' self-contained units, again part of our capital funding program; 1,465 of 10,000 community housing units. Again, this is in the four corners of the province on a per capita basis. But I remind this member that it's a balance between individual responsibility and what we can provide as a government because we're dealing with taxpayers' dollars here.

2:20 Attendance at Remembrance Day Ceremonies

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, next week MLAs in this House have the opportunity to participate in local Remembrance Day ceremonies. In my view, these opportunities to remember those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom and prosperity are vital to our national and provincial fabric on several levels. Unfortunately, not every Albertan has the opportunity to take part in these events because of conflicts with their employment. To the Minister of Service Alberta: is this government willing to legally ensure that every Albertan can attend a Remembrance Day ceremony if they so choose?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to attending Remembrance Day ceremonies, in many cases most employers will let their employees go, and I'm just a little bit confused as to where this question is coming from.

Mr. Anderson: Well, to be clear, there are provinces that have designated Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday or prohibit stores from opening during that morning. That's not what I'm asking for. I'm asking the minister: just as we allow people a mandatory period of time to vote on election day if they choose, would the government be willing to do the same thing for employees wishing to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies?

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to that request, if there's any particular situations that we need to be aware of as a government, we're more than happy to look into them. Any services like that are open to the public, and we always encourage everyone to go if they can attend.

Mr. Anderson: The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration looks like he'd like to answer this question. Tell us: would you like to look into this and see if there's a way that we can allow people who want to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies to attend them when they otherwise wouldn't be able to, just like we do with voting?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm pointing it out here is because if the member is asking a question, he might as well know whom he should be asking the question to. Our employment standards legislation right now does not designate Remembrance Day as a holiday; however, I have to tell you that we are not receiving any complaints from Albertans advising us that employers are not allowing them to go and participate in this holiday. If this was a problem and if employees definitely would be raising that as an issue, we would look at it, but at this point it doesn't appear to be an issue other than in that caucus.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

Postsecondary Education Affordability

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Instead of investing in postsecondary education, this government's only solution for students in institutions is piling on debt. Nonrepayable financial assistance widens access and encourages students to finish, but in

Alberta the ratio of loans to bursaries is 14 to 1. The government-imposed debt craze is spreading to institutions as the University of Calgary has sunk into a \$47 million deficit. To the minister of advanced education: with student loan rates up by one-fourth and projected to increase another 20 per cent next year . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's interesting that the hon. member says that we're not investing in postsecondary. I can tell you that in the roughly four years that I've been the minister of this department, we have already created more than 14,000 new seats for new access for students.

An Hon. Member: I didn't hear that. How many?

Mr. Horner: More than 14,000. Close to 15,000.

Indeed, our capital plan continues because a lot of the construction is still ongoing. We will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, broadening the base of our support, utilizing all of the tools in our tool box, which includes bursaries and scholarships. Frankly, I would stack our scholarship program up against any other province in Canada.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I very much appreciate the creation of seats. Absolutely necessary. However, the attendance is a problem. How is Alberta going to raise its 14 per cent, subpar postsecondary participation rate when the only option is debt, and the most debt-averse students, those with low incomes and from rural areas, are the ones we need to reach? How are we going to help them?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the hon. member and his research that, simply, student loans are the only deterrent to raising our participation rates in postsecondary. There is a list of items that come into play, the economy being one, where students are perhaps going out into the workforce and then coming back. One of the things that we've noticed is that the average age of our students is actually going higher because they're going out, getting some dollars in their pockets, coming back into our system, and we have to be responding to that kind of reality.

Mr. Chase: Well, the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that it's getting harder to go to university full-time because it's unaffordable. If massive layoffs, tuition hikes, and extra fees couldn't stop our second-largest university from sliding into a deficit, isn't this a sign that cuts to postsecondary operating grants have gone too far?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referencing the University of Calgary's current deficit situation as was reported in the Auditor General's report, as has been recently reported in the media. We recognize that the University of Calgary is going through some difficult financial times, and the management there is taking the reins to create a new system of accountability within their system. They are tackling the problem with vigour. We're supporting them in every way possible, which means they may have to carry a deficit for a small period of time. We're going to support our university, not criticize it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Highway 63

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Numerous Albertans use highway 63, widely regarded as a busy and dangerous highway, yet some constituents claim that there does not seem to be too much activity happening with respect to twinning that highway. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation. Can he please explain why more work is not being done on the highway when there are so many safety concerns?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, although the collision rate on highway 63 is below the provincial average, one collision is still too many, as far as I'm concerned. We have and will continue to make improvements to this highway to help safety. Safety is everyone's concern. Twinning a highway plays a role in the safety plan, but we all have a role to play in making our highways safe.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments, but I don't think the minister answered the question. Could the minister explain why more work was not done on highway 63 this year?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to tell Albertans exactly what we're doing on highway 63, and it's a significant investment. This government invested \$147 million on highway 63 this year, and the federal government is also providing funding. [interjection] If the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo would actually quit his yipping and listen for a minute, he might learn something about his riding. Twinning north of Wandering River . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll let the minister take a breath while I ask the next question here. I want to ask the minister about the bridge in Fort McMurray. I know constituents driving in Fort McMurray are curious about its status as it looks like it's finished but it's not open yet. Can the minister tell us what the status is on that bridge and when it'll be commissioned?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. The bridge does look like it's finished, but there has to be a realignment made there for the highway to connect to that bridge. We also have to move some of the utilities and different things from the existing bridges. But I'd like that hon. member to know that construction is being done on time. That bridge will open in 2011.

To answer a little bit of his last question, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that of the \$147 million we invested this year, we did some twinning north of Wandering River.

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

Fort Chipewyan Health Research Agreement

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This week the Minister of Aboriginal Relations has faced a few questions, but rather than answering, he's decided to duck and cover. The First Nations and Métis people in Alberta deserve better, so I'm going to ask a question again to the Minister of Aboriginal Relations. Does the minister think it's his responsibility to publicly advocate on issues like health and safe drinking water for the First Nations and Métis people in Fort Chip? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Webber: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government acknowledges the concerns and frustrations of the people of the Fort Chip area, and we remain totally committed to working with that community, with the chiefs up in that area to resolve a number of their issues. I feel as a minister that I have a duty to listen to their concerns and to bring them to my caucus to inform my caucus of the issues up in that area. That is what I feel is my role as the minister.

Dr. Taft: Well, the minister of health's and the Premier's names are all over the correspondence with the chief in reference to the Fort Chip health study. Given this Minister of Aboriginal Relations has claimed to play a central role in these negotiations, why is this minister mysteriously absent from correspondence on this issue?

Mr. Webber: Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not the truth. This letter of intent that we're trying to get signed up in the Fort Chip area has my signature right on that document, so I'm very much involved with the issues up in that community.

Thank you.

Dr. Taft: Well, I'd like him to table that, then. That would be very helpful. I'm sure you'd agree, Mr. Speaker.

Why is this minister ignoring requests for a clear plan on how the health study will be done and instead, as he says, merely providing advice regarding a letter of intent?

2:30

Mr. Webber: Well, Mr. Speaker, we do have a physicians' working group up in the area right now talking to the community, and we're developing some type of community health study. Yes, some type of community health study. The options were presented to the Nunee health board in Fort Chip in August.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

High-speed Internet Service for Rural Alberta

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been way too many reports generated over the last number of years regarding Internet connectivity or, in the case of Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, the lack of it. In 2009 the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties brought forth a report recommending an increase in high-speed connectivity in rural Alberta, and this year similar recommendations were being presented by the Alberta Economic Development Authority. My questions are to the Minister of Service Alberta. Ma'am, what are you doing to help this cause in rural Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is fully committed to ensuring that Albertans have access to high-speed Internet wherever they live. We know the SuperNet has built the fibre, the infrastructure to get that going, but we are hearing about challenges in many other parts of Alberta. This past summer Service Alberta issued a request for information, asking industry to help identify the best ways to address the challenges for unserved and underserved areas of Alberta, and we are reviewing that as we speak.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you. To the same minister. I don't need any more reports, and I don't need any more promises. I just need to know when you're going to fix this for the remaining mile in rural Alberta. There's 30 per cent of us that have no Internet service to our homes.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, it's about 34 per cent that do not have access to Internet service. Currently we are looking at the strategy and moving forward. Once we have reviewed the industry responses to the request for information, of which there are many, we fully intend to move towards a request for proposal and ensure that Albertans have access to high-speed Internet. This will be done within two years of awarding that contract.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you. To the same minister again. I've got counties in my constituency that are willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on this last mile. Can you give them some advice? I don't know if we're going to duplicate the work here, but what I heard from your answers is that you're going to take this on.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the communities within Whitecourt-Ste. Anne for proactively moving forward to access high-speed Internet. Now, we know that many of these community initiatives are important pillars in our overall strategy. Moving forward, our provincial strategy is going to negate the need for these piecemeal approaches. We are fully committed to a comprehensive Alberta solution addressing all the areas of our province. Again, we want this work done within two years of awarding the contract.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Highway 3 Coalhurst Intersection

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The egress to highway 3 from Coalhurst and highway 509 has long been a very contentious and dangerous intersection. There is even a Facebook group about it. In fact, just within the last few weeks there's been a fatal collision and a collision with serious injuries. To the Minister of Transportation. I know this minister is aware of the serious concerns regarding this intersection. Is the minister considering some solutions, and is this a priority?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, this is about working with the town to find solutions and provide access to the town while enhancing safety features on our highways to make sure that everyone gets home safely. I did meet with the mayor of Coalhurst last year, and my department officials continue to work with the town to improve the situation. There have been several options that have been proposed, and we're still waiting on the town to come back with those decisions.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that an overpass is probably prohibitively expensive, but could a traffic light be a solution?

I'm just going to go into my third question, and then I'll have two. There could be a better way, and this is my suggestion. Would you consider lowering the speed limit from Kipp until an appropriate position past the Coalhurst intersection, lowering it to 70 when at this point in time it's 110?

Mr. Ouellette: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a main highway on one of the national highway systems in Alberta. It's highway 3, going to the Crownsnest Pass. It's a twinned, four-lane highway. When I sit down with our safety engineers and we talk about speed limits and how they put the speed limits on highways, they say that it's very, very unsafe to lower a speed on a major highway because then all traffic doesn't go the same speed, and it makes it more dangerous for the people sitting there.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Elizabeth Métis Settlement

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent article in the *Cold Lake Sun* indicated that some of the members of the Elizabeth Métis settlement have serious concerns with how the settlement is being managed. Can the Minister of Aboriginal Relations explain what he has done to respond to these concerns?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Webber: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, hon. member, for that question. We do have a Métis settlements ombudsman office that works with the settlement members and with the settlement councils to investigate and to resolve issues and make recommendations to my office if needed. Now, the concerns brought forward by the Elizabeth settlement were investigated by the ombudsman this year, and recently I received a report from the ombudsman in regard to this investigation. I did find this investigation to be unacceptable, and at the time I spoke privately with the ombudsman as to why I did not accept the report.

Mrs. Leskiw: To the same minister. I agree; the report was unacceptable. Does this confirm the rumours that I've heard from some of my constituents that the ombudsman office has been shut down, and there's no one available to hear their concerns?

Mr. Webber: Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Métis ombudsman did resign for reasons that do remain private. However, the ombudsman office was never shut down, and in fact it is currently operating under my direction. There are still people there to answer the phones, and any settlement member can call at any time with any of their concerns. I hope to have a new ombudsman in place within the next week or so.

Mrs. Leskiw: I am pleased to see the minister is committed to the Alberta Métis people.

My final question is to the same minister. The Elizabeth settlement has been working very hard to develop a gravel pit in south-west Edmonton. Can the minister tell me if he's willing to champion the gravel pit to the city of Edmonton and help this economic development opportunity become reality for the people of the Elizabeth settlement?

Mr. Webber: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that I do support economic development in any Métis settlement or by any

Métis business to help them become more self-sufficient. However, this gravel pit that the hon. member is referring to is really out of my hands. It's the city of Edmonton. They have decided not to grant the municipal approvals needed for this gravel pit to operate. It is a municipal issue, and I will respect the city of Edmonton's decision.

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

Securities Regulation

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Several Canadian provinces are supporting the federal government's plan for a single national securities regulator; however, Alberta is joining Quebec in court action to prevent exactly this from happening. Some suggest Alberta is wasting its time and resources on a matter that is already a fait accompli and in a realm that would be better regulated by the federal government in any case. My first question is to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise. Considering all of this, why is Alberta still proceeding full speed ahead in opposing a single federal securities regulator?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, the time and money that's being wasted is being wasted in Ottawa in trying to set up a new national securities regulator. We have a system that works, and Albertans know that if something works well, you don't waste the time trying to fix it. Why does it work? Because the Alberta Securities Commission understands and knows how the Alberta economy works. It has local expertise. The last thing we need is a bunch of faraway bureaucrats in Ottawa who don't have that local knowledge and have the Ottawa one-size-fits-all view of Canada.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is to the same minister. Given that proponents of a single national securities regulator suggest Canada is a laughingstock – on the world stage, that is – for having a disjointed system of 13 different regulators, is Alberta not also open to the suggestion that we're a laughingstock for attempting to prevent attempts to make it better?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, that line is just the standard line of the federal finance bureaucrats in Ottawa. They're the ones that get laughed at when they show up and pretend they're the SEC from the U.S.

The Canadian system, the passport system that we have, is recognized internationally for the two things that securities regulators are supposed to do, efficiency of raising capital and investor protection. For the last two years the Milken Institute has rated Canada the best, most efficient at capital-raising, and the World Bank has ranked Canada the best in the top five for investor protection. In fact, just yesterday, so it's six years in a row, once again Canada was ranked in the top five, tied with the U.S. ahead of the United Kingdom, for investor protection.

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the same minister. We've seen the experience of our neighbours to the east, Saskatchewan, and their experiences in potash, how it has competed both on the local level and internationally and how messy it can be. Now, to compete in a global marketplace, do we not need a national system to represent our national interests?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, the story out of Saskatchewan and Ottawa yesterday was a positive story. It's a good story. It's about the protection of provincial resources. As far as our system, we have a national system already. What we don't have is a centralized system in Ottawa. We have a system that works, the passport system. You register in one province; automatically you get registered in the other nine. We have a national system, and it does work.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness would like to supplement an answer, I believe, which will allow a further question to be raised.

Fort McMurray Continuing Care Facility

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to clarify an answer with respect to the continuing care facility that is being constructed in Fort McMurray. If you take a look at *Hansard* through this week, you would see numerous spots where interjections were being given during my attempts to answer questions, and I may not have completed a thought here. What was intended to be said was that a new 48-bed continuing care facility that was projected for construction in Fort McMurray is actually going to be replaced with a new 100-bed continuing care facility.* With all the interjections and all the interruptions, it was difficult to complete that train of thought. If I said 48 – and I don't have *Hansard* in front of me – then I just want to clarify that that was the original intention, but in fact it's been replaced with a 100-bed facility.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, I believe that was in response to a question of yours.

Mr. Boutilier: Yeah. Thank you very much. Of course, I got kicked out of the PC caucus, Mr. Speaker, for, in fact, representing my bosses, the constituents of Fort McMurray, on this very facility. I'm very pleased that the minister has clarified, as the Minister of Infrastructure already had in question period.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Well, that concludes the question-and-answer period for today. Today 19 members were recognized, and there were 114 questions and responses.

We will move back to Members' Statements very, very quickly. In the interim might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Speaker's Ruling Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: I take it, Edmonton-Strathcona, you want to re-introduce someone, which is highly irregular, and it's not something that I'm going to permit. Today we will do it once. If a person has already been introduced, they don't have to be re-introduced. You've requested to proceed again, but I'm not doing that in the future.

Introduction of Guests (continued)

Ms Notley: As I say, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your generosity. As I had mentioned before, my guest was unable to be in the public gallery when he was introduced, so I'd like now once again to

introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly Jan Buterman. Jan is here today, as I said, representing the Trans Equality Society of Alberta. It's a membership-based organization whose purpose is one of advocacy and education on trans-related issues for both government and others who do not know or understand the numerous challenges faced in living with this condition. I would ask that Jan now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, an introduction as well.

Mr. Ouellette: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two outstanding young high school students that are here to watch our proceedings today. Miss Leah Wagner is an exchange student from Germany who is studying at W.P. Wagner school of technology in Edmonton. She is keenly interested in politics back home in Germany and is here today to learn more about our political system. She's joined by an outstanding grade 11 student from W.P. Wagner. Miss Avery Bellikka is an honours student who is very interested in what happens here in the Legislature. She is also planning an exchange visit to Japan. The ladies are joined in the gallery by Avery's parents, Jerry and Lorraine Bellikka. Jerry is no stranger to the House. I used to work with him in my department, and now he works in the Premier's office and does a very good job for the government of Alberta. I ask all the members to give them a great traditional warm welcome. Would they please stand?

The Speaker: Hon. members, we're going to revert to Members' Statements now.

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Property Rights

Mr. Berger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Property rights are something that Albertans and Canadians value deeply. In Alberta these rights are enshrined in legislation and promoted by this government. That is why I'm concerned by recent comments by an individual in a southern Alberta newspaper which stated that the land-use framework is Soviet-style legislation and that it repeals landowner rights. I would like to clear up this misrepresentation of the truth.

First of all, the Alberta Bill of Rights is clear in stating that landowners have the right to the enjoyment of their private property. Bill 36, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, passed by this Legislature, will assist in implementing the land-use framework and does not compromise property rights. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act does not authorize the government to extinguish land titles. Section 11 does allow a regional plan expressly to amend or cancel a statutory consent if doing so is in the public interest. Although both are instruments of an enactment, under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act a land title is not a statutory consent and cannot be cancelled by a regional plan. Land titles can only be affected through the due process of law such as through the Expropriation Act, in which case appropriate compensation would be payable.

Existing property rights continue to be protected by the Alberta Bill of Rights and are not compromised by the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, and I know the hon. Member for Airdrie-

*See page 1082, right column, paragraph 4

Chestermere would agree. On May 13, 2009, this hon. member stated that the Alberta Land Stewardship Act is an “unprecedented victory for the rights of landowners in this province” and that “no other jurisdiction proposes to protect the rights of landowners the way Bill 36 does.” Mr. Speaker, this hon. member is absolutely correct in emphasizing this province’s commitment to preserve our right to private property.

In light of that, one week from today I urge all hon. members to participate in honouring . . . [Mr. Berger’s speaking time expired]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. [interjections]

Ms Notley: Water is at the heart of life. [interjections]

Speaker’s Ruling Decorum

The Speaker: Airdrie-Chestermere, just cool it, okay? One of the things I’m going to look at – and I want to look at the deputy leader of that party and that caucus – is that in the last number of days we’ve been getting a lot of complaints in my office from people outside of this Assembly about the noise coming from there. One of the items I’m looking at for the spring session is to actually move the chairs and the desks here so that you’ll be right close to me.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Water Allocation

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Water is at the heart of life. Everywhere throughout history when people have failed to protect water, the results have been devastating. I urge this government not to treat this matter lightly but to ensure that water is a priority so that human and ecosystem well-being can be assured long into the future.

Tragically, this PC government is in the pocket of big business. They put corporate interests ahead of families and the environment when business friends apply political pressure. They are on the brink of making major changes to water allocation rights throughout our beautiful province. They’re looking at deregulating water and giving control of this essential resource to people who want to make a buck. That’s wrong. That abandons their duty on behalf of all Albertans to be good caretakers of this treasure. The government is proceeding without consulting First Nations, as our treaties with them require.

All orders of government have an important role to play in protecting water for this generation and the next. The government has cut funding for water monitoring by 25 per cent since 2007 and cannot even ensure that those with licences are in compliance. A promised wetland policy has just been compromised, and comprehensive and open consultations about water are at best delayed and more likely abandoned.

Meanwhile, our water supply continues to shrink. We already see evidence of failure to take care. Fish from the Athabasca River are developing extreme deformities. People in some parts of this province are afraid to drink tap and well water. Floods and droughts are becoming more and more common. The Minister of Environment is working on amendments to our Water Act and has signalled that the government is open to using for-profit, market-based means for water allocation. We know what happened when they deregulated our electricity. Prices went through the roof. We know that they’ll put profits before people and that Alberta’s families always pay the price.

We need to learn from such mistakes. Our water is too important to sell off. All other options have not been explored. We need an

allocation approach that is not based on ability to pay but, rather, on public interest.

It’s time the government stopped acting like henchmen for private interests. It’s time we rally together to put people first in practical ways. Water is not for political manipulation; it is our very life. Our water is not for sale.

2:50

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

Victims’ Services Memorandum of Understanding

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 28 I was joined by the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security in Drayton Valley as he signed a memorandum of understanding with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, K Division. Also joining us were victims’ services units from Drayton Valley, Leduc, Wetaskiwin, and Rocky Mountain House. While our police throughout the province work very hard to protect us and those we hold dear, the sad reality is that Albertans are still victims of crime each year.

Last week the MOU was extended to ensure that victims’ voices are heard and that they receive the services they require to get through their time of need. The victims’ services branch works to ensure that Alberta’s Victims of Crime Act is carried out in our communities. This act has allowed for changes to help victims of crime such as the ability to collect surcharges on provincial statute offences, defined principles respecting the treatment of victims, and introduced financial benefits for victims. Our government works with those who are hurt and victimized by crimes of all types and levels of severity to ensure that their emotional and financial needs are met. Mr. Speaker, those who have been impacted by crime can have a long process of physical and mental recovery, and our government and our police services are taking steps to help them in their time of need.

I know that our Cardium victims’ services branch in Drayton Valley and surrounding area and all victims’ services units along with our RCMP detachments work tirelessly to reduce and prevent crime in our communities and to help us feel safe in our homes. I would like to thank the many volunteers who believe so strongly in helping victims of crime, who give so many hours of their time to help others in need.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Cardium and Wetaskiwin victims’ services units for the awards they received from the minister for their outstanding work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

Bill 29 Alberta Parks Act

Mrs. Ady: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 29, the Alberta Parks Act. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This bill will align the legislation with the plan for parks. It will consolidate and modernize three pieces of existing park legislation into a single act, simplifying the parks system by reducing the number of classifications from seven to two, and will allow us to achieve a balance between conservation and recreation goals. The Willmore Wilderness Park Act will remain unchanged.

I am confident that this bill will serve the public and our parks

system and our government well for a very long time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Ms Tarchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to section 16(2) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act as Chair of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund it is my pleasure to table the 2009-2010 annual report of the fund.

Pursuant to section 15(2) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act I would also like to table the 2010-2011 first-quarter update on the fund. Copies of these reports have previously been distributed to members.

Thank you.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling today, and it is the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Update: The Importance of Being Pro-Active from Fraser Milner Casgrain. I would encourage the hon. minister of labour to have a quick squint at it.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Mason: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a research paper from the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy. The paper, which was published last month, is titled Expanding Canada Pension Plan Retirement Benefits. It analyzes various proposals for CPP reform and concludes that mandatory and universal coverage with higher benefit rates than the current CPP are essential to ensure adequate benefits for all Canadians.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of documents signed by over 50 people who would like to see a law passed to amend the certification of guide, service, and assistance dogs. The letter proposes an amendment to the guide dogs qualifications regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act that would allow any person with a disability who requires the service of a guide dog to obtain certification through testing and proof rather than through the federation, as it currently reads.

Thank you.

Projected Government Business

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

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Official Opposition House Leader, according to Standing Order 7(6) I would like to ask the Government House Leader to share the projected government business for the week commencing November 15.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, hon. member, for the question. As is our tradition, I'm pleased to provide the answer.

On Monday, November 15, in the afternoon we will of course deal with private members' business. That evening we'll do second reading of Bill 24, Carbon Capture and Storage Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 25, Freehold Mineral Rights Tax Amendment Act; Bill 26, Mines and Minerals (Coalbed Methane) Amendment Act; Bill 29, Alberta Parks Act; and otherwise as per the Order Paper.

On Tuesday, November 16, in the afternoon we'll be dealing with second reading of Bill 17, the Alberta Health Act, and in Committee of the Whole we'll be dealing with aforementioned bills 24, 25, and 26. That evening we will continue with second reading of Bill 17 and Committee of the Whole on aforementioned bills 24, 25, and 26.

On Wednesday afternoon we'll be dealing with second reading of Bill 17, Alberta Health Act; Bill 27, Police Amendment Act; Bill 28, Electoral Divisions Act; and Bill 29, Alberta Parks Act. That evening we'll be dealing with second reading of aforementioned bills 17, 27, 28, and 29; third reading of Bill 16, Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving) Amendment Act; Bill 18, Government Organization Amendment Act; Bill 19, Fuel Tax Amendment Act; aforementioned bills 24, 25, and 26 as well as Bill 23, Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act; and otherwise as may be indicated on the Order Paper.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday afternoon in Committee of the Whole we'll be dealing with Bill 17, Alberta Health Act, and otherwise as may be indicated on the Order Paper.

Statement by the Speaker

Canadian Royal Heritage Award 2010

The Speaker: Hon. members, we still have a couple of minutes before the standing order kicks in. I'd like to advise members today that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta was the recipient of the 2010 Canadian royal heritage award, presented to a person or institution in recognition of their efforts in preserving, presenting, or enhancing Canada's royal heritage. This award was presented by the Canadian Royal Heritage Trust at a special dinner held in Toronto last week.

The award citation reads in part:

For Alberta's centenary in 2005 and the visit of Her Majesty The Queen to the province that year, the Legislative Assembly installed in glass over the exterior central front door of the Legislature in Edmonton, the cypher of Queen Elizabeth II surmounting the Canadian Golden Jubilee garland of maple leaves, and over the interior front door the Queen's arms in right of the province. At the same time, the cyphers of King Edward VII, King George V, King Edward VIII and King George VI were also installed in glass over the two other exterior doors and two interior doors on each side of the central ones. Together, the royal cyphers provide the Legislature with a collection, aesthetically pleasing and prominently visible, of the cyphers of all the Sovereigns of Alberta's history as a province. When the District of Alberta, named after Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, became a province in 1905, it was described by the Governor General, the Earl Grey, as "a new leaf to Your Majesty's [King Edward VII's] maple crown." The distinctive addition of the Monarchs' cyphers to the royal heritage of Alberta and Canada is a commendable model for all the provinces.

Although presented to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, this award recognizes the contributions of the participants in this project, including Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta community development, the Alberta protocol office, the Legislative Assembly Office, and the

creators of the commemorative stained glass windows, Winter Art Glass Studio. I want to especially acknowledge the leadership of the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House, who was the Minister of Infrastructure at the time we approached this file and as we took it to conclusion.

In order to further highlight the work of Alberta stained glass artists featured in the Legislature Building, we have produced a brochure featuring not only the royal cyphers but also the stained glass window in the public gallery donated by the city of Edmonton in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the stained glass window installed in the Legislature Library to celebrate the centennial. Copies of this brochure, a very, very nice and historically sound brochure, will be available to all members momentarily.

3:00

Orders of the Day Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Evening Sittings

19. Mr. Zwozdesky moved on behalf of Mr. Hancock:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business for the remainder of the 2010 fall sitting unless, on motion by the Government House Leader made before 6 p.m., which may be made orally and without notice, the Assembly is adjourned to the following sitting day.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I note this motion is not debatable. Thank you.

The Speaker: Under Standing Order 4(1) it is not, so I'll call the question.

[Government Motion 19 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 27 Police Amendment Act, 2010

The Speaker: The hon. Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security.

Mr. Oberle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and move second reading of the Police Amendment Act, 2010.

The Police Amendment Act modernizes and streamlines the police complaints and discipline process. It supports the government of Alberta's priority to provide safe communities for Albertans by ensuring adequate and effective policing throughout the province. Except for some minor process updates, the existing police complaints and discipline process has been largely unchanged since 1973. It has become legalistic and time consuming because of rising caseloads and lengthy wait times. As a result, it is no longer efficient. At the same time stakeholders' and the public's expectations of police accountability have been evolving. They want and deserve a police complaints and discipline process that is more timely, fair, and effective.

Public confidence in the police complaints system is of paramount importance, Mr. Speaker. It is also critical that there is a proportionate and reasonable response to allegations of misconduct. We all

want effective oversight of our police. To refine the process, we held consultations with stakeholders and asked for public input via an online survey. Stakeholders included police services, police associations, police commissions, policing committees, the Criminal Trial Lawyers Association, the Law Enforcement Review Board, and the Alberta Justice criminal division. In addition, we received over a thousand responses to our online survey.

Consultation showed clear overall agreement on the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the police complaints and discipline process. Improving the process requires changes to the Police Act, which will in turn require amending the police service regulation and Alberta's policing standards and guidelines.

I'd like to take a few minutes to go through what we are proposing in Bill 27, the Police Amendment Act, Mr. Speaker. By expanding the definition of complainant, the bill provides that when police officers make complaints against other officers, they will have the same standing, rights, and responsibilities as other complainants. They will be able to make complaints like any member of the public. Currently they have fewer options and rights than public complainants.

Some aspects of the Law Enforcement Review Board, or LERB, process are addressed in the bill, Mr. Speaker, to enable more appeals to be heard on the record as opposed to oral hearings, which are like trials. This will result in less time- and resource-intensive processes and allow a greater number of appeals to be heard in a shorter period of time. Again, it makes the process more efficient. The board will still be able to conduct oral hearings in circumstances that warrant it such as when new evidence is brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also gives the LERB additional powers and authorities to manage their process. For example, it allows the board to dismiss matters where the complainant does not comply with the board's direction or where individuals refuse to participate in the process. It also allows the board during an appeal to resolve a matter where both parties agree. The bill requires the Law Enforcement Review Board to issue its decisions within 60 days, and if they are unable to do so, they must advise the parties as to why this cannot be done.

Bill 27 reflects the need to develop experienced, productive commission and committee members and allows for a total tenure of 10 years. Especially important to Albertans are the provisions of the act that relate to public complaint directors. The act clarifies who can serve in this position and sets out the roles and responsibilities of the provincial public complaint director, an employee of my department. The amendments also allow regions to come together to hire a public complaint director to serve more than one committee.

The act clarifies who can and cannot lodge complaints and what information needs to be included in the complaint. We want to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that only those that are witnesses to the action, directly affected by the action, retained by or acting for a complainant, or related to a complainant can lodge complaints. This will prevent people who see something in the news that disturbs them from lodging complaints. They were not witnesses to or impacted by the event, nor are they related to or acting on behalf of a complainant. They are true third parties. Complaints of this nature eat up both time and resources, and this proposal will prevent these types of complaints from going forward. However, true third parties can still bring a complaint to the chief of police, who may then decide to initiate a complaint.

The act allows complaints to be received via e-mail, Mr. Speaker, just catching up with modern technology, and it defines when a complaint is considered to have been made. Also addressed in the act is the limitation period or time frame in which someone can

bring forward a complaint. Currently complaints can only be made within one year of the alleged misconduct. These new provisions will allow for discoverability. That means that if someone learns of misconduct after the one-year time limitation is up but they could not have reasonably known about it during the one-year time period, they can still bring a complaint forward. For example, if today I learned that an officer had made an unauthorized police query about me two years ago, I could still bring a complaint forward.

The bill also makes it mandatory for alternative dispute resolution to be offered in appropriate circumstances, Mr. Speaker, to support the informal resolution of complaints. In some cases all that is needed for resolution is a simple apology or acknowledgement of the complaint. If cases can be handled informally, this saves a lot of time and resources. It still gets satisfactory results. We will develop a provincial standard that will provide guidance on what is appropriate for informal resolution. For example, if an officer is seen as disrespectful during a traffic stop, that might be a good example of where alternative dispute resolution would work, especially if it's a first-time offence. However, if there are multiple complaints against the same officer for the same offence, alternative dispute resolution may not be appropriate because it's clearly not an isolated case and the problem is not being dealt with. Additional action may be necessary in that case.

With respect to complaints and discipline the bill makes the chief of police's decision final on matters that are not of a serious nature. This prevents the use of extensive resources at an administrative tribunal for minor complaints. I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the event that the complainant is not satisfied with that resolution, he could still file a complaint against the chief.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team is also addressed in this bill, Mr. Speaker. It gives ASIRT jurisdiction in serious incidents involving the military police in Alberta, which is new. This actually was at the request of the military police in Alberta, and ASIRT agrees with this proposal. It also allows the director of ASIRT in narrow circumstances to start an investigation without getting the approval of the director of law enforcement, who is an employee of my department. What this means is that if during the course of an ASIRT investigation the director uncovers additional criminal conduct not previously brought forward, the ASIRT director can begin investigating. The director must advise the director of law enforcement and my department of this investigation, but they don't have to wait for direction or approval to go ahead.

3:10

The bill allows for the dismissal of complaints in certain circumstances, Mr. Speaker. This would include situations where the complainant is not participating, they may have moved, or they don't show up at a hearing. It is not efficient to spend time and resources on abandoned complaints. They should be dismissed.

Mr. Speaker, the bill addresses the use of evidence by ensuring that both voluntary and involuntary statements given by officers are protected and cannot be used for other purposes such as civil suits. Currently only voluntary statements are protected. Exceptions include cases of perjury or other wrongdoing.

Finally, the bill requires that all existing complaints come under the new process effective on the proclamation date. This is necessary because as things stand now, some of these complaints can take years to work their way through the process.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, Bill 27 provides a modern, efficient, and transparent police complaints and discipline process that effectively meets the needs of law enforcement and the expectations of Albertans. It ensures we retain Albertans' trust and confidence in law enforcement.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise today to provide these comments. I would now like to move that we adjourn debate on Bill 27.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 28 Electoral Divisions Act

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

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill 28, the Electoral Divisions Act.

This bill sets out the names and boundaries of Alberta's electoral divisions. Periodically reviewing and updating electoral boundaries is necessary to ensure the electoral map continues to properly reflect the province's changing population distribution and densities, community interests, and other factors.

Bill 28 is the result of almost a year's review by the arm's-length Electoral Boundaries Commission. In May of 2009 the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act was amended to establish an Electoral Boundaries Commission, an independent body of five individuals who were charged with reviewing all of the provincial electoral boundaries in Alberta. Over the course of a year the commission conducted its review, travelling around the province and consulting with Albertans in public meetings. The commission reviewed the existing electoral map and made recommendations on the areas, boundaries, and names for 87 electoral divisions based on the input they received, the applicable legal principles, and the latest census and population information. This review was done to ensure that Albertans have effective representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the commission was directed to divide the province into 87 electoral divisions, four more than are currently in place. Since the last time the number of electoral divisions was changed, in 1986 – and I think yesterday I inadvertently said 2002 by mistake – Alberta's population has grown by approximately 1 million people.* It is important for our province's electoral divisions to reflect the realities of the province's population.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the commission's report was tabled in the Assembly in June of this year. On October 26 the resolution was made in this Assembly, and the contents of the report were debated. All of the boundaries recommended in the commission's report were approved by this Assembly as were the majority of the names of the electoral divisions.

There were, however, changes to the suggested names of four electoral divisions. Mr. Speaker, these suggestions were made in order to better reflect the history and character of those divisions as well as the desires of their constituents. Specifically, the Assembly approved the following name changes. The proposed electoral division referred to by the commission as Okotoks-High River will retain its existing name of Highwood, the electoral division of Strathcona will now be named Strathcona-Sherwood Park, the electoral division of Calgary-Montrose will now be named Calgary-Greenway, and the electoral division of Calgary-North Hill will now be named Calgary-Klein.

Bill 28 reflects the commission's report as amended by the Assembly. This act will repeal and replace the existing act of the same name, and the new electoral boundaries will come into effect when the next general election is called in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, Bill 28 will bring Alberta's electoral boundaries and divisions up to date with its population and current needs.

I now move that we adjourn debate on Bill 28.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

*See page 1098, left column, paragraph 13

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

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

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

**Bill 16
Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving)
Amendment Act, 2010**

The Chair: Are there any comments, questions? The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Chair, how much time did I have left when we adjourned last time? How far into it was I?

The Chair: You have 20 minutes.

Mr. Anderson: Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I ended right after I stood up last time, I want to talk a little bit about Bill 16. Again, as I said, this is one of those bills where I feel that, obviously, people are very concerned about distracted driving, and rightfully so. No one likes to see, when they're driving down the highway, that someone is texting or doing something that's not safe, that they're swerving around or they're cutting people off or they're running lights or whatever.

I understand the intention behind the bill, and it's a good intention. It's to stop distracted driving or to keep it at a lower level or at least decrease it. I understand the intent, but I just really feel it was a bill designed to be looking like we're doing something about it. It's not really accomplishing anything, just a bill to kind of be seen doing something when, really, it's not going to do much of anything for safety. In fact, what it might honestly do at the end of the day – and I guess we'll see; I'm sure it'll get passed – is that it could just lead to more waste of very needed police resources, and I would really hate to see that because we're already very much strained as it is.

Our police, our men and women in uniform, have a lot of things on their minds: a lot of laws to enforce, a lot of things that they need to enforce, a lot of things they need to be looking out for. The thought of having any of these officers spending any time of their very precious time on the road looking for people on cellphones or looking for people eating or looking for people writing or reading a direction off a note on where they're going to – I don't know if under this bill a GPS system is permitted. If it is, for those who don't have it, they might have a note that they're reading, or they're making a note. Is that going to be something that we want our officers spending their time on? If I thought for a second that this would in some way improve road safety in Alberta, I wouldn't need to stand up for more than a couple of seconds to say: "Yes. This is great. Let's go." But I just don't feel this bill in its current form is going to do much of anything.

That said, democracy is a funny thing. I talked earlier about it, and I'll be making a member's statement, probably, on it in the near future. We do things sometimes for interesting reasons in our system. I know that I voted for bills in the past, when I've been on the other side in the PC government. Bill 36 was alluded to. I absolutely did vote in favour of that bill, and I absolutely did speak to it, in fact. I did that because I trusted the minister at the time very much, someone who I thought of at the time as a political mentor and friend, so I thought I should vote for that and that I should read the speech that his department prepared for me in that regard.

You learn hard lessons in this job sometimes. There's a bad

reason for doing something. What I should have done is taken more stock of what was in that document, and I did not. It's one vote that I very much regret and that I will work very hard to undo over the next two years. That's definitely not a good reason to vote for something, but sometimes there are other reasons to vote for something.

3:20

One of these things is when your constituents so overwhelmingly want to see something done even though I don't think this bill is a very good one. I don't think it's going to do very much at all. I think it's a nanny state bill. The Minister of Transportation across the way: I know that deep down in his heart of hearts – I mean, I'm certainly not in his heart of hearts, but I sure doubt that he's very pumped about this bill. Maybe he is. Maybe he had a change of heart over the last six to eight months or the last year that I wasn't aware of.

When our constituents want something and they are essentially demanding it and polls show overwhelmingly that they want some kind of distracted driving legislation, that they don't believe people should be on their phones talking, sometimes you vote for things not because you necessarily agree with them but because your constituents demand it, period. That's what they want, much like me crossing the floor and joining the Wildrose Alliance. That was one thing my constituents wanted me to do. [interjection] Well, we'll verify that in 18 months. Don't you worry about that.

We do things for different reasons, and this is one that I'm going to eventually probably have to vote for because the mail that I've been getting on the issue is probably about 3 to 1 in favour of passing the bill. That's not to say that I'm not going to try to make some amendments, and I will bring an amendment forward on this bill today. It's just one of those bills where, you know, if the people want it, they're going to get it. I think they're going to find that this is going to lead to nothing more than a few more tickets, a little bit of a cash grab, and I don't think it's going to solve the problem at all.

I don't think there's anyone in this Chamber, frankly, that is going to change their behaviours because of this bill. I could be wrong. Maybe there will be, but knowing the group in here, I doubt it very much. We'll see. I mean, if you do, if the Solicitor General is going to keep to that hands-free device, if he thinks he can pull that off for his entire next two years, God love him, you know. Go for it. If the Minister of Transportation doesn't think he's going to eat a burger for the next two years on the road when he's running between events, okay. We'll see how that works. Now, I know the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill. I know he'll follow this law. That I am confident of. He will be consistent. He will follow this law, not because of the law but because he already does it. He already has common sense that not many of us in here have, and he has that ability to do that. This will be definitely difficult for me to follow.

Now, as I've read through this document, I found it amazing that there were that many amendments from the government side on this bill given how short it was. They almost amended every section. We weren't aware of those amendments. There were a lot of subamendments that we would have brought forward, but we weren't aware they were bringing a whole bunch of amendments. Unfortunately, with our small caucus we weren't here at the time those were brought forward, and a lot of these sections have been cut off to us because of that. So we'll have to stick to the few that weren't dealt with previously.

What I want to do – and I believe I can keep the remaining time that I have after we get through the amendments. I can come back and still have my 12 minutes, 15 minutes, whatever, left. [interjection] Oh, still? Absolutely. Fantastic.

Okay. I will bring forward an amendment now on that. Well, no. I'll talk for a couple of more minutes on it.

The Chair: Hon. member, are you going to introduce?

Mr. Anderson: No, not yet. I'm just prefacing it.

The Chair: Okay. Continue on.

Mr. Anderson: Section 115.4 says that subject to this section and the regulations made under section 115.5, no individual shall drive or operate a vehicle on a highway while engaged in an activity that distracts the individual from the operation of the vehicle, including but not limited to.

And then there's a list of stuff.

- (a) reading or viewing printed material.

Again, you can't look at the directions that you've gotten legally, which is beyond belief.

- (b) writing, printing or sketching.

Probably not a good idea to be sketching. That's for sure. But writing? I don't know. If you're on your hands-free and somebody says, "Turn right at Johnson Lane" and you want to write that down on the seat next to you, you're not allowed to do that anymore.

- (c) engaging in personal grooming or hygiene.

That's very vague, it seems. You know, I don't know what that exactly means. Grooming: does that mean picking your nose or something? We're going to pull people over for that? Some people in this Assembly are going to have a problem if that's the case. You know, it just depends what kind of grooming we're talking about.

I mean, hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar, you're going to have trouble with this one. You know that. Come on.

Mrs. McQueen: No trouble with it.

Mr. Anderson: That's all right. You're already well groomed. Then

- (d) any other activity that may be prescribed in the regulations.

Then it jumps down to 115.5.

The Minister may make regulations . . .

- (b) prescribing prohibited activities for the purposes of section 115.4.

In other words, it's not just these things up here. The minister can change the rules. If a future minister feels that, for example, a Bluetooth or something, or let's say a GPS device – it's unwritten material. It says, "Reading or viewing printed material." What about nonprinted material? If they want to say that a GPS is distracting, then the minister could unilaterally, without the consent of this House, change that rule, and I don't think that makes very much sense at all. I just don't think that it would make a whole lot of sense that the minister would be given that kind of unilateral authority to interfere in our lives even more than they already have.

This is something I just didn't understand as I read the bill, and I'm going to bring an amendment to it, so let's do that now. I'll pass it out first, and then we'll get to that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. We will pause a moment for the pages to distribute the amendment. This amendment shall now be known as amendment A3.

Hon. member, please start on amendment A3.

Mr. Anderson: Okay. Amendment A3. I received a note here from you folks, and I'm not really sure what it means. You're going to have to come and chat with me, or else I'll chat with you after. I just

can't understand the handwriting. That's the problem. There are a couple of words I can't make out.

The Chair: Just go on with A3.

Mr. Anderson: Okay. I'll go on with the amendment. The amendment is to Bill 16, Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving) Amendment Act, 2010. I move that Bill 16 be amended in section 2 in the proposed section 115.5 by striking out clause (b). That would be taking out the line under regulations on page 4 of the bill, for those of you watching at home, 115.5:

The Minister may make regulations . . .

- (b) prescribing prohibited activities for the purposes of section 115.4.

3:30

Then if you flip up to 115.4, again it talks about:

(1) Subject to this section and the regulations made under section 115.5, no individual shall drive or operate a vehicle on a highway while engaged in an activity that distracts the individual from the operation of the vehicle, including but not limited to

- (a) reading or viewing printed material,
- (b) writing, printing or sketching,
- (c) engaging in personal grooming or hygiene, and
- (d) any other activity that may be prescribed in the regulations.

Then in subsection (2) the interesting thing is that subsection (1) does not apply in respect of a vehicle that

- (a) is not on a highway, or
- (b) is parked in a manner specified in a regulation made under this Act.

I guess that if you're not on the highway, you can potentially be on your cellphone while you're driving. That one I'll have to get clarification about. There are so many vague parts to this bill.

Hon. member, we're just talking about the amendment that I brought forward to get rid of section 115.5(b). You can take a look at that.

The reason I was thinking that it would be a good idea is that I just think, you know, that any time we're talking about an intrusion into people's personal liberties or lives, with government saying that you cannot do something, that should come through the Legislative Assembly, especially something like this, which is so personal. I don't know.

I'm thinking of distractions that the minister would have unilateral control over adding here. I'm thinking of maybe turning the radio on or off, adjusting the radio to change the channel perhaps. Some of our cars use satellite radio now. My truck has satellite radio in it. There are all these buttons on the console, so you've got to fool around, and you're trying to find the hockey game or trying to find CNN or Fox news or something for election results. [interjection] The CBC. You'd be surprised, hon. member, that I do listen to the CBC a lot. I have to shower afterwards, of course, but I do listen to it from time to time. I really do. You've got to know what the other side is saying. But I do that.

I just hope that in the future if you had some, you know, wacko cabinet minister out there – that would never happen, I know. But if you ever did, they could say: "You know what? It's just as dangerous changing your radio or changing your satellite, so I'm going to add this by regulation to the list of prohibited activities and not bring it through the House." Now, granted, in our party system if a minister was to do that, most likely the trained seals would probably get up and vote for it in lockstep as usual. But when we do eventually reform this House – and, hopefully, we have free votes and free debate on a matter that's actually worth while – what we'll have is representation. When people are represented, when an MLA

is the voice in Edmonton for his constituents back home, not the government's voice, the government PR person back home, when that occurs, I would be very confident that the will of the people, the will of the House would be to say: "Forget that. That's way overstepping. We should be able to change the radio." They would defeat that amendment.

If you leave it to just a minister to be able to stand up and – or not even stand up. He wouldn't have to stand up. That's kind of the point. He wouldn't have to. Just an order in council. Good grief. How many orders in council do we see come through? Every day they're doing some orders in council. That's fine. I understand there's a need for some of those things. But on something that's obviously going to be intrusive into our personal lives, I would think that it would be important to bring that to the Legislature.

Now, of course, that might mean that if we're bringing more of these things through the Legislature, we would need to sit longer than the three months we've sat here. We get paid quite a large amount of money to be here as MLAs, and I would think it would be okay to be here longer than the three months we're going to be here this year, whatever it is: 12 weeks, 13 weeks. What is it going to be? It's got to be 14, 15 weeks. Not much, though. We would have to work a little harder to approve these things and take some of the power away from Executive Council and away from ministers and actually put it in the hands of the elected representatives of the entire body of this House, which is where it should be.

But that's not where we're at today. One good thing about the system that we do have today is that ideas that have to be legislated do still have to come through this House. It gives the opposition an opportunity to point out to the government party voting in lockstep, regardless of how they feel about things, that they're going to have to defend it, at least in the public. Now, they still pass it usually, but it at least gives the opposition a chance to point out the flaws, and there's a political price. [Mr. Anderson's speaking time expired]

That's all right. I'll say some more stuff later.

The Chair: On amendment A3?

Dr. Taft: Yes, on the amendment. Do we have 29(2)(a) at this level?

The Chair: No. You have 20 minutes to talk about A3.

Dr. Taft: Okay.

The Chair: On amendment A3, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Certainly, I was listening with interest to the hon. member. It reminds me of two evenings ago, Mr. Chairman, when I was listening to CBC television. I think Mr. Solomon was interviewing a professor from the University of Calgary who was holding an elephant, a little baby elephant. Not only was he holding the elephant – he was very pleased, of course, with the results of the U.S. mid-term elections – but the elephant was interfering with his microphone. The young man from CBC headquarters in Toronto asked him to remove the elephant so that the Canadian listeners and viewers could hear his remarks more accurately. The gentleman went on to talk about Fox and CNN.

Dr. Taft: He had a fox and an elephant.

Mr. MacDonald: Well, he was getting all his information almost up to date, in real time from Fox, and the CBC commentator aggress-

sively said to him: I do not appreciate you promoting those networks on our television station. I thought that was quite interesting.

The hon. member here was talking about CNN and Fox, and it reminded me of that, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, the elephant was in the television studio that night. I thought the gentleman from Calgary looked a little bit ridiculous clutching his stuffed elephant. Babar I think he called it.

An Hon. Member: Better than a donkey.

3:40

Mr. MacDonald: A donkey. That would be a very appropriate mascot for this government caucus. I agree with you, hon. member.

Now, the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere is proposing in the regulation section of Bill 16 to simply remove 115.5(b). When you look at the prohibited activities that are mentioned in 115.4, just above the regulation-writing power, you can see, you know: individuals shall drive or operate a vehicle on a highway while engaged in an activity that distracts the individual from the operation of the vehicle, including but not limited to reading or viewing printed material; writing, printing or sketching; engaging in personal grooming or hygiene; and any other activity that may be prescribed in the regulations. I don't understand why we would want to remove that section.

I'm not a fan of governing by regulation. In the years that I have been in the Assembly, there has been an unfortunate tendency by this government to do more and more by regulation and less and less by statute, just these bills that enable the government, or in this case the cabinet, to write rules as they see fit, quietly and without public scrutiny. Certainly, this is a government that is unwilling to have a great deal of public scrutiny.

That being said, Mr. Chairman, when we look at many of the activities that people, unfortunately, do while driving distracted, the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays has certainly made a good start with this bill towards at least trying to control distracted drivers. Does it go far enough? I'm not convinced of that, but it certainly is a good start. In this case if we're not going to take the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall's idea to have an overview of this entire legislation within the next three years, I think that to allow the government in this case a little bit of rope with their authority to write regulations is needed.

Last Friday, during our constituency day, I was very pleased to see for a short period of time two students from the University of Alberta. They visited our constituency office. They were polite. They were very concerned about public safety. I sat there listening to what they had to say regarding this bill. They don't think it goes far enough, and I would agree with them. But I told them why I think we have to allow this bill to proceed in this manner, the reason being, Mr. Chairman, that we have a government that has been slow to react in the past, whether it's helmet laws for children, in some cases seat belts. There are still members that suggest that that is unnecessary. There are lots of valid examples of this government being slow to act to enhance or to ensure public safety. It has taken them this long to go this far. I think it's about encouragement. Should we restrict and limit cellphones and electronic devices even further in the future? We might have to. Let's see how this works.

Now, we know that Albertans – and this was pointed out to me by the students – are the worst offenders in Canada. At any given time 10 per cent of us are using our cellphones while driving, compared to the national average of 5 per cent, I'm told.

You look at hand-held cellphone legislation in Canada – and it was the students who were pointing out to me the different legislation in different provinces. The fine in British Columbia is \$167. I

believe in Saskatchewan it is \$280. Of course, ours is around \$170 here in the proposed legislation. In Manitoba it's \$200. Quebec has a range. Interestingly enough, in the provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan, if I am busted there under their laws, I would have demerit points. I would have in B.C. three demerits, in Saskatchewan four demerits. Quebec also has three demerits. P.E.I. has three demerits, and their fines range between \$250 and \$400. Now, Nova Scotia, to compare, Mr. Chairman, would have no demerits issued, but it's \$164 fine for your first offence, and if you're pressing redial and get caught, it can go up to \$337. So there is a wide range of laws across the country. I would surmise that each and every one of these jurisdictions has significant ability to make regulations.

I think it may be comforting for the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere if the government was willing at this time to – maybe they already have and my BlackBerry hasn't given me the information. Maybe they have already tabled or made public the regulations they have in mind for this statute. We could have a look at them. Certainly, people in the media could have a look at them. The individuals who are very concerned about public safety and reducing the number of accidents could have a look, and perhaps they, too, would be satisfied with the government's regulations. Maybe they go far enough; maybe they don't. But perhaps I would encourage at this time, Mr. Chairman, the hon. members across the way, or in this case the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays, to consider doing that.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, on this debate on amendment A3, I certainly have heard not only from the University of Alberta students. In fact, I had an individual from our constituency phone yesterday afternoon. We had quite an interesting conversation regarding this bill. She did not think it went far enough. An individual who has had a letter published in the *Edmonton Journal* today outlining his concerns spoke over at the Royal Alex hospital, and my constituent had the pleasure of hearing his speech. This individual made some excellent points about cellphone use and how we should restrict it to ensure public safety on the roads. She thought she would phone and express her opinion to our office on behalf of her family, and I appreciate that.

Hopefully, this bill is going to be a step in the right direction. I am not convinced that amendment A3, as it has been explained so far by the hon. member, has merit, but hopefully there will be some further details on this.

Dr. Taft: I'm going to actually engage in a serious discussion here on the amendment.

Mr. MacDonald: My colleague the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview wants to have an opportunity to get some questions on the record regarding this proposed amendment A3, Mr. Chairman, so we will cede the floor to the hon. member. Perhaps the dialogue that results will convince me one way or another regarding the merits of this, but right now I don't think it is in the public interest or in the interest of public safety to delete that regulation-making ability.

Thank you.

3:50

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview on A3.

Dr. Taft: On amendment A3. I'd like to engage the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere in a little bit of clarification here on this. When I first heard the issue of cellphone restrictions while driving raised – and I suppose that would be a few years ago now – I was ambivalent initially because I thought of the reasons that the member outlined here, that it's government intrusion into personal affairs.

But as I thought about it more and as I, frankly, experienced a couple of real scares myself from other drivers – well, in fact, I don't think the member was here, but a year ago last August I was rear-ended in broad daylight at an intersection. The person behind me who hit me was clearly not paying any attention to what was going on. And last winter I was nearly driven off a narrow two-lane highway by somebody coming on who was texting and was driving up the hill in my lane. You could see them texting away as they were driving, and it was scary.

Then I listened to other material and I thought, well, okay. I reframed that, in fact, driving is a privilege, and we do license it, and we remove that privilege from people for various kinds of offences. Then I saw having a safe place to drive or, indeed, to walk across the street as a right. So I ended up coming to the point where safety was a right, being protected from the stupidity of other drivers was a right, and driving and being able to use a cellphone while you're driving is a privilege. So then, when I came to that conclusion, I began to frame the whole issue of cellphone restrictions a bit differently. When I saw the evidence that I've seen, I actually ended up supporting this legislation. I wouldn't mind if it went further.

Your amendment also addresses an argument within an argument, which is the shift from legislation into regulation, which I'm not in favour of, and I think the member would agree with me on that. So I guess I'm putting to the member two questions. One is if he sees driving and using a cellphone as a right or a privilege. Well, that would be the main question because I think he's already made it clear he doesn't want to see more regulations; he'd rather see things in legislation. So do you want to reflect on that, hon. member, in this debate?

Thank you.

Mr. Anderson: Very good points. With regard to whether or not driving is a privilege or a right, I think we can all agree that it's a privilege to be able to drive. I don't think anyone disagrees with that. I guess we also have the privilege, we have the right, or whatever you could say, to be able to do a lot of things. A privilege and a right. The thing I'm trying to get out here is this: I think that if you're going to pass a law, there should be a natural effect of that law. In other words, it should achieve something.

Although I do believe that, you know, obviously we have the right to have and we should have safe roads. There's no doubt about that. We should be able to go out and know that when the light turns red, people stop, right? We get that. When it's green, we go. When we come to a stop sign, a four-way stop, it's going to go in an orderly flow around there and it's all going to work and people are going to follow those laws. But I think that if you're going to have a law that is going to – the reason for those laws or the laws of the road is just so that there can be an orderly way of driving so that people don't get in accidents and so forth as much as possible.

Now, I guess I would just say that we know what would happen if we didn't have those laws. If we didn't have red lights – I'm really trying to do a lot of reflecting while I talk here, which is difficult for me to do at the same time – we know what would happen. There would be carnage. There would be accidents all over the place. Same thing with no stop signs. Same thing but to a lesser extent with speed limits. So I do understand that.

However, I don't see how this bill is actually going to save lives. The reason is because I don't see how it is enforceable. I don't see how this law is going to cause people to change their behaviour. I mean, what are the demerits on this?

An Hon. Member: Zero.

Mr. Anderson: There are no demerits? See, there are no demerits. How much is the fine?

An Hon. Member: A hundred and seventy bucks.

Mr. Anderson: A hundred and seventy bucks. That's just not going to change any real behaviour. A hundred and seventy bucks might change somebody's behaviour, but it won't change the behaviour of very many at all.

I think that what should be focused on, and what I do like, is the careless driving. We have the right to go down the street and not see people swerving back and forth out of the lane. That I think we all want to not see on our streets. So I think that if people are doing that and they're on the phone or they're doing that and they're eating a burger or something like that, if there's an offence being carried out and the officer can see that the person is weaving because, you know, they are drunk – we have drunk drivers – or they are eating a burger or they are combing their hair and you can see it and they're weaving all over the place, hammer them, absolutely hammer them. That's careless driving because of whatever reason. I don't care why they're being careless. Maybe they are listening to the radio. Maybe they're on hands-free, you know, and they're not paying attention.

Some people have the cognitive ability to do more than one thing at the same time.

An Hon. Member: Especially women.

Mr. Anderson: That's right. Especially. Many in this House have that ability. I'm one of those. I mean, I really can do a lot of things while I'm driving, and I've never been in an accident. Well, not since I was 14, but that was a different story. We'll leave that. That's a different story for another time. There are people that are able to be safe and do some of these other things whereas other people can't. They're swerving around, and they're being careless, and they're not paying attention and so forth. So for those people I think the trick is: let's hammer them.

If people are swerving all over the road because they're doing something when they shouldn't be doing something, let's give them, you know, five, six, seven, eight demerits. I think that's what it is for careless driving, if I'm not mistaken. I think it is eight demerits. Give them a large ticket. Give them demerits. If they're in an accident, let's strengthen the liability penalties and say that if you cause an accident and you're on your cellphone – that's where you nail people. That can take away your driver's licence. It can cost you a fortune. That's the stuff that, in my view, would be more likely to keep people from being distracted.

For me it's not really, you know, a privilege/right thing. Yeah, it is a privilege. We all have the right right now, if we want, to have a Swiss Army knife in our pocket. Sure we could use that knife to do something bad, to damage something. [interjection] That's right. You've got the Swiss Army knife in your pocket right now. You could use it to hurt somebody. But we have laws against that when the actual hurting occurs. It doesn't mean you outlaw the knife. It's kind of like this whole gun registry debate in a lot of ways. You don't make it difficult for law-abiding citizens who are able to use guns safely, et cetera, et cetera. You don't burden their lives with all this excess regulation when, really, what you should be doing is going after the people that are actually abusing firearms. They likely are completely unregistered because that's what criminals do; they don't register their firearms. I think it's a similar argument. We don't need to necessarily regulate everything that could be used as a weapon, and I think that that includes a car.

4:00

Now, I understand that there are speeding laws, and I understand that there's a balance. Where is that line? With the same logic you could say: well, then, you shouldn't have speeding laws, right? Some people can drive at 150, and they're safe. The hon. Transportation minister: good grief; there's a prime example. Safe as you could be; 160 kilometres an hour, though. I mean, that's absolutely amazing. Not all of us have that ability to be safe going 160 kilometres an hour. Surely I know. There are a lot of individuals I won't target right now, you know, in my own family. Going 160 is not safe for them.

We have these laws, but I just think this one is a little bit too far on that scale. I understand that a lot of members in this House believe that it's not. You know, if driving is a privilege, if part of driving is not being distracted, that's fine – we can debate that; we are debating that – but I just think it goes over the line. Also, I think a law needs to be enforceable. You've got to be able to enforce a law. I mean, with seat belt laws I know for a fact that it is very difficult to prove a seat belt infraction unless you've got it on camera.

An Hon. Member: Affidavit evidence.

Mr. Anderson: No. Affidavit evidence, hon. member, generated from one police officer can or can't. I've seen it both ways. In a seat belt violation it's not actually that good. [interjection] Well, yeah, I do, unfortunately. Anyway, I don't think it's effective. First-hand experience. I think, generally speaking, you need two officers to verify it by affidavit, or you need a camera or you need some kind of independent – that's why with speeding, the laser is enough of a sure thing. It's recorded, so they can prove it.

Just in talking with some people from the Edmonton Police Service recently, they told us that this is going to be very difficult to enforce in court. I guess time will tell. We'll see what judges do with it. I mean, people can just say: "Look, what do you mean I had my cellphone up? I was scratching my head when I went by. I was scratching my head. What do you mean: burger? It wasn't a burger. I was wiping my mouth or picking my nose or something like that. I wasn't eating anything." There are a hundred different excuses that one could use, and rightfully so. Like, it's very difficult for a police officer to see something fly by that quickly and actually say: yeah, that definitely was a cellphone. Very difficult. I just don't see how this would be very enforceable in that regard, but I do see the other side.

As I said earlier, at the end of the day I have to begrudgingly defer to my constituents on this. You know, it's a better reason than deferring to the party line. That's for sure. My constituents, like I said earlier, 3 to 1 at least want this bill – you know, positive to negative mail and positive to negative discussions – although I don't think it's going to be effective at all. I'm going to try to amend it, try to make it better. We're going to have another amendment here at some point that will hopefully make this an experimental law to see if it actually works. So an experimental law, kind of like – what do they call the sports at the Olympics? A demonstration sport? – a demonstration law. Let's see if this thing works. I don't think it will. You know, democracy is one of those things where if enough people say that they want something, then they get it. People are going to get it, but I don't think this is going to do a thing.

Really, the one problem I did have and the reason I brought the regulation forward, hon. member – and I know I've heard you speak to this many times – is the issue of ministers having kind of these orders in council. You have these bills where they list a few things,

and then they say basically that the minister can do whatever the heck he wants to amend the bill. We've got these things, "reading or viewing printed material"; in other words, not electronic material. So if you had, say, a GPS, like a TomTom or something like that, on your dash, it doesn't include that. What if one day somebody says: "No. That's off. You can't look at your GPS"? Well, I'd want that to come through the House.

I think you can agree with the bill, and I think you are agreeing with the bill overall, but this one part – I would think that that would give you a little bit of pause to say: "Look. You know, if you're going to outlaw something else, if you're going to prohibit something else, perhaps you should bring it to the body of this House to do, just like you're doing with this bill right here." Why should a future minister have more ability to change the law than the minister who now introduced this legislation? That's the problem.

I could see the other side's point, though. I mean, the other side is saying: "Well, look. You know, we have whipped votes on everything. It just saves time because whatever the minister says, at the end of the day we're going to do it. We're going to put up our flippers and do it. It's not a big deal." That's unfortunate. It shouldn't be that way in a democracy, but that's, generally speaking, what they do. I understand they think that's efficient, but for the rest of us and I think for average Albertans, we'll see. Obviously, this will be part of the upcoming election campaign. Most of us would say: "Look. You know what? When you're doing something that's going to affect people's lives, that's going to be an intrusion into people's lives, let's bring it to the body of the House. Let's all talk about it, let's all have a free vote on it, and we can all be accountable for it."

You know, maybe there are MLAs on that side of the House that actually are against this bill, but none of their constituents know that, none of them. So a hundred per cent are going to vote for this bill, and those who are against it – and I have some idea of who those might be – are not going to vote against the bill. They're going to vote for the bill. How is that democratic to one's constituents? I will never figure that out.

Nonetheless, even in a whipped vote, which they all are, they still have to be accountable for the way that they stood up. At least, you would make them come to the House and say: "Yeah. You know what? We're going to ban the TomTom; we're going to ban the GPS." They have to be responsible for that. They're going to have to be responsible to that old lady down the street because she couldn't use her TomTom and she got lost in a back alley, and she's just mad about it. They're going to have to be accountable to that old lady if they do that. They're going to have to be accountable because that old lady couldn't read the directions that her daughter gave her. They wrote it down: here are the directions to my house, Grandma. She goes out, but she can't read it because under this law you are not allowed to read or view printed material.

So Grandma is not allowed to read the directions, and she goes and gets lost, or she has to pull over. But, you know, it's tough sometimes. You're driving away, and then all of a sudden you come up to a sign: "Do I turn here? I can't remember if I turn here. Oh, where was it? Oh, yes. That's right, Johnson Avenue." And you make a turn. But you can't do that anymore. You'd have to pull over in traffic, which, if it's heavy traffic, is often more dangerous than driving with your cellphone and eating a burger at the same time. Pulling over, you're going to get nailed by someone coming behind you and, you know, just blow everything to smithereens and the whole bit.

I just really think that the minister in the future should have to come to this House and explain why they're taking away yet another liberty, yet another thing. I think that's important; you know, just

like I have to be accountable for the fact that in the past I voted for the land-use framework, something that I will regret for a long time.

Mr. MacDonald: Now, you voted for that.

Mr. Anderson: I know. I spoke to it. I spoke to the land-use framework. It just ticks me right off.

That's what happens when you're a trained seal. You've got to get in there. You get a speech handed to you, "Here's the speech; read it," and you've got to read the speech. You've just got to do it. "Okay. Minister of finance, you're a good friend of mine." [interjection] Well, the former Minister of SRD, the current minister of finance; it's his bill. You're like: "Absolutely. I'm going to do this. I trust you." You give the speech, and then you realize: "Oops. Maybe I shouldn't have done that." Absolutely. I will work for the next two years to reverse that mistake. You can count on it.

Anyway, that's how I feel about it.

4:10

The Chair: Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration, you wish to speak on amendment A3?

Mr. Lukaszuk: That is correct, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I imagine that the Member for Edmonton-Riverview and yourself and a few in this House would probably remember our debate on bicycle helmets. I remember it very vividly because every time I attend a grade 6 class and I talk to them about how a bill becomes a law, I always use the bicycle helmet as an example because kids can simply relate to it.

The reason I'm bringing up that particular bill, now the act, is because some of the arguments against bicycle helmets were almost – almost – as ridiculous as the arguments I'm hearing right now against this particular bill. Mr. Chair, even though no member would actually rise and claim on the record that he or she is special and can drive while doing many, many other things and do it safely and safer than anybody else, members would rise and raise the very same issues, saying: "Are you expecting the police to be chasing kids on bicycles? How are you going to take in a child who doesn't have ID? If you take in a child, the child doesn't have a job, so at the end of the day it'll be the parent paying for that ticket, anyhow." And the list went on and on and on.

Thankfully, Mr. Chair, that particular bill was passed, became a law, and now some seven, eight years later you will hardly find any young person that would get on a bicycle and ride without a helmet. As a matter of fact, I can use my daughter as an example. Because of this bill she never had the opportunity of riding a bicycle without a helmet. When she grew up to the age where she could ride a bicycle, a helmet was a natural piece of equipment that we provided her with, so she rides her bicycle with a helmet. Now what she does, consequently, is that she makes me wear a helmet. Well, I wasn't raised with a helmet, but she makes me wear a helmet, which obviously was an unintended positive consequence. The fact is that you will never ever catch her on a bicycle not wearing a helmet. Police officers don't have to worry about chasing her and her classmates or ticketing her.

The fact is that most Albertans, most Canadians will respect the law if a law is on the books. They don't go through every day challenging every law to see whether they will get caught, whether they can avoid it. The fact is that it's a social understanding that if there is a law on the books, a majority of us will follow it. With time it becomes a social norm, and we simply adhere to the regulations.

Mr. Chair, no one – no one – in their right mind could say that I

have some special skills gifted to me by God that allow me to do more things simultaneously and still be as good at every single one of them than any other person or than most people. The fact is that even though some may argue that they're special but in a different definition of the term "special," no one is special in that definition, where they can actually speak on a hand-held cellphone while changing the radio and still be an exceptional driver and not cause any risk.

Mr. Chair, for those who drive on highways and weave in and out of lanes, if you were to pull them over and ask them, "Can you drive safely while speaking on the phone?" I would bet that they would be the first ones to argue that they can drive very safely and that they should be allowed to continue driving. I know for a fact that, especially while looking at the phone and dialing and driving, you are not as attentive to the road, and law enforcement officers would be the first ones to inform you of that. Yes, there will be arguments, and some will try to convert those arguments into some other ideological debates, but there's simply nothing ideological about it. The fact is that you cannot be attentive in the ever-increasing traffic in a province that is becoming more populous and with more and more vehicles on the road and be able to drive safely and be doing other things, engaging things, at the same time.

Let's go back to the arguments. Perhaps for those of the members who weren't here at that time, look at the *Hansards* on bicycle helmets. Learn some lessons from that debate so that perhaps we don't have to take significant time of the House, and vote accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had some comments in the last couple of days. I made some notes. People talked about education, so I'm going to begin an education process here for one of the hon. members, maybe more. Not that I'm an expert in any way . . .

The Chair: On amendment A3.

Mr. Johnston: Oh, A3. Okay. Regarding amendment A3, I don't support it, and I would like my colleagues to defeat it. It was said that amendment A3 would be a waste of police resources, a waste of time. There were many other things that were mentioned. The amendment says: shall not drive while distracted, may operate a vehicle on a highway, and the minister may make regulations.

Regarding some of the comments I've heard . . .

The Chair: On amendment A3.

Mr. Johnston: Okay. I don't support it, then. I'll leave my comments.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview on amendment A3.

Dr. Taft: Yes, specifically on amendment A3, which would have the effect of removing the authority or the ability of the minister to make regulations relating to section 115.4(1). I want to make it clear to the member that I actually support this bill. I think driving is a privilege, and we would disagree on that. I don't think eating a hamburger or using a cellphone while you're driving is a right. I think it's a privilege, and as such it loses out to my right to have a safe driving environment. So we disagree on that.

However, on the amendment, I actually am inclined to support the amendment. I want to be clear here. The section that it would amend, 115.4(1), has a very important clause that concerns me. I'm not going to read the whole section, because the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere did, but the important part is the preamble: "Subject to this section and the regulations . . . no individual shall drive or operate a vehicle on a highway while engaged in an activity that distracts the individual from the operation of the vehicle."

This is the important part that has changed my mind and leads me to support the amendment. The important clause is "including but not limited to." Then it goes on to list four specific things. When it says "including but not limited to," it means that the minister could do all kinds of things there, and I do have trouble with that.

If we are to take this Legislative Assembly more seriously, I think those issues should come back here. If the minister wants to add whatever it might be – and I think we have to be sensible here. He might add "eating" here, or he might add "watching video screens" because those are increasingly standard features in cars now. Those would be legitimate concerns to have, but there's no reason that the minister couldn't bring those to the Assembly, and if they are legitimate, then I'm sure we would all support the minister.

For that reason, for the principle of defending the integrity of this institution, I will support the amendment. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore on amendment A3.

Mr. Hinman: Yes. Thank you. I would like to rise in support of amendment A3, again because of the importance of the democratic process, that is being bypassed with the current bill the way it sits. It's to me paramount that we bring back legislation to the House rather than continue to increase the authority of ministers to be able to change whatever it is.

4:20

It's interesting that many of the bills that this government has brought forward and the activities that this government is doing are more and more out of order in council or at the minister's discretion. Bill 36 and property rights is a good example. With Bill 50 it's again up to the minister's discretion. With the potato farm, which now, thankfully, has been withdrawn, again it was up to the minister's discretion. These are just three relevant, current ministers' discretions that we have in this House, that cause a lot of concern for Albertans from the north to the south. This is exactly what 115.5 is about. It's about saying: well, the minister can just add or subtract on a whim.

Another concern when we do that. I believe one of the most important things that a government does, you know, in our Constitution, in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms is talk about respect for the rule of law. To me what that means is that the precedents are there, you know what the ruling is, it's pretty clear, and there's not an arbitrary decision. When you have respect for the rule of law, you actually start to have peace and prosperity because people know what the results are going to be, whether it's an investment, whether it's a driving act, or any of these areas. It's just so critical that we bring these things back to the House to pass new legislation and not just have someone who can sit in the minister's chair say, "You know, I'm concerned with this; a tragedy has happened; therefore, I'm going to change the regulations" because of that one incident that happens.

There's no question that when we look at the records out there by the AMA – and there are a few bodies in the States – 80 per cent of vehicular accidents are from driver distraction. We realize that this

is happening. We don't know why it's happening, but we need to be looking at that and saying: "That's the focus of this bill. It is driver distraction. It's the safety of the people." As the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview said, I want to know that other people are paying attention.

It's interesting, though, because just recently, this last month, a young lady really got nailed in the courts. I believe it was a \$2,500 fine, and was it three demerits? We have laws on the books already that we're failing to utilize, so it's not always about having more bills. It's not always about having more control. It's about having better laws, better understanding of those laws, and the education process of realizing that when we're behind the wheel of a vehicle, we are responsible for where that vehicle is going and for sticking in our lane, signalling properly, going the right speed, not accelerating because we're in an exciting conversation or decelerating because we're concerned with something and slowing down. All of these things need to be looked at.

Having the arbitrary decision of the minister is not in the best interest of this law. Because of that, I strongly support this amendment. I'd ask the members of this House to support this amendment because it would clarify and assure Albertans that this is where we are going to go and not have all these regulations.

People say: well, I didn't know that was against the law. Well, it isn't. It's a regulation that the minister passed. The classic example, that we've been using constantly in here, is that you're eating, and the minister could decide a week after this bill is passed: "You know what? We don't want anybody eating anymore while they're driving." Therefore, someone is pulled over and does not realize that there's a new law. "Well, no, we've just changed the regulations and the descriptions on that law." There are just so many

important things that we need to look at.

The Chair: I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member. It's 4:25. Pursuant to Standing Order 4(3) the committee shall now rise and report.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 16. 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.

Thank you, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Those who concur with the report, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

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

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that it is 4:25, I move that the House stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 15.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:27 p.m. to Monday, November 15, at 1:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to November 04, 2010

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

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

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

1 Alberta Competitiveness Act (Stelmach)

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2010 cA-14.9]

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

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010; SA 2010 c7]

3 Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2010 (Weadick)

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010; SA 2010 c6]

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

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010; SA 2010 c4]

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2010 (Bhullar)

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010; SA 2010 c5]

- 7*** **Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 311 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 402-03 (Mar. 10 aft.), 492-503 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 533-37 (Mar. 17 aft.), 561-62 (Mar. 18 aft.), 769-82 (Apr. 14 aft.), 850-62 (Apr. 20 aft.), 869-76 (Apr. 20 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 878-84 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2010 c8]
- 8** **Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2010 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 334 (Mar. 8 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 429-30 (Mar. 11 aft.), 503 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 532--33 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 680-81 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010, with exceptions; SA 2010 c2]
- 9** **Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Johnson)**
First Reading -- 576 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 615-16 (Mar. 23 aft.), 735-43 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 798-804 (Apr. 15 aft.), 868 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 878 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 22, 2010; SA 2010 c9]
- 10** **Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010 (\$) (Redford)**
First Reading -- 486 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 518 (Mar. 17 aft.), 618-20 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 682-83 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 876-77 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 22, 2010; SA 2010 c12]
- 11** **Witness Security Act (Drysdale)**
First Reading -- 486 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 518 (Mar. 17 aft.), 620-24 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 683 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 877 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2010 cW-12.5]
- 12** **Body Armour Control Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 486-87 (Mar. 16 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 518-19 (Mar. 17 aft.), 624-28 (Mar. 23 aft.), 743-49 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 862-65 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 885-87 (Apr. 20 aft., passed on division)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2010 cB-4.8]
- 13** **Securities Amendment Act, 2010 (Morton)**
First Reading -- 552 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 616-17 (Mar. 23 aft.), 681-82 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 865-67 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 877 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2010 c10]
- 14** **Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010 (Ouellette)**
First Reading -- 552 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 617-18 (Mar. 23 aft.), 682 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 867 (Apr. 20 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 877-78 (Apr. 20 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 22, 2010; SA 2010 c11]
- 15** **Appropriation Act, 2010 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 576 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 608-15 (Mar. 23 aft.), 627-28 (Mar. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 643-60 (Mar. 24 aft., passed on division)
Third Reading -- 675-78 (Mar. 25 aft.), 684 (Mar. 25 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 25 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 25, 2010; SA 2010 c3]

- 16*** **Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving) Amendment Act, 2010 (Johnston)**
First Reading -- 763 (Apr. 14 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 956-67 (Oct. 26 aft.), 980-81 (Oct. 27 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 991-98 (Oct. 27 aft., amendments agreed to), 1013-20 (Oct. 28 aft.), 1113-17 (Nov. 3 aft.), 1135-42 (Nov. 4 aft., adjourned, amendments introduced)
- 17** **Alberta Health Act (Zwozdesky)**
First Reading -- 1010-11 (Oct. 28 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1072-85 (Nov. 2 aft., adjourned)
- 18** **Government Organization Amendment Act, 2010 (Evans)**
First Reading -- 916 (Oct. 25 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 984-90 (Oct. 27 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1107-11 (Nov. 3 aft., passed)
- 19** **Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2010 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 916 (Oct. 25 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 981-84 (Oct. 27 aft., passed)
- 20** **Class Proceedings Amendment Act, 2010 (Drysdale)**
First Reading -- 1032 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1065-66 (Nov. 2 aft.), 1100-01 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 21** **Wills and Succession Act (Olson)**
First Reading -- 1033 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1066-67 (Nov. 2 aft.), 1101-03 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 22** **Family Law Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1033 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1067-70 (Nov. 2 aft.), 1103-06 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 23*** **Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2010 (Weadick)**
First Reading -- 1012 (Oct. 28 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1070-72 (Nov. 2 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1111-13 (Nov. 3 aft., passed with amendments)
- 24** **Carbon Capture and Storage Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 (\$) (Liepert)**
First Reading -- 1033 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1099-1100 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 25** **Freehold Mineral Rights Tax Amendment Act, 2010 (Liepert)**
First Reading -- 1033 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1100 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 26** **Mines and Minerals (Coalbed Methane) Amendment Act, 2010 (Liepert)**
First Reading -- 980 (Oct. 27 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1012-13 (Oct. 28 aft.), 1106-07 (Nov. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 27** **Police Amendment Act, 2010 (Oberle)**
First Reading -- 1098 (Nov. 3 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1133-34 (Nov. 4 aft., adjourned)
- 28** **Electoral Divisions Act (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1098 (Nov. 3 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1134 (Nov. 4 aft., adjourned)
- 29** **Alberta Parks Act (\$) (Ady)**
First Reading -- 1131 (Nov. 4 aft., passed)

- 201 Workers' Compensation (Firefighters) Amendment Act, 2010 (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 154 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 213-27 (Feb. 22 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 577-85 (Mar. 22 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 709 (Apr. 12 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2010 c13]
- 202* Mandatory Reporting of Child Pornography Act (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 154 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 336-48 (Mar. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 586-89 (Mar. 22 aft.), 698-704 (Apr. 12 aft.), 705-09 (Apr. 12 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 819-25 (Apr. 19 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2010 cM-3.3]
- 203 Municipal Government (Local Access and Franchise Fees) Amendment Act, 2010 (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 311-12 (Feb. 25 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 709-10 (Apr. 12 aft.), 825-32 (Apr. 19 aft.), 836-37 (Apr. 19 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Community Services), (Oct. 27 aft., reported to Assembly, not proceeded with)
- 204 Fiscal Responsibility (Spending Limit) Amendment Act, 2010 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 271 (Feb. 24 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 922-28 (Oct. 25 aft.), 1036-44 (Nov. 1 aft, defeated on division)
- 205 Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 916 (Oct. 25 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1044-46 (Nov. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 206 Utilities Consumer Advocate Act (Kang)**
First Reading -- 1012 (Oct. 28 aft., passed)
- 208 Recall Act (Hinman)**
First Reading -- 1033-34 (Nov. 1 aft., passed)
- Pr1 Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta Act (Weadick)**
First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 732-33 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 749 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 804 (Apr. 15 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 22, 2010]
- Pr2* Canada Olympic Park Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 2010 (DeLong)**
First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 733-35 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 749-50 (Apr. 13 aft.), 768 (Apr. 14 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 804 (Apr. 15 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 31, 2009]
- Pr3* Lamont Health Care Centre Act (Horne)**
First Reading -- 366 (Mar. 9 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 735 (Apr. 13 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 768-69 (Apr. 14 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 804 (Apr. 15 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 22 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 22, 2010]

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