



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Issue 11

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 27th Legislature

Fourth Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC)	Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)
Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)	Knight, Hon. Mel, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC)
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)	Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (WA), WA Opposition House Leader	Liepert, Hon. Ron, Calgary-West (PC)
Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)	Lindsay, Fred, Stony Plain (PC)
Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC)	Lukaszuk, Hon. Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)	Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC)	MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)
Blackett, Hon. Lindsay, Calgary-North West (PC)	Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL), Official Opposition House Leader	Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Leader of the ND Opposition
Boutillier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (WA)	McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)	McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)	Morton, F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC)
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC), Government Whip	Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), ND Opposition House Leader
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (AL), Official Opposition Whip	Oberle, Hon. Frank, Peace River (PC)
Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)	Olson, Hon. Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Danyluk, Hon. Ray, Lac La Biche-St. Paul (PC)	Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)	Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (AL), Official Opposition Deputy Whip, Official Opposition Deputy Leader
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Egmont (PC), Deputy Government House Leader	Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)
Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC), Deputy Government Whip	Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)	Redford, Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC)
Elniski, Doug, Edmonton-Calder (PC)	Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Evans, Hon. Iris, Sherwood Park (PC)	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)	Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (WA), WA Opposition Whip	Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Fritz, Hon. Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)	Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
Goudreau, Hon. Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace (PC)	Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (Ind)
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)	Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Groeneveld, George, Highwood (PC)	Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC), Premier
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC), Government House Leader	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL), Leader of the Official Opposition
Hayden, Hon. Jack, Drumheller-Stettler (PC)	Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (AL)
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)	Tarchuk, Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC)
Hinman, Paul, Calgary-Glenmore (WA), WA Opposition Deputy Leader	Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (AB)
Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)	VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (PC)
Horner, Doug, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert (PC)	Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)
Jablonski, Hon. Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC)	Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Jacobs, Broyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC)	Webber, Hon. Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)	Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)
Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)	Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL)	Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Deputy Government House Leader

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Clerk	W.J. David McNeil	Parliamentary Counsel	Stephanie LeBlanc
Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations	Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Committee Research Co-ordinator	Philip Massolin
Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services	Shannon Dean	Sergeant-at-Arms	Brian G. Hodgson
Manager – House Proceedings	Micheline S. Gravel	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	Chris Caughell
		Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	Gordon H. Munk
		Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Liz Sim

Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 67 Alberta Liberal: 8 Wildrose Alliance: 4 New Democrat: 2 Alberta: 1 Independent: 1

Executive Council

Ed Stelmach	Premier, President of Executive Council, Chair of Agenda and Priorities Committee, Vice-chair of Treasury Board, Liaison to the Canadian Armed Forces
Lloyd Snelgrove	President of the Treasury Board, Minister of Finance and Enterprise
Dave Hancock	Minister of Education, Political Minister for Edmonton
Iris Evans	Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations
Mel Knight	Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
Luke Ouellette	Minister of Transportation
Rob Renner	Minister of Environment
Verlyn Olson	Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Yvonne Fritz	Minister of Children and Youth Services, Political Minister for Calgary
Jack Hayden	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Political Minister for Rural Alberta
Ray Danyluk	Minister of Infrastructure
Gene Zwozdesky	Minister of Health and Wellness
Ron Liepert	Minister of Energy
Mary Anne Jablonski	Minister of Seniors and Community Supports
Len Webber	Minister of Aboriginal Relations
Heather Klimchuk	Minister of Service Alberta
Lindsay Blackett	Minister of Culture and Community Spirit
Cindy Ady	Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Hector Goudreau	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Frank Oberle	Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security
Jonathan Denis	Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs
Thomas Lukaszuk	Minister of Employment and Immigration
Greg Weadick	Minister of Advanced Education and Technology

Parliamentary Assistants

Evan Berger	Sustainable Resource Development
Manmeet Singh Bhullar	Municipal Affairs
Cal Dallas	Finance and Enterprise
Fred Horne	Health and Wellness
Broyce Jacobs	Agriculture and Rural Development
Jeff Johnson	Treasury Board (Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat)
Diana McQueen	Energy
Janice Sarich	Education
Teresa Woo-Paw	Employment and Immigration

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Ms Tarchuk
Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski

DeLong
Forsyth
Groeneveld
Johnston
MacDonald
Quest
Taft

Standing Committee on Community Services

Chair: Mr. Doerksen
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr

Allred
Anderson
Benito
Bhullar
Chase
Johnston
Notley
Rodney
Sarich
Taylor

Standing Committee on the Economy

Chair: Mr. Bhardwaj
Deputy Chair: Mr. Chase

Amery
Dallas
Fawcett
Hinman
Johnson
Lund
Taft
Tarchuk
Taylor
Woo-Paw

Standing Committee on Health

Chair: Mr. McFarland
Deputy Chair: Ms Pastoor

Forsyth
Griffiths
Groeneveld
Horne
Lindsay
Notley
Quest
Sherman
Swann
Vandermeer

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Mitzel
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Bhullar
Blakeman
Campbell
Hinman
Lindsay
MacDonald
Marz
Notley
Quest
Rogers

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Kowalski
Deputy Chair: Mr. Campbell

Amery
Anderson
Bhullar
Elniski
Hehr
Leskiw
Mason
Pastoor
Rogers
VanderBurg

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Dr. Brown
Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw

Allred Kang
Benito Lindsay
Boutilier McQueen
Calahasen Morton
Dallas Redford
Doerksen Sandhu
Drysdale Sarich
Hinman Taft
Horner Xiao
Jacobs

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Prins
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hancock

Amery Lindsay
Berger McFarland
Calahasen Mitzel
DeLong Notley
Doerksen Pastoor
Forsyth Quest
Groeneveld Sherman
Hinman Tarchuk
Jacobs Taylor
Leskiw

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. MacDonald
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rodney

Allred Griffiths
Anderson Groeneveld
Benito Kang
Calahasen Mason
Chase Sandhu
Dallas Vandermeer
Elniski Xiao
Fawcett

Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services

Chair: Mr. Drysdale
Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang

Boutilier
Brown
Calahasen
Cao
Forsyth
Johnson
MacDonald
Rogers
Sandhu
Xiao

Standing Committee on Resources and Environment

Chair: Mr. Prins
Deputy Chair: Ms Blakeman

Anderson
Berger
Boutilier
Hehr
Jacobs
Marz
Mason
McQueen
Mitzel
VanderBurg

Select Special Ombudsman Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Mitzel
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Blakeman
Hinman
Lindsay
Marz
Notley
Quest
Rogers

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 10, 2011

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. As we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we renew our energies with thanks so that we may continue our work with the people in the constituencies we represent. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As everyone here would know, today is World Kidney Day, and it's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you two very special individuals from the Kidney Foundation, Northern Alberta: Sheelah Zapf, president, and Heidi Erisman, executive director. Sheelah has served on the board of directors since 2007. She has a son who is a paraplegic and a kidney transplant recipient. Heidi has been with the organization since 2005, and she played a very key role in working with Alberta Health and Wellness to implement the living organ and donor reimbursement program. I would ask both of these special guests to please rise and receive the enthusiastic applause for being here from our colleagues. Thank you.

It's also my great pleasure to introduce to you six or seven visitors here from the L'Arche Association of Edmonton, which is housed in my particular constituency. Along with their caregivers we have Janis Radink, Jessica Rodriguez, Kate Kim, Irina Bezrukova, Kanako Kikuya, and Abigail Lee. They come to us from Korea, Japan, Russia, Costa Rica, Germany, and right here in Edmonton. If they could please rise and receive the warm, enthusiastic welcome from the House, that would be great. Welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Mr. Allred: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the privilege of introducing two classes of bright young students from Sir Alexander Mackenzie school in St. Albert. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and the Assembly 45 more grade 6 students from Sir Alexander Mackenzie school in St. Albert, who are equally as bright as their colleagues from yesterday. I'll ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is, indeed, very rare I get visitors to this Legislature from my constituency. Today I am so proud to have the pleasure of introducing to you and through you 31 bright, rambunctious grade 6 students from St. Andrew's school in High Prairie. They're here to watch their government at work. As you know, grade 6 studies government. They are joined by teachers Mr. Al Baird and Mrs. Emily Ferguson and, of course, parent helpers Mrs. Elaine Rederburg, Mrs. Ruby Walker, Mrs. Rachel Kemp, Mrs. Rosemary Halldorson, Miss Stewart, Mrs. Pardell, Mrs. Gauchier, Mr. Cross, Mr. Lanigan, and Mr. Lamouche. They're seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask that they all stand and receive the warm welcome of this Legislature.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Vandermeer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you two of my constituents, Jason Edmonds and Samson Kandie. They both work at the Balwin Villa centre, which recently opened and had its grand opening. Jason has not been to the Legislature since his grade 6 field trip 10 years ago, and Samson, originally from Kenya, is a newcomer to Canada. They're both seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Benito: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you and through to all members of this Assembly two very distinguished members of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta. The first one is Madame Patty Dittrick, president, and the second lady is Mary Lynne Campbell, executive director. We had a very productive meeting a few minutes ago about the discussion on the education act. They're looking forward to seeing the introduction of this legislation in the House and the inclusion of the definition of inclusiveness, natural persons, and enabling public school boards to achieve educational and community goals. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this fantastic Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two groups of guests to introduce today. First, I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly representatives of the Tunisian community living in Edmonton. Tunisia was the first site of the many recent popular uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East calling for democratic reforms. Tunisians have achieved remarkable success in ending the unjust Ben Ali regime. Our guests today are lending an encouraging hand to those in their home country by developing support and solidarity with the Tunisian people across Canada. They are currently mobilizing around a petition campaign across Canada to be sent to the federal government advocating for government support in resolving continuing injustices against the Tunisian people and ensuring a quick transition to a peaceful and democratic society.

I would now like to welcome the members of the Tunisian community who are seated in the members' gallery of the Legislature. I would ask that they now rise as I read their names: Fathi Ben Mardas, Hounaida Ayed, Abdennaceur Salem, Adel Laifi, Nariman Saidane, and there may be others with them whose names I do not have. I would ask them now to please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

My second group of guests, Mr. Speaker, is the new members of the NDP caucus staff as well as one individual who is leaving after a number of years of remarkable service. Rob Pearson has served as our director of outreach for three and a half years, and he has done an outstanding job of increasing the engagement of Alberta's diverse society with the political process in this House. I want to thank him very much for his contribution to our caucus. He will indeed be missed. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome some of our new and very talented staff, who bring a wide range of skills and have already demonstrated their determined work ethic and their passion for their positions. They are sessional researcher Geoff Brouwer, outreach assistant Myles

Curry, research officer Kate Millar, and Carissa Halton, who is my executive assistant. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

Statement by the Speaker

Election Anniversaries

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have a few introductions today as well. On March 11, 1997 – that's 14 years ago – eight members in this current Assembly were elected to this Assembly for the first time. So congratulations to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, our Minister of Education; the hon. Member for Sherwood Park, our Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations; the hon. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Calgary-Fort; the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane; the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills; the hon. members for Edmonton-Centre, Edmonton-Gold Bar, and Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. Congratulations on your 14th anniversary.

On March 12, 2001, 10 years ago Saturday, 11 members in this Assembly were elected to this Assembly for the first time and will be presented with a 10-year Mace pin momentarily by the pages, who will assist me in this regard. The pages may move as I speak. To the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, our Minister of Transportation; the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul, our Minister of Infrastructure; the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster, our President of the Treasury Board; the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Member for Dunvegan-Central Peace; the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky and our Minister of Sustainable Resource Development; the hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw and our Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation; the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, our Minister of Employment and Immigration; the hon. former Deputy Premier, the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert; the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow; the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne; and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview: congratulations on your 10th anniversary. Please wear your Mace pins with pride.

On March 12 it'll be happy birthday time to the young Member for Stony Plain.

1:40

Members' Statements

Alberta Business Awards of Distinction

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, on March 4 the Alberta Chambers of Commerce held its 20th annual Alberta business awards of distinction at Enoch, just outside of Edmonton. Out of the 11 awards the Alberta government sponsored five: three from Employment and Immigration, one from Aboriginal Relations, and one from the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

These awards are presented to the province's top employers, organizations that have excelled as employers of youth, aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities. Other awards noted excellence in entrepreneurship, marketing, exporting, and developing relationships with aboriginal organizations and communities.

This year's Premier's award of distinction, the ceremony's top award, was presented to PTI Group, Inc., an Edmonton-based company employing more than 2,800 people around the province. PTI is a key player in our province's oil and gas sector by providing the many services needed to set up and service remote work camps. It has established an excellent reputation for developing strong relationships with First Nations and Métis communities. PTI has found a way to balance local businesses and economic goals with First Nations' rights and environmental and cultural concerns.

I would like to congratulate PTI Group, Inc. for this award and for being an example of an exceptional employer and contributor to Alberta's workforce and economy. I would also like to encourage the Alberta government to continue to foster strong partnerships with business and industry through organizations like the Alberta Chambers of Commerce.

Thank you.

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

Long-term Care

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's much talk these days about the legacy of the current Premier. He seems eager to claim that it will be some rosy time for Alberta seniors, with couples able to stay together through the years in comfort and security. The reality being created by this government is much less attractive and should be alarming to both those who will need more care and their families and friends. Either this Premier does not know the difference between long-term care and continuing care or he is determined to confuse Albertans with deceptive language.

Long-term care spaces are where those needing medical care will receive it as part of a fully public health care system. They will not have to drain savings and create massive obligations on family and friends. This development is not in any way keeping pace with the demographic growth of those needing such care. The refusal to plan for what lies ahead will lead to a major crisis in the next few years. We need to do much more to assure everyone of affordable assisted living options and good home care, but this will never be completely adequate. The vision the Premier lays out of people staying together is a pretext for inadequate and unaffordable care based on a for-profit model where every bit of care costs extra fees.

Promises to create new long-term care beds have been broken. The language has been changed to boast about inadequate and costly continuing care spaces whenever questions are raised about vitally needed long-term care spaces. We are moving to a full-blown crisis, when it will be impossible to act quickly enough to prevent unnecessary suffering for many seniors.

This so-called legacy is already spilling over to impact all Albertans in need of health care. Medical experts assert that the crisis in emergency departments will not be solved by new protocols that create hidden waiting rooms for people to wait in for days but only when large numbers of acute-care beds are not being used by those who need long-term care.

We hear of families that have had to quit jobs or wipe out savings to get care for loved ones. We hear exhausted and stressed staff in facilities saying that they cannot provide the care needed because even the inadequate facilities that now exist are understaffed.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's slavish commitment to . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Mr. Vandermeer: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. More than 23,000 Albertans are affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. FASD results in a range of lifelong disabilities such as brain damage which is caused by premature exposure to alcohol. Alberta has a 10-year innovative plan that aims to establish

awareness and prevention, assessment and diagnosis, and research and support for individuals with FASD and their caregivers.

Alberta is also a member of the Canada northwest FASD partnership, which is an alliance of provinces and territories working together to reduce the incidence of FASD and improve the quality of life for those living with FASD. Last week was the 4th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Mr. Speaker, you will be pleased to know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services assumed the leadership of the Canada northwest FASD partnership for the year 2011-12 on behalf of Alberta. This partnership will create a supportive environment for building community capacity and providing the appropriate training, education, government leadership, evaluation, and research. Alberta's participation in the partnership will help in the prevention of FASD and assist people living with FASD and their caregivers.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say congratulations to all the partners for 10 years of hard work and especially for the work our minister is going to be doing, and congratulations to Alberta for taking a lead in this.

Thank you.

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

Childhood Obesity Initiatives

Mr. Horne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about a national initiative that has been created to look for solutions to a very serious health issue. On March 7 provincial health representatives joined the federal Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq, to launch a national dialogue on childhood obesity. Alberta's own chief medical officer of health, Dr. André Coriveau, was part of this national launch.

Mr. Speaker, the factors contributing to the rising rates of childhood obesity are complex. Reduced levels of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits, increased time spent in front of computers and televisions are just some of the contributing factors to this national epidemic. In fact, current statistics tell us why a national dialogue on childhood obesity is such an urgent issue. More than 1 in 4 children and youth aged two to 17 are either overweight or obese, a trend, I'm sad to say, holds true for Alberta. Obese children are being diagnosed with a range of health conditions that were once only seen in adults such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Mr. Speaker, the national dialogue offers a number of opportunities for Canadians to participate in a conversation about how to tackle the obesity epidemic, including a website, online and in-person discussions as well as a national summit. This national initiative complements the wellness forum, hosted by our own Minister of Health and Wellness last December, as well as an international wellness symposium planned for the fall. Discussion is now under way to have the Alberta symposium serve as the national summit for the dialogue about national healthy weights.

We have a number of Alberta initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles. These include the Communities ChooseWell program, that has involved 162 communities, promoting wellness over the past four years, and the healthy school communities award, that celebrates school communities that support healthy choices and healthy environments for kids.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans are encouraged to participate in the healthy weights dialogue by visiting the website www.ourhealthfuture.gc.ca. Finally, as the business of public health care in Canada increasingly becomes the business of man-

aging chronic disease, I can think of no other important conversation . . .

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

Community Chili Cook-offs in Calgary

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford for the perfect segue to my member's statement today, and that is on chili night in Calgary North-Hill. This isn't a formal event, but last Saturday I got to participate in two different chili cook-offs in my constituency, that being hosted by the Mount Pleasant Community Association and the other one by the Highwood Community Association. These events brought community members and families together and included not just sampling the various chilies that were made but also other activities such as sledding, drumming, lip-synching, and dancing.

I personally and my fiancée got to taste over 20 different chilies, Mr. Speaker. They had multiple flavours, from spicy to sweet to smoky, with different ingredients. Some were vegetarian, some were your standard beef chilies, and some had turkey in them. There were more different kinds of beans than I or my fiancée care to remember.

1:50

What is most important, Mr. Speaker, is not the different types of chili or whose was best, but it was the fact that this allowed many different members of the communities to come together with their families and have fun for the evening. I want to thank all those who cooked the chilies during the day as well as those organizers and volunteers who spent the time to put these events together for these two communities. It certainly allowed lots of friends and neighbours to be able to break bread over dinner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You forgot to tell us when you're going to marry this wonderful young woman.

Oral Question Period

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

Emergency Medical Service Delays

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier said, "I am here to support our doctors." That's hard to believe because ER doctors don't trust Alberta Health Services' sham review into 322 cases of compromised ER care dating back to 2008. The doctors say that this review is nothing more than a witch hunt. Dr. Paul Parks is quoted: Alberta Health Services won't provide us with written assurance of immunity if we do hand over the details, and without the details it's impossible to do a meaningful investigation. Why has the Premier chosen to cover up that the Alberta Health Services internal review went absolutely nowhere because doctors are afraid to speak?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday that I'm not going off on some wild goose chase after baseless allegations of payoffs to doctors. However, very reckless statements in this House have caused ordinary Albertans to question the care they receive from doctors and other health care professionals. This is about maintaining confidence in the health care system. Accordingly I've asked the Minister of Health and Wellness to work with the Health

Quality Council of Alberta to clear the air, reassure Albertans that they will get good care when they need it.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to confuse all of us by talking about other allegations. We're talking about 322 cases of compromised ER care. Are you or are you not going to have the Health Quality Council investigate these?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, again, this is a quote that was in *Hansard*. "How can Albertans, including the health care workers in this system, have any trust in this government when since 2008 you have failed to investigate 322 concrete cases of malpractice?" Doctors deliver service. So to say that this wasn't against doctors is totally wrong. I can tell you that we are supporting doctors. That's what we're all about.

The minister has further details in terms of the extent of the review.

Dr. Swann: Well, that's embarrassing, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier continues to avoid answering the question Albertans are asking, that professionals are asking. Three hundred and twenty-two cases in emergency since 2008, Premier: are you going to investigate them through an independent Health Quality Council investigation or not?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness will be working with the Health Quality Council – and the terms of reference will be very clear – to investigate all the matters that have been raised, to clear the air once and for all, and to make sure that these baseless allegations that were made in this House are addressed. Again, our aim here is to reassure Albertans that they do have confidence in the health care system.

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

Dr. Swann: Let's try this again, Mr. Speaker. For the benefit of the 322 patients who received compromised care in 2008, the time has come for the Premier to stop playing games. Show true leadership. Do the right thing to restore confidence in the health care system. It's time for the government to listen to the growing chorus of professionals who are demanding an independent investigation of 322 cases, Mr. Premier. Will he finally keep his word and direct the Health Quality Council to independently investigate the 322 cases?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we're going to go beyond that. It'll be up to the Health Quality Council to investigate all matters that have been raised with respect to the 322 concrete cases of malpractice, I suspect by doctors the way I read this. We're also going to look at ER waiting times, look at a cancer strategy. The terms of reference will be entered into and agreed upon by the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Health Quality Council. They will do a thorough review of all of the practices, the amount of money going in, how we can improve access to health care, and to make sure that we're getting good value for the dollars that we're investing.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to ask the Premier if the fact that he knew about these cases since 2008 has anything to do with the fact that he is trying to hide the facts by not allowing an independent Health Quality Council investigation.

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the Health Quality Council is independent. They are independent. They receive evidence under the Alberta Evidence Act, which will be kept perfectly confidential.

They have various powers under their own act. They are independent. Learn what you're talking about once and for all. Just stop these baseless allegations and get to the facts. They will investigate everything, including the statements made by this hon. member in terms of accusing doctors of malpractice in 322 concrete cases. Those are his words, not mine.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the Premier say that he is allowing the Health Quality Council to investigate. That's a good sign. That's very good news. I guess I want to ask if he will take the next step now and make the Health Quality Council report to the Legislature instead of to the health minister? That would truly prove his intentions to make them independent.

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, without any issue in terms of making the report public, that report will be made public. It will be presented here in the Legislature. It will also be made public to all Albertans so that Albertans can see for themselves what is in the report and the recommendations coming from a very qualified group of professionals that are going to do a thorough review.

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

Water Quality Monitoring in the Oil Sands

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The water monitoring report released yesterday said exactly what everyone expected it to say, that monitoring is insufficient and the government has no clear idea of the impact of the oil sands on the environment. Now, the minister continues to respond that they need time to implement a monitoring system, but this government has had 40 years to create a monitoring system with the growth of the oil sands, and all it has done is deny and stall. To the Minister of Environment: in the new monitoring system will the government actually be doing the monitoring? I'm not asking who's paying; I'm asking who's doing.

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, the member knows perfectly well that I have appointed a panel that is led by two pre-eminent Albertans whose job it is in consultation with highly qualified scientists to provide me with recommendations on how the system should operate. For me to try and presume what that recommendation is going to be in advance of the report from that committee would be inappropriate.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Back to the same minister. I asked about who was going to do it. Now I'm going to ask about who is going to pay for it. Who is going to pay for this monitoring system that is being developed? Is it going to come out of the minor \$17 million system that the government has right now, and what percentage will be covered by government?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, that's another part of the terms of reference for the panel. If the member would like a copy of those terms of reference, I'll be happy to provide them. It's a public document. I've asked the panel to provide me with advice on how the system should be paid for, but I can say at the outset that the lion's share of the cost will be borne by industry. We have a very firm commitment that that is the case, and that will be the case. The balance of the costs should be borne, I would expect, jointly by the provincial and federal governments.

Ms Blakeman: Well, that's a bit of an answer.

Back to the same minister: has the minister learned the lesson from the inadequate water monitoring system and started reviews on other monitoring and reporting in the area? In other words, can he get some work done while we wait for more panels to report back on what an extensive monitoring system should look like?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member would take the time to actually read the report that came back yesterday, she would see that, in fact, the panel reported to me that the work that has been done to date is actually very good, high-quality work but that the work that was done by Dr. Kelly and Dr. Schindler was focused in a different area. The main point that was made yesterday was that there needs to be a much more co-ordinated approach among the various medias. We can't separate air and water and have them going down two different paths. They have to be co-ordinated. That's what the panel will be putting together.

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

2:00 **Emergency Health Service Delays**
(continued)

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Paul Parks has now joined Dr. Tyrrell, chair of the Health Quality Council, and many other doctors who say that enough evidence exists to conduct a full public inquiry with full immunity for witnesses regarding an avalanche of health system failures in our ERs, yet this government continues to run and hide and do nothing. To the health minister: Albertans want to know why you're so scared of calling a full public inquiry to look at these 322 cases, with immunity for witnesses who want to testify.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Premier just indicated that he's given me instructions to direct the Health Quality Council of Alberta to conduct a review, and that's what I'll be doing.

Mr. Anderson: We don't want a review. We want a full public inquiry with witnesses called and immunity. That is critical.

The evidence we're all talking about, except for you, was leaked last fall from ER docs at a single Alberta hospital, 322 ER horror stories. This already tabled document, which we all have, is your evidence. Your government has known about it for three years, but all they've done is evade, evade, evade. To the minister: will you call a public inquiry to investigate what is going on in our ERs?

The Speaker: There are no preambles.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to repeat this now for the second time, after the Premier repeated it four or five times. I'll try and do it slowly enough. I wonder if I could have unanimous consent to go over the 30 seconds to make sure that everybody hears it.

The Speaker: No. I'm not asking for permission from the Assembly. We're in the question period, the Routine. Go.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Okay. Then I have 10 seconds left. I am directing the Health Quality Council to review wait times for emergency rooms as well as for cancer services in relation to health quality provisions in this province.

Mr. Anderson: A review is not good enough. We want to be able to make sure that who people come forward are able to testify openly with full immunity, sir – full immunity. Will you give them that immunity during this review?

Mr. Zwozdesky: They will have that full immunity. Subject to the Alberta Evidence Act section 9(5), there will be no liabilities in that regard. They will have full protection of the regulation and the law of this province, and that guarantees their anonymity.

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

Villa Caritas Geriatric Mental Health Facility

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. At the grand opening of Villa Caritas earlier this week the health minister publicly stated that the facility was safe and that he had no reason to believe that it was not. What he didn't say was that a few days earlier a patient had tragically died at that facility. My question is to the minister. When was the minister informed of this tragic death?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I believe I found out about it when this member asked the question in this House. But let me tell you what else is out there in the public. The family contacted Mr. Rutherford on his radio show this morning, and the family said this. They were upset that the leader of the NDP was using their father's death as a political weapon. They said the NDP leader was, if I could use the word, lying and making assumptions. They said that the family is convinced it could have happened anywhere, and they do not blame Covenant Health or Villa Caritas for anything. So if you'd like to take this opportunity to apologize.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I will never apologize for trying to make our facilities safe, something this minister should do.

Given that both the Public Agencies Governance Act and the Alberta health minister's mandate and roles document say that the minister must be notified of any adverse event that affects activities, operations, or the well-being of Albertans, it's clear that this minister should have been informed, and not by me. So if the minister insists that he was not told, will he explain why he was not informed of this by his staff as the law requires?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, my office was informed. I was not personally informed. However, what is important to know here is that sometimes after a circumstance like this occurs, the family requests a period for condolences, for sympathies. That period, as I understand it, was offered, certainly by my office, certainly by me. I'm surprised that this member wouldn't understand how grave this situation is and how much worse he is making it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to make the facility safe, and this minister is stretching credulity by saying that he was not informed by his staff. Frankly, I don't believe him. He categorically told this House that he was not informed, so he must either take action against the people who didn't inform him or admit he knew about the death and still chose to tell Albertans that Villa Caritas was safe despite the tragedy.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, these allegations are unbelievable. This is an extremely safe location for people with mental health difficulties, specifically geriatric people. It underwent a lot of review. People were interviewed, people with expertise in mental health. There were other people who went and visited other facilities of a similar nature to ensure that we had state-of-the-art facilities there. Again, there are things like 19 monitored cameras in all the hallways. There are shatterproof glasses. There are barri-

ers in the stairwells. There are a number of safety precautions, and I would tell you that there are no hooks in this facility either.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East. [interjections] Lethbridge-East, you've been called.

Safety in Psychiatric Facilities

Ms Pastoor: Mr. Speaker, these questions will be delivered with absolutely no disrespect intended. Whenever a patient dies unexpectedly in a health care facility, health care providers are left wondering whether there was anything that might have been done to prevent it. It's a deep concern for front-line health care providers. To the minister of health. It's been noted publicly with respect to the recent death at Villa Caritas that Alberta does not have detailed safety protocols governing safety at psychiatric facilities. Mr. Minister, why is that?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there are policies and procedures at all of these facilities that they follow. In fact, there are exactly those kinds of safety procedures in place at Villa Caritas. The policy, in fact, I believe, was faxed over to my office, and if you'd like a copy of that, hon. member, I'd be happy to provide it to you.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Given that there are internationally recognized codes and standards on safety and security in psychiatric facilities, will the minister undertake to review them within a time frame of six months to ensure that Alberta has not fallen behind in patient safety?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I'll give the hon. member assurance that that will be done.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you very much. To the same minister: given that this particular case has focussed attention on the neglected area of mental health in our health system, will the minister please review the need to reinstate the Mental Health Board to ensure a voice for the mentally ill?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I've spoken with Alberta Health Services about an issue similar to this, and in fact they are working through some of the details right now to create a mental health advisory council the same way they are looking at creating a cancer advisory council. So the short answer is that almost the same thing, or a similar function at least, to what you're asking for will be created.

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

Sundance Power Plant Unit Closures

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, TransAlta recently announced a notice of termination for units 1 and 2 of its Sundance plant. Under the terms and conditions of the power purchase arrangements, referred to as PPAs, these units produce almost 600 megawatts for the grid and will now be sitting idle even though the expiry date of the PPA is 2017. My questions are to the Minister of Energy. Is this decision by TransAlta an indication that the terms and conditions of the PPAs are inadequate?

Mr. Liepert: No, I don't think that's the case at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact, under the terms and conditions of the PPA that's in place, there are provisions for this type of situation. It is my understanding that TransCanada, which is the purchaser of the power under this PPA, has a period of time to contest the decision of TransAlta. If necessary, there's a dispute resolution mechanism that is defined in legislation, and that's a process that needs to be followed.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is to the same minister. Will this force majeure cause an increase in cost to power consumers in Alberta?

Mr. Liepert: Well, I don't think it's any secret, Mr. Speaker, that the electricity prices in the province have increased from the previous month since the unexpected shutdowns. You know, it's a matter of simple economics, supply and demand. But I think we also have to recognize that, I believe, next month the Keephills 3 plant is due to come on stream and add some 450 megawatts of power, and there was a very positive announcement today that Greengate Power has received approval from the Utilities Commission to start construction on Canada's largest wind farm in southern Alberta.

2:10

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, will this minister commit to a review of the PPA process to ensure that other generation units in Alberta don't end up in early retirement because the PPA does not allow for sufficient funds for major rebuilds?

Mr. Liepert: I wouldn't want to leave the impression that there's an overall review of the PPA process, but I'm certainly pleased to look into that.

At the end of the day the decision on whether to rebuild these units or shut them down is one that has to be made by the owner. There's no question that when it comes to coal-fired power generation, it is operating under some uncertain market conditions today due to some federal carbon policies which haven't been fully explained. But as I said earlier, next month the Keephills 3 plant will come on stream.

Health Services Financial Reporting

Mr. MacDonald: Much to the surprise of the health minister, the Auditor General's report last October indicated that Alberta Health Services found numerous errors in the way data was being processed from the ledgers of former health authorities, including Capital health. One error resulted in more than \$500 million in misclassified expenses; another resulted in the omission of \$420 million of expenses. To the minister of health: how does the minister explain these errors in expenses totalling \$920 million?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, when Alberta Health Services was doing their review of the books, they found that some items had been put into the wrong categories. It's like putting beverages in with entertainment or lunch or something along that line. Now, obviously, the numbers are much larger than that, but I use that simple example.

The other thing is that there were nine different health authorities, and some of them had their own classification systems. So when Alberta Health Services had to bring this all together, they had to reclassify some of those items.

Mr. MacDonald: Again to the same minister: is that \$500 million that the Auditor talks about in misclassified expenses that needed

to be corrected in the topside ledger, or the ledger of Alberta Health Services, an example of one organization having two sets of books?

Mr. Zwozdesky: No, Mr. Speaker. That is so ridiculous. I'll already cleared this all with the Alberta Auditor General in relation to some allegations that surfaced a week ago Monday. There is no such thing as two sets of books. What there were were some entries that had been put into this category, and they should have been put into that category. The Auditor General flagged that, and so did Alberta Health Services. They've straightened it all out. No money is missing. No money is misappropriated. It's all there, it's all accounted for, and it's all been audited.

Mr. MacDonald: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: given that the Auditor indicates in his 2010 report that \$420 million of expenses was omitted between what was in the Alberta Health Services ledger and what was in I believe it's Covenant Health's and Capital health's ledgers, is that not another example of this organization, the one that you are in charge of, sir, having two sets of books?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Not at all, Mr. Speaker. I fully resent the accusation or allegation or innuendo that underlies the tone of that question. The fact is that Alberta Health Services spent considerable – considerable – amounts of time to reclassify 1,300 different entries. They did it manually to ensure that it was properly done and that it passed the smell test of the Alberta Auditor General, and it has.

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

Gas Station Leak in Bowness

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Residents of the Bowness neighbourhood in my constituency continue to deal with the impacts of a gasoline leak from a local gas station. They're concerned that as the months pass, all they see is one plan after another. My question is to the Minister of Environment. When will my constituents see actual work being done to clean up the contamination so that their lives can get back to normal?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for those residents in Bowness. This must be a very difficult situation for them to deal with. I can assure them and I can assure their MLA that work has already begun to clean up this incident. In fact, 3,000 litres of the estimated 7,000 to 9,000 litres have been collected. I've instructed my staff to do everything that they can to speed this process up. They're delineating the plume as we speak, and that will help to put the plan together.

The Speaker: The hon. Member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental to the same minister. Remediation takes time and money. What compliance tools does your ministry have to continue to push and place pressure to ensure that the company is held accountable?

Mr. Renner: Well, the fact that the company is held accountable is really the underlying premise for everything that we do. We have in place at this point an environmental protection order that gives us the ability to demand that services be performed by the company. We continue to work with this company, with its environmental consultants to monitor the work that's ongoing. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day I can assure members of this House

that it is the polluter who is responsible for paying, and we will ensure that not only is the work done in a timely manner but that the taxpayer is not left on the hook to pay for it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplemental to the same minister. The mayor of Calgary has appointed a point person from the city to handle this issue on their side. Will he consider doing the same?

Mr. Renner: Well, we have a regional director in our southern region office who is the lead person on this file. Our staff have been working with the residents and making themselves available to discuss issues and also, in a similar vein, with city officials because the city is involved with this as well. We've had a number of neighbourhood meetings. In fact, just last week our staff met with the residents. We'll continue to provide updates and answer questions as necessary. We understand the importance of this issue to the local residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

All-terrain Vehicle Safety

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Alberta the rate at which children and teens less than 16 years of age are killed in ATV-related deaths is astounding. Of those children who have died, 47 per cent were not wearing a helmet. Mandatory helmet legislation is not only a necessity but should be common sense for this government. To the Minister of Transportation: does this minister know how many deaths have occurred due to weak and insufficient ATV safety legislation?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I've got to say that one – one – innocent person dying or one person dying is too many if it can be prevented in any way. It's very, very important what we do for safety with ATVs in this province. We work every day on trying to better our education system, on making sure that people are educated before they get on these powerful pieces of equipment.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We require helmets for bicycles. Why not for ATVs? To the minister again: why has this government done nothing to protect these innocent children that the minister is talking about?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, we do a lot to protect these innocent children. There's no one under the age of 14 years that's allowed to ride an ATV in this province without direct supervision by either riding with the person or riding beside the person. You can't legislate common sense, but you sure can try to educate people, and you work with people all the time. I have ATVs myself. I never allow anybody on them without a helmet.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can legislate common sense. We have done it with seat belts.

To the minister again: will this government make a commitment today to support helmet requirements for ATV operators under 16?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, we're looking into that all the time. I've got to tell you that before you pass legislation, you have to make sure that you can look after all the unintended consequences that could come from that legislation, and that's what we're working with. We can only enforce on public lands. We can't enforce on private lands. Therefore, we're working on what the best piece of I'm going to say education can be to keep educating people. It's not just helmets. There are all kinds of safety equipment that people should be wearing when riding those ATVs.

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

2:20 Social Assistance Programs

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 2008 a review of social-based assistance programs was announced with the goal of simplifying the process for those Albertans who rely on these key programs. My questions are to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Since you were asked to lead the cross-ministry review and since we haven't seen any results recently, does that mean the review is no longer a priority of your ministry?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing further from the truth. In fact, this is not just a good-news story; this is a great-news story. This government is very committed to the Alberta Supports program and its goal of improving and simplifying the delivery of its social programs to eligible Albertans. The commitment is confirmed in the latest budget with Alberta Supports receiving \$14 million in the '11-12 budget to support this worthwhile initiative.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My next question to the same minister: how will this investment benefit Albertans, and what does it mean to my constituents who rely on these social-based assistance programs in their day-to-day lives?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, Alberta Supports will make it less complicated for Albertans to find information, access services, and get help when they're transitioning between programs and when they're looking for programs. Currently we've launched the provincial call centre and a web portal. As well, several pilot projects are being implemented to test new approaches to delivering services to Albertans in person. Results from these pilot projects will guide future improvements to our in-person delivery of services.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the same minister. While these plans are encouraging, they're just that: plans. When will Albertans actually notice a tangible difference from Alberta Supports?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, we've already started to make a difference. Along with other changes the Alberta Supports contact centre and the web portal were launched last year, and already these tools are catching on. Last month there were 6,000 hits on the website, and there have been over 40,000 hits since last June. The contact centre received 25,000 calls last month; there have been over 100,000 calls to the contact centre since June.

The vision for Alberta Supports is to give Albertans the choice of online, telephone, or face-to-face to receive and provide information that can help them to get the right services at the right time.

Water Quality of the Athabasca River

Ms Notley: The Minister of Environment is on the record claiming that toxins in northern Alberta water are naturally occurring and unrelated to oil sands activity, yet yesterday a scientific report found that industrial activity is contributing to water contamination and that government monitoring had never been designed to test for the impact of oil sands on the contamination. So will the Minister of Environment now apologize to Albertans for repeatedly making scientifically unfounded claims that the lower Athabasca water quality is not threatened by industrial operations?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, I stand by my comments. I've always indicated that there are no detectable levels of contaminants and that we have done everything we can to ensure that the water quality in the Athabasca River is maintained by prohibiting any discharge of any industrial fluids into the river.

What the report yesterday identified is that there are very small quantities of emissions that come through the air that could theoretically end up in the water and that more testing needs to be done to assure ourselves that we have control of that.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the Minister of Environment is also on the record lauding the RAMP monitoring system as adequate and given that yesterday's report concludes that the notion of RAMP as an adequate system of environmental monitoring is incorrect, will the Minister of Environment apologize for consistently and repeatedly providing the wrong information to Albertans about the quality of environmental monitoring in the lower Athabasca?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, RAMP has done an admirable job of doing what they were intended to do, and that was to monitor inputs into the system. However, the science has changed. The concept of environmental management has changed since the inception of RAMP, and now it's time to move on. It's time to begin to think about how we're going to monitor, to understand the impact from a cumulative effects perspective from all media: from water and air and land and biodiversity. RAMP was not intended to do that.

Ms Notley: Given that 40 years of inadequately monitored development has occurred under this government's watch – and it didn't just change yesterday, by the way – and given that after all this time change had to be initiated by an outside scientist not under the thumb of this government or industry, will the Minister of Environment tell us how exactly Albertans are ever supposed to trust this government to protect Albertans' environment, public health, or international reputation?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to dispute the assumption that this member makes that this was somehow initiated by someone from outside of Environment. The panel that we have in place today was put in place for the implementation of cumulative effects environmental monitoring. I've been talking about that long before the report came from Kelly and Schindler. The fact of the matter is that we passed in this House the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act is the regulatory authority . . .

Drug Shortages

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, I rise to address an issue of life-and-death importance that doesn't get enough attention. The Pharmacists Association is concerned that over 90 per cent of pharmacists have

difficulty filling prescriptions for common medicines, including antibiotics, antidepressants, and heart drugs. Patients are often frustrated and angry, and patient health is being affected. To the minister of health. The pharmacists' top recommendation is to set up an information system about drug shortages. What's the minister doing to get such an information system in place?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, I met with the representatives from the Alberta College of Pharmacists just a few days back. We are making some progress on this, perhaps not as quickly as even I would like to see, hon. member, but nonetheless the discussions are taking place, and we are moving it along reasonably quickly.

Dr. Taft: Given the severity and widespread nature of this issue, I'm wondering what the provincial government as a major drug purchaser with a direct impact on supply and demand is doing to bring in policies that will promote rather than hinder timely supply of drugs?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has indeed flagged a very important issue. I want to point out to Albertans that this particular shortage that occurred, for example, in Calgary not that long ago wasn't only local to their area. For those particular drugs it was also a world-wide situation. There are issues of chemical supply to make some of these particular drugs that are at play, and there were other issues with a couple of the manufacturers to do with their assembly lines. So there were some reasons for that. That's why we flagged it a couple of weeks ago to try and get something done about it here.

Dr. Taft: Well, given that the patient always comes first, what does the minister of health say to Albertans who need medicines like penicillin or other antibiotics or antidepressants or heart drugs and cannot get them because of drug shortages? What do you say to them?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, by and large the shortages that occurred were with respect to generic drugs. So what we have said is that we will cover the cost of the brand-name drug. So they still have access to the same drug, and we'll cover the difference in pay.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program, known as AISH, is a very important program for vulnerable Albertans. The rising cost of living has put great pressure on our AISH recipient constituents, who are already on very tight budgets. My questions today are to the hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Can the minister explain why the overall AISH budget was increased but not the monthly \$1,188 payment to our AISH constituents?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, the AISH budget was increased by almost \$50 million to a total of \$783 million this year. This increase allows us to maintain the current maximum AISH monthly benefit while still being able to accommodate caseload growth. The AISH living allowance is \$1,188 per month, as the hon. member mentioned. There have been five increases totalling \$290 million since 2005, and three of these increases have happened under this Premier.

2:30

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Minister. To the same hon. minister: when our AISH constituents are faced with emergency situations, what other assistance is available to them?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, in addition to their financial assistance, AISH clients may also be eligible for personal benefits for needs such as special diets, child-related expenses, medical transportation costs, and emergency situations. As well, AISH clients, their spouses, and dependent children are all eligible to receive benefits, including prescription drugs, eye care, dental care, and emergency ambulance services. The average amount per client for health benefits is about \$370 per month.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same hon. minister. Our AISH constituents have expressed concern over having the AISH payments reduced when they receive CPP disability payments. Can the minister explain why this reduction is allowed?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, our government has been working with the federal government for years. The AISH program works together with federal government programs such as CPP; it does not replace them. Benefits from the CPP disability program are considered replacement income, intended to cover basic-living needs. The income is nonexempt and is considered dollar for dollar when determining a client's monthly AISH assistance. This process is consistent with the treatment of CPP income by other social assistance programs in the country.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Support Programs for Doctors

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has a family doctor shortage, and it's time to remind the health minister about this, considering that nine programs that support family doctors are set to expire before March 31 if negotiations aren't agreed on. These programs are essential for family doctors to operate, and they must continue. Why, Minister, are you trying to destroy the trust between family doctors by eliminating the dollars you provide for more complex care and the time that they have to spend with their patients?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, nobody is trying to destroy or diminish or whatever she's alleging. In fact, we're working very closely with doctors on a number of initiatives pursuant to our five-year health action plan, and that's going very, very well.

With respect to the AMA negotiations I think I've already indicated in this House on numerous occasions, Mr. Speaker, that I am not part of the negotiating committee. Each of the three groups – Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Medical Association, and Alberta Health and Wellness – has negotiators at the table, and I wouldn't be surprised if they're still at the table even right now.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, you are the Minister of Alberta Health and Wellness. Speak up.

I want to follow up on something that you said. Given that you continue to talk about your five-year funding plan, the first of its kind in Canada, how do you plan to keep family doctors in this province if you're going to eliminate these programs?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, nobody is talking about eliminating programs. They're negotiating how to go forward with those programs. That's what negotiating is all about. But let's not lose sight of the fact that we have some harsh fiscal realities in this province, and we are fortunate that we came through them as well as we did under the leadership of this Premier and this entire government caucus.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the health minister. You stated several times that your goal is to attract and retain family doctors. Why, then, are you attacking the family doctors in such a callous way by eliminating their physician and family support program?

Mr. Zwozdesky: I don't know where she's getting this notion that anything is being eliminated. There are negotiations going on, and to the best of my knowledge our folks are not negotiating through the media. We have a lot of support already for the clinical stabilization initiative. That's about \$42 million. There's the business cost program, that helps physicians get established. That's about \$62 million. We've got a physician on-call program. That's about \$91 million. We have a specialist primary care initiative program. That's \$10 million. We have physician benefits of \$16.8 million, of \$5.9 million. And I could go on, Mr. Speaker.

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

Economic Recovery Initiatives

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the past couple of years we have been hit with the worst recession since the early 1930s. We were prepared for it, but we did not come out completely unscathed. My first question is to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise. What is this government doing to help get the province's economy back on track?

Mr. Snelgrove: There's no way I can answer that in 30 seconds, but I'll try. Mr. Speaker, first we brought out a budget that reflects what Albertans want to do. It keeps them healthier, educated. It keeps them working. It keeps Alberta as a very solid, stable place to attract investment. We have reassured the business community, including Albertans, that we have confidence in them and their future. I just look down the line: the drilling program, that put thousands of Albertans back to work; the agriculture initiative to sell our food to other markets in the world. The province is on the right track. We've never lost sight of that. It's just a little detour.

Mr. Benito: Productivity and being competitive are two very important ideas in moving forward. My first supplemental is to the same minister. What specific initiatives does your ministry have in place to ensure that Alberta remains more productive and competitive?

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, quite honestly, the answer is in the question. We have to be more competitive, and we have to be more productive. We established Productivity Alberta in 2008, that can bring different industry and Alberta initiatives together to work on it, and we've got the Competitiveness Council, that is looking at a broad range of how we can maintain our competitive advantage around the world. I look forward to their report, which should come to us early in the summer.

Mr. Benito: To the same minister: what assurances and commitment can your ministry give to Albertans that every possible measure is being taken to speed up our province's economic recovery?

Mr. Snelgrove: Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that business has identified to us is skilled labour. We invested more money in advanced education. We're working with Employment and Immigration to make sure that we have the training in the regions where the upgrading needs to take place. You know, the tools need to be there for industry to create the wealth and create the jobs, and that's really, quite honestly, where the government is. We need to create the environment, both socially and economically, for businesses to locate or re-establish themselves in Alberta and provide that job so that that Albertan has some jingle in his pocket.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

Forensic Pathologist Supply

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Calgary medical examiner's office will soon be inoperative after its two remaining forensic pathologists resigned. The indications are that overwork and stress were major contributing factors to the departure of these last two doctors. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. Are these resignations indicative of the province expecting too much forensic work to be done by too few doctors?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. member for raising this issue. It's one of which we are well aware, and we're very concerned about it as well. I would just point out that this is a problem that's pervasive around North America, if not the world. Medical examiners of this type are highly trained, and they're in great demand. Everybody is looking for them. We're aggressively out there recruiting. We have received notice from several of the examiners that they will be leaving. They're not gone yet, and we're taking that time to recruit.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame that 20 positions for medical training were reduced at the universities this past year.

Given that justice delayed is justice denied, how can the absence of Calgary-based pathologists not unnecessarily delay Calgary court cases?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Olson: Thank you. There are a number of initiatives that we're undertaking in the short term. We will be looking at locums. We're also looking at using hospital pathologists. I will say, too, to the hon. member that we have an arrangement with the University of Alberta, which will be training interns to work as medical examiners. We want to train our own people. That's very much part of our plan. We're also looking at a business plan to increase the number of medical examiners.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I hope part of the solution is foreign-trained upgrading, more seats available to upgrade foreign physicians, foreign-trained pathologists.

Given that upgrades to the Calgary morgue were made in 2009-10, is this yet another example of the government funding facili-

ties without providing adequate staff and resources to operate them?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Olson: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in recent years we have increased the number of medical examiners in Alberta from four to seven. As I said, we're looking at a business plan to increase it even more. It's a tough, competitive market out there to recruit medical examiners. As I say, they're in great demand around the world, but we're quite confident that Alberta is an attractive place for medical examiners to come and work.

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

2:40

Barbless Fish Hooks

Dr. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past number of years there have been more and more regulations for sport fishing in Alberta: catch-and-release only, bait bans, and barbless hooks only. A number of studies, however, have indicated that the utility of barb hook restrictions as a management tool is severely limited if not lacking altogether. My questions are all for the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Given the fact that there is no clear scientific justification for barbless hook requirements, Mr. Minister, would you consider eliminating that regulation?

Mr. Knight: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes a very good observation. That is, in fact, backed up by the Fishing Phile, written by the venerable Bob Scammell, that indicates that this should be looked at. The department, of course, is committed to improving Alberta's fisheries through a variety of initiatives. This happens to be one that was undertaken in probably 2002, 2004. I would say to the hon. member . . .

The Speaker: We'll keep setting out the lure.

Dr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, will the minister consider relaxing the regulations at least for younger fishermen so that we can get them involved in the sport of angling?

Mr. Knight: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, the business of relaxing regulations: I don't think that's exactly what the member would suggest that we should do. As long as the regulations and the conservation efforts that are put forward by our department and by all anglers in the province of Alberta are maintained, I think that there's adequate opportunity to bring younger anglers into the sport in Alberta.

Dr. Brown: Can the minister advise the House what he's doing to encourage young kids to get out fishing and to join in the sport of angling?

Mr. Knight: A number of things, Mr. Speaker, but I think the one that we might look at as an outstanding piece of work is that, you know, we've got a number of educational opportunities. We stock a lot of bodies of water in the province with fish. There is good opportunity, I think, for youngsters to be involved. The Bow Habitat Station in Calgary is probably one of the major pieces that we do that helps educate youngsters relative to the angling industry.

The Speaker: I could declare a recess, and we could all go fishing for the next few days. Of course, the Government House Leader could propose a motion that we take the next week off to go fishing, too.

That was 18 members who were recognized today, with 108 questions and answers. In a few seconds from now we'll continue with the Routine, with part of Members' Statements. We'll continue in about 20 seconds from now.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Calgary Ring Road

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Infrastructure keeps a city moving and its economy growing while giving its people the means to pursue a high standard of living. Projects such as the Calgary airport tunnel ensure that communities are able to thrive and prosper. But it's not enough to simply build a tunnel or an intersection or a bridge or a road. These projects need to be done the right way, in the right place, and at the right time.

All of this is especially true when it comes to Calgary's ring road. For three full decades this government has failed to come to an agreement with the Tsuu T'ina Nation, preventing the south-west portion of the ring road from being constructed. So now as an alternative this government is back to considering the five options of their plan B, the best known of which involves going either under or over the ecologically sensitive Weaselhead natural area, an important green space for our growing city.

Mr. Speaker, this is no solution. This government must find a way to bring the Tsuu T'ina Nation back to the negotiating table so that the Sarcee Trail extension can move forward with minimal environmental impact as well as achieving a positive economic impact for the Tsuu T'ina. It's time to breathe new life into plan A and get moving on the only real viable option for Calgarians. Completing the Calgary ring road will provide immeasurable benefits to the city and to the province. It will improve quality of life, economic opportunity, and even environmental benefits as vehicles merely passing through Calgary won't have to waste time stuck in the city, burning fuel while idling at stop lights.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Premier and his ministers to complete this project in a timely manner without damaging the Weaselhead. Our city must grow, but it must do so with respect for the environment and sensitivity towards the delicate ecological balance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Kidney Day

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak about World Kidney Day, being celebrated on this, the 10th of March. World Kidney Day aims to raise awareness about our kidneys' role in maintaining our overall health and wellness and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and related health problems world-wide.

The theme of this year's World Kidney Day is Protect Your Kidneys, Save Your Heart, reminding people that kidneys play a key role in the regulation of blood pressure, filtering the blood, and bone health, to name only a few. Amazingly, the kidneys filter a litre of blood in the body every minute, removing waste, regulating blood pressure, and balancing the body's chemicals. The kidneys often exhibit the first signs of larger health problems,

including diabetes and hypertension. They are, in essence, our body's smoke alarms.

These are issues that affect a growing number of Canadians. More than 22,000 people in Canada are on dialysis, and almost 160,000 are living with transplanted kidneys. In Alberta an estimated 1,900 people are on dialysis. One-quarter of all Albertans will experience some loss of kidney function after they reach the age of 65.

While the health implication issues such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and kidney failure are obvious, there's also a high cost to treating kidney failure in Canada. While only .1 per cent of patients in Canada suffer from chronic kidney disorder, nearly 2 per cent of Canada's health spending goes towards dealing with this disorder. Maintaining healthy kidneys and being aware of their importance to our overall health will produce a cascade effect that can only benefit Alberta's health system in the long run.

On this World Kidney Day I encourage all Albertans to be active, to make healthy food choices, to cut back their sodium intake, and to work to reduce their blood pressure. Mr. Speaker, these conscious efforts will go a long way in ensuring that all Albertans live a long and enjoyable high quality of life.

Presenting Petitions

Dr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Standing Committee on Private Bills I request leave to present the following petitions that have been received for private bills under Standing Order 98(2):

- (1) the petition of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties for the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Amendment Act, 2011;
- (2) the petition of the Galt School of Nursing Alumnae Society of Alberta for the Galt Scholarship Fund Transfer Act;
- (3) the petition of the Auburn Bay Residents Association for the Auburn Bay Residents Association Tax Exemption Act;
- (4) the petition of the Cranston Residents Association for the Cranston Residents Association Tax Exemption Act;
- (5) the petition of the New Brighton Residents Association for the New Brighton Residents Association Tax Exemption Act;
- (6) the petition of the Tuscany Residents Association for the Tuscany Residents Association Tax Exemption Act; and
- (7) the petition of Glenn McNamara, Chair of the Board of Governors of Hull Child and Family Services, for the Hull Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2011.

[The Speaker in the chair]

2:50

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 34(3.1) to advise the House that on Monday, March 14, 2011, Written Question 9 will be dealt with and Motion for a Return 2 will be accepted.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Bill 204

Justice System Monitoring Act

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce Bill 204, the Justice System Monitoring Act, on behalf of my colleague from Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Speaker, there's a famous saying: justice delayed is justice denied. Too often when it comes to serious crimes, victims' suffering is compounded by long, drawn-out court cases. In the rarest cases in which innocents are charged, every extra day it takes to clear their name is a travesty. While the Criminal Code is a federal matter, this province is responsible for administering justice. Simply put, Alberta's Justice department needs to do a better job of ensuring that court cases are handled in a reasonable amount of time. It is not only victims that suffer from delays; our remand centres are overflowing and prosecutorial staff are overworked. Something practical and tangible needs to be done. As with most things, the first step towards making improvement is understanding the problem and then measuring your progress.

Bill 204 would mandate the Justice department to track and present statistics on various measures of efficiency, including length of time from laying a charge until verdict, total time of court hearings in a case, length of time between reporting an offence and laying a charge, number of delays exceeding three months, number of prosecutors involved on each file, number of adjournments granted, number of trials that begin on their designated day, approximation of costs of delays in terms of peace officers and prosecutors as well as witnesses, victims, and jurors.

While respecting the personal information of those involved, this bill will cast light on our justice system and better enable all Albertans to understand where the efficiencies in the system are. It will also provide a baseline from which the government can tangibly report progress. The ministry will have six months after the calendar year-end to present a report online providing the statistics outlined in the act. If the House is not sitting, the report must be tabled within 15 days of the next sitting.

These reasonable measures will ensure that the public, the House, and the Minister of Justice are all aware of the state of our justice system and that there is an ongoing dialogue about where improvements need to be. Victims of crime as well as those falsely accused deserve verdicts as swiftly as possible. Bill 204 is an important step in that direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 204 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Olson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a letter that I wrote to the Member for Calgary-Buffalo regarding the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act and the Chief Electoral Officer's role in reviewing possible contraventions of that act.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Solicitor General.

Mr. Oberle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of the Law Enforcement Review Board's annual report for the year 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As per the standing orders I'm tabling the requisite number of copies of a letter I've mailed to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of the advisory task force report Building Financial Capacity for School Board Trustees and Superintendents. As chair of the task force I've brought together stakeholders from the Alberta School Boards Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, and the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta to review school board budget systems and processes as well as the financial oversight. I'd like to thank all those stakeholders for their tireless work on this particular task force.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of three documents which deal with barbless hooks and angling. The first of these is an article from the August 2010 issue of the *Alberta Outdoorsmen*. The article is titled Mandatory Barbless: Good for Fish or Gormless Boondoggle, by Bob Scammell. The author points out that the scientific data does not support the ban on barbed hooks and that lots of enforcement time is wasted on unnecessary regulation.

The second is an article entitled Effect of Hook Type on Mortality, Trauma, and Capture: Efficiency of Wild Stream Trout Caught by Angling with Spinners, authored by Robert DuBois and Richard Dubielzig of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It's published in the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* and indicates that a biological advantage with the use of single- or barbless-hook spinners with wild stream is not justified.

The third article is titled Barbed Hook Restrictions in Catch-and-Release Trout Fisheries: A Social Issue, by D. J. Schill and R. L. Scarpella from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, published in the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*, which concludes that managers proposing new regulations should consider the social costs of regulations such as barbed hook restrictions that produce no demonstrable biological gain.

The Speaker: Ordinarily I draw to the attention of the member the length of the statement with respect to the tablings. This being such an intriguing subject, I just couldn't bring myself to do it.

Mr. Anderson: A very intriguing subject as is this, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of tablings today and I'll try to work through them as quickly as possible.

The first is the Thursday, March 3, 2011, copy of the *Calgary Sun*. The front of it has a picture of the federal building, House-Poor Idea, of course, referring to the waste of the federal building, \$115 million this year.

The second is the *Edmonton Sun*, one of the favourites of all blue-collar workers around the province. I love the *Sun* as well. It's entitled The Money Pit. A very interesting article there.

There's also an editorial, again from the *Calgary Sun*, called Expensive Symbols of Our Discontent, outlining how this was a gross mismanagement of taxpayer funds at this time.

There is a further editorial, also March 8, from the *Calgary Sun*, called MLAs Play and We Pay. Again it talks about the utter waste of taxpayer dollars on the federal building at a time of deficits and increasing debt.

Also, going out to rural Alberta, we have an article entitled What Will We Do When the Piggy Bank's Empty? A fantastic article there on the federal building and the gross waste and mismanagement of funds by not delaying that project.

There's also Canadian Newsstand, which also goes out to many rural papers. Budget 2011: A Sea of Red Ink. It goes through many of the wastes with regard to the federal building.

We have the *Vegreville Observer* right in the Premier's home riding, I think that is. New MLA Offices Not a Priority. Again it's an editorial saying how much of a waste this project in the federal building is.

Then, of course, we have another Sun Media article on March 3: MLAs' \$275M Home Blasted. It goes through and essentially savages the government on their gross mismanagement and wasteful spending on the federal building.

We also have one of my favourite papers, the *Airdrie City View*. Again an editorial saying that the renovations, the \$275 million, to the federal building, were a complete utter waste and something that should not have been a priority for the government.

I have 30 or 40 more of these, but I will wait to table them maybe on another day. Thank you.

The Speaker: I'm always amazed when a member stands up and says "I'll be brief," and then takes seven minutes to be brief.

Hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, do you want to continue your legacy?

Mr. Chase: Yes, I do.

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I sincerely hope the government will inform members of the opposition prior to the demolition of the Annex.

Mr. Speaker, I am tabling e-mails from the following individuals who are seeking the preservation of the Castle wilderness and believe clear-cutting, otherwise known as block cuts, will damage the ecology, watershed, wildlife, and natural species and must be prohibited at all costs: Clark Davis, Sue Allen, Jenifer Guillemain, Jane Stanley, Claudette Chase, Marlene Osterberg, Matt Hornland, Shawna Trudel, Judy Wright, Marg Sutton, Tanya Brunelle, Amanda Doyle, Janice Cook, Randal Clark, Kerry Pitt, Craig Hall, Nick Aikins, Wendy Glossop, Kathy Ponto, Angela Wiens, Alain Robert, Lyn Schwarz, Pamela Gordon, Kirk Miles, and Mintje Jacobson.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:00

The Speaker: I think, hon. members, Standing Order 7(7) now kicks in. It says, "At 3 p.m. the items in the ordinary daily routine will be deemed to be concluded and the Speaker shall notify the Assembly." Shall I call Orders of the Day?

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 9

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2011

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Mr. Snelgrove: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today and move third reading of Bill 9, Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2011.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to read *Hansard*, but I also like to read supplementary

supply estimates. After question period I had time to do that, hon. member, and I have more questions for you.

An Hon. Member: You do?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. There are lots of questions in here. My first question would be, of course, the Treasury Board minutes that are referred to in the supplementary supply document, not in the bill but in the estimates. For a government that claims that they're open and transparent and accountable, why can I not go to the library downstairs and look up the details of each and every Treasury Board minute?

I'm just going to pick one, for instance, in Service Alberta for 10 and a half million dollars, Treasury Board minute 47/2010. Why is that so difficult for taxpayers to have access to? That would be one. Transportation: I have more questions on the Transportation adjustment here in a moment, but there's a Treasury Board minute, 41/2010, where there is an adjustment of \$205 million. I would appreciate the details. I think taxpayers would appreciate the details. Treasury Board minutes are not public documents, and I must say that I was surprised and disappointed to learn that. I just naturally assumed they would be public documents if one knew where to look, but that's not the case.

Now, to the hon. minister. The adjustments to the gross amount include an increase of \$306 million as a result of an approved carryover of 2009-10 unused capital investment appropriations, and this is according to the Financial Administration Act. Most of it is in Transportation. There's some in Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Sustainable Resource Development, Solicitor General and Public Security, Service Alberta, and \$66 million in Infrastructure. I assumed after reading this that this was transferred forward to these estimates, and I cannot find those amounts. The unused amount was carried over. Carried over to where? If I could have, Mr. Speaker, an explanation on that, I surely would appreciate it. That's a significant amount of money.

I know in the health care budget, certainly, \$300 million: what do we care if we can't find it? That's sort of the attitude over there. I know the Treasury Board president doesn't share that view. He would look after every nickel, every dime, every quarter, and every dollar. I have confidence in that. But other ministers: I don't have the same confidence. I just don't. I read the Auditor General's reports, and I think to myself: my, still in cabinet?

Now, Mr. Speaker, with Bill 9 this side of the House has certainly reviewed the budget for Aboriginal Relations that's requested and for Advanced Education and Technology. I would like to note with Advanced Education and Technology that I was surprised last week to receive a call from an unemployed apprentice who was endeavouring to become an electrician. This young man made many trips to NAIT, many trips early in the morning, to get in the lineups to see if he could take a class, and he could not. We're looking at – and I'm a little skeptical on this one – a labour shortage right now. There are so many people in this province who want to get training or additional training who cannot. They can't seem to get access to the system. I'm curious as to how we are deploying our financial resources in Advanced Education. It seems to me quite odd that individuals who are unemployed and who want to upgrade their skills seem to be having such difficulty accessing the classroom of their choice.

We talked in committee on Children and Youth Services. We talked about Culture and Community Spirit. I read in *Hansard* what other hon. members had to say about the Culture and Community Spirit request, and I have nothing to add.

Now, Employment and Immigration. We have certainly gone over that. Environment, Infrastructure, Municipal Affairs, Seniors

and Community Supports, Service Alberta, Sustainable Resource Development, and Tourism, Parks and Recreation, of course, looking for a \$300 million amount. That may not seem like much. One can read off those names of various departments, and what is it? It's three-quarters of a billion dollars. Oh, well, we missed the mark again. There are some valid reasons for these requests, but there are some that I'm a little skeptical of. I'm a little skeptical. Yes?

Mr. Liepert: It's the first time you've ever been skeptical.

Mr. MacDonald: I never was skeptical, Mr. Speaker, until I read the 2008-09 Health and Wellness annual report, signed off by a certain hon. member of this Assembly. What is said in the audited statements is certainly not repeated in the minister's, if I can call it, brag book section. A brag book section: that's the first part of an annual report, where we talk about performance measures and we try to meet the general accounting standards and we have the minister's speech. Yes, hon. member, I am skeptical, and I'm skeptical for a number of reasons.

With that report in question, 2008-09, I would be skeptical for \$69 million reasons because I for a number of days have had a great deal of difficulty trying to balance what's in one part of that annual report and what's in another. So there, Mr. Speaker, would be my reasons for being skeptical of this government's overall ability to manage money and budget so that we do not have such an issue each and every year with supplementary supply.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate an explanation at some point from the government members about the adjustments that are noted on page 7 in the estimates, which are formulated in this bill. If I could have an explanation of where precisely that \$306 million that's carried over goes. Is it into general revenue, is it into the next year, or where? I would appreciate that.

Thank you.

3:10

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona now becomes the third speaker in this debate. The speaking time now is 15 minutes, and 29(2)(a) is available at the conclusion. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise to speak briefly to Bill 9 and the elements that it contains. In general, I mean, this is a bill, of course, that's geared towards accessing additional funds from those that were initially planned for in the budget of 2010-11. There are certainly reasonable grounds, in certain cases, for when the government would have to be coming back to us for more funds, depending on whatever sort of unpredictable situation arises. However, I would suggest that most of the places where they're coming back to us for more money are places that were actually quite predictable.

I'm not necessarily disagreeing with some of the requests that are coming forward. Some of them are of concern to me, but many of them I don't disagree with. What I do disagree with is this notion of trying to pretend that these cost pressures have gone away and then underbudgeting the need for this expenditure, disrupting the planning accordingly, and then coming back to this Legislature seeking more income.

It seems to me that this arises primarily from the political liability associated with introducing a budget that has a deficit which is bigger than members of the government believe is politically palatable. Fair enough, you know. As, certainly, myself and my colleague from Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood have stated repeatedly in this Legislature, our party actually has the best record

in the country for introducing the greatest number of balanced budgets over the last 25 years, so I understand the value of introducing a balanced budget. That's a valuable thing, and it's what Albertans and taxpayers expect.

I would suggest that rather than underestimating the resources that are necessary to meet the needs and the expectations of Albertans, instead what needs to happen is that the government needs to more responsibly look at its revenue side of the budget. In particular, the government needs to look at collecting the fair share of royalties that are owed to Albertans as a result of the exploitation of resources which belong to Albertans.

This government has over the course of the last five years actually reduced quite significantly the amount of money that Albertans collect and enjoy as a result of oil company utilization of our oil and gas resources. In so doing, they then create a false pressure to reduce spending in order to balance the budget. Then we get into this situation where they, in fact, claim that they're reducing spending, which anybody would reasonably expect could not be done. So we get into the situation where a year later we're looking at trying to have the Legislature approve this spending of additional funds. As I said, I'm not necessarily opposed in all cases to the spending of additional funds, but I am opposed to this pattern of budgeting and the complete unwillingness on the part of government members to collect a fair return for Albertans on our oil and gas resources.

Having said that, there are a few areas within the supplementary supply estimates that I have some concerns with. The first relates, of course, to the additional funding that's being requested by the ministry of advanced education in the form of an additional roughly \$60 million for student loans. It's worth noting that a mere two years ago this government was coming to us looking for roughly \$130 million for student loans. If we pass this bill, we will look at actually expending \$260 million for student loans.

What that represents is a significant and profound increase in the debt load that we are shifting to the shoulders of students in this province. That is happening for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is this government's failure to honestly address the need for tuition freezes as they impact students. They suggest that they are kind of freezing tuition in relation to the cost-of-living formula, but then, of course, they're letting institutions willy-nilly go out and come up with arrangements around those freezes in order to increase the costs shouldered by students in the form of noninstructional fees. Notwithstanding that there were suggestions that they wouldn't allow that to go ahead, it clearly is going ahead at, you know, 70 to 80 per cent of the rate which was first proposed. That's going ahead, and that's creating more pressure for our students. Obviously, the institutions themselves in many cases need that extra money.

Then the question becomes: is this government truly interested in investing in a greater level of education for its citizens in order to fund this transition into what we hope someday will be a new economy, a knowledge-based economy, using the government's language here, or are we just interested in saying that we're going to do that and then making students shoulder unnecessary levels of financial burden?

Quite frankly, in many cases what it will do is ensure that only those students who come from families that are comfortable with taking on \$60,000, \$70,000, or \$100,000 debts in order to finish their education will go to university, only the kids from those families. Kids from families that are not comfortable with taking on that kind of debt, usually because they are lower income families, working-class families, will no longer have unfettered equal access to our systems of advanced education, which we should be encouraging in this province if we are truly going to educate our

workforce. What I see, then, in this extra ask in this bill for advanced education is a clear decision to move the cost for advanced education onto the shoulders of only those students that can afford it, and that's a concern.

In aboriginal affairs I had a question that we discussed in estimates, but I do believe it actually relates to the year passed, which would then be appropriate for this conversation. Under the First Nations development fund, which is the lottery fund, which I understand is actually coming in under budget – and we see that in this bill – I had noted that there appeared to be some reporting inconsistencies in that one particular band appeared to have received a total of about \$30 million from the First Nations development fund, yet the online listing of recipients of the funds from that fund only showed about \$20 million of what those dollars were used for. So there appeared to be about a \$10 million gap, and I'm inquiring as to whether this \$8 million shortfall that is related to that is somehow related to that misreporting. It's just a question. Certainly, any light that can be shed on that would be appreciated.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Obviously, as well, one of the areas that we have a significant concern about is the area of Employment and Immigration. I recall very clearly two years ago and last year sitting in the budget discussion with the Minister of Employment and Immigration and suggesting that their plans to reduce funding for income support programs were very poorly thought out, that it was clear that the demand on those programs was going to increase, and that as a result of the economic slowdown more and more people were going to need to access those funds. Those concerns were ignored, and we went ahead with a budget that clearly underestimated the demand on those line items.

Once again and for the second year in a row, maybe even the third year, we are back in this House seeking more funds for income support programs. I'm concerned when the government does that. Clearly, there is still a need for this, and I am very concerned about what kind of institutional gatekeeping and pressure on applicants has occurred in order to reduce the number of applications and reduce what is coming back into this House. On one hand, we see that the ministry clearly doesn't have a good sense of what the pressures are out there; on the other hand, we see that they have a tremendous desire to dramatically decrease the level of income support provided.

So I certainly worry that what we've actually got is some pretty significant examples of institutional gatekeeping as far as people's access to these programs when they need them. You know, I am concerned that that's the case. Why wouldn't we simply acknowledge what the best guess is in terms of providing proper support for Alberta's lowest income citizens rather than consistently overestimating the amount to which the demand for that will decrease? To me that just doesn't seem like good planning. It doesn't seem like responsible financial management.

3:20

Another area which I'm concerned about as well is the Ministry of Environment. We see that, in fact, we're looking to have more money paid out in that ministry, but that is primarily due to a legal settlement. The settlement was greater than what the ministry is coming back to us for because the ministry has found additional savings within itself on the operating side of their budget. In particular, they have found an additional almost \$8 million in environmental assurance, which, of course, includes monitoring. I'm really quite concerned because last year this ministry cut about \$18 million for monitoring. Now what I see is that they

didn't actually cut \$18 million; they cut \$25 million. This was in the same year that we had all these independent, third-party scientists come out and clearly identify that the government is not doing its job on this issue, that they are breaching their trust with Albertans, that they are letting Albertans down day in and day out in terms of failing to properly monitor the environmental implications of increased development, in particular in the oil and gas sector although not exclusively.

Then, of course, we have now the spectre of government keeping that line item stable and static at the same time that they anticipate significant increases in industrial activity as part of their predicted revenue streams, not an increase in the rate of what they're collecting, certainly – we couldn't possibly have that – but an increase in the amount of industrial activity. Yet we have no corresponding increase in environmental protection. What this bill does is that it essentially has this Legislature approving after the fact additional cuts made to environmental monitoring last year above and beyond what the minister brought before us when we first looked at this budget. In the current context of the complete lack of credibility of our environmental monitoring system both provincially and internationally I am very, very concerned that this Legislature would now be asked to condone mid-year additional cuts in this very, very, very important ministry. That's a concern to our caucus.

The last area that I want to talk about really quickly is the area of Seniors and Community Supports. This relates to an issue that I had started to discuss with the minister in that area but, of course, didn't get through because estimates are so ridiculously short in this province. In this what we've got here is the minister coming to us for approval for expenditure of an additional \$39 million for the ASLI programs. That's great unless you identify that, in fact, last year the minister came to us suggesting that we were going to spend an extra \$75 million on affordable living accommodations for seniors. An extra \$75 million, not \$39 million but \$75 million.

Of course, this was raised through the bond issue that the government came up with last year. We didn't spend all \$75 million last year. We only spent \$39 million last year. That's fine. There's a good reason for that, but what that means, of course, is that going forward, we should anticipate an additional \$36 million in this year's budget. Now, in this year's budget we don't actually have \$36 million; we have \$75 million. What we should have is \$86 million. What it means is that the government has cut quite significantly its investment in affordable living spaces for seniors as a result of having issued the bonds last year. Basically, what this shows is that they issued the bonds, and they asked Albertans to pay for the bonds and said that that would provide for our seniors, but we've actually just taken other money away from it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions. Any hon. members wishing to take part?

Seeing none, any others wishing to speak on the bill?

The chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

Consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mr. Drysdale moved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To His Honour Colonel (Retired) the Honourable Donald S. Ethell, OC, OMM, AOE, MSC, CD, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate March 3: Mr. Hancock]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, do you want to speak on the throne speech?

Mr. Benito: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise today and respond to the Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. Before I share my thoughts on the merits of his speech, I would first like to thank His Honour for his service to our country. During his time with the Canadian Forces he served in some of the most dangerous regions on Earth. While there he brought with him our Canadian values of tolerance, freedom, and the rule of law. I thank him for his sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank our hon. Premier for his leadership and guidance. His stewardship of our province has enabled us to ride through the recent economic storm better than any other jurisdiction in Canada. I thank him for his vision.

In my mind the Speech from the Throne is highlighted by Bill 1, the Asia Advisory Council Act. As His Honour stated,

our province has relied heavily on a single customer, the United States, which buys about 85 per cent of our province's exports.

If Alberta is to grow to its greatest potential, we need to diversify our product development through technology and take advantage of other markets.

In simple terms, Mr. Speaker, Alberta needs to look beyond the United States for trading partners, and without a doubt the best place to look is the emerging economies of Asia. Nations like India and China are growing at an outstanding pace, and they will need the resources and skills that Alberta has to offer. Alberta is blessed with food, timber, and energy. These will be needed as the building blocks for these nations' growth.

Beyond these resources, Mr. Speaker, these nations will need the skills and expertise that Albertans have to offer. As is often stated, our people are our greatest resource, and it falls to a wise government to ensure that its people are as trained and as qualified as they can be. That is why I am optimistic about His Honour's words when he stated that "we will continue to beckon the world's best researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and investors to join us in areas of strength such as energy and the environment, biotechnology and bio-industries, and health research." Innovation, Mr. Speaker, and advancement of technology will be imperative to our future economy, but right now they will be imperative to the advancement of economies around the world and instrumental in connecting Alberta to the expanding global marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to touch briefly on His Honour's comments regarding infrastructure. As His Honour stated: "Infrastructure is a critical foundation for our province's future. It is an economic enabler and a driver of competitiveness, and it helps support the quality of life Albertans enjoy." That is why I'm so pleased to see that even during these challenging economic times this government has had the foresight to build. Alberta will return to economic prosperity, and when that happens, we will need schools, hospitals, and roadways. We must have the infrastructure in place that the people will need.

Building right now makes sense. Not only is the price of construction down, but spending now employs people when they need jobs the most. By not panicking and cutting spending carelessly, we have managed to mitigate the worst of the economic storm and keep people working. This is sound governance. Mr. Speaker, I

am pleased that His Honour's speech highlights this sound leadership, and I am excited to see what 2011 brings to the people of Alberta.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Lieutenant Governor for his touching words and for his service to the people of Canada. I would also like to again thank the Premier for his leadership and steady hand. With that, I will conclude my comments, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

3:30

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

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been looking forward to sharing my thoughts on the recent Speech from the Throne delivered by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. He is certainly a figure that all Albertans can be proud of, and I certainly share that sense of pride.

Having said that, residents here and residents of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo share that respect and pride. But I want to say that as the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo I do not share the same respect pertaining to the governing party relative to important issues. Specifically, I want to say that I talk to my constituents on a daily basis, and it's important to look at and reflect on the Speech from the Throne because my constituents feel, like many people, that we need to rescue important rights when it comes to the issue of where we go forward.

I want to proudly say that the people of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo have priorities that I think are so important, Mr. Speaker, and as we go forward, we must centre on important issues. Those are important issues that really capture the feeling and the spirit that the people of Fort McMurray, that Albertans are looking at. The big picture talks about: how do we have a important focus on Albertans? I believe that as we go forward, it's important to not lose sight of the people of all Alberta.

Most importantly, let us not forget the goose that is laying the golden egg. I believe that the goose that is laying the golden egg is in the oil sands area, and when it comes to the oil sands, the resources are coming from the area of Fort McMurray. I believe the oil sands are truly the goose that is laying the golden egg when it comes to this valuable resource, a resource that is so important. It is something that we proudly – proudly – contribute to the future for the benefit of all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, we all care deeply about the future and about what is next. I proudly can say that my wife and I are so interested in the future. Where we go forward is so important to the future. I will say as a proud father of a three-year-old son that we believe that future is so important. I say that as someone who is now just 50 years old, that that is so important, so important from the perspective of where we go forward.

I think all Albertans and all members of this House clearly believe that the future of Alberta was never more important than now. The issue is: where do we go from here? We all proudly want our province and Alberta to go forward in a manner that is so important to our future, and as we go forward, I sincerely say that I believe that we all care deeply about the future of Alberta in all parties, representing all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in the important area of my community of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo and its contributions. The resources that we have in Fort McMurray, called the oil sands, are so important. Consequently, I think all of us in this Assembly recognize the role that the oil sands play.

Now, it's interesting that when we talk about the oil sands, there have been issues relative to the oil sands. What's most important with the oil sands is the energy that it contributes to the rest of the world. So I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the oil sands are so important in contributing.

3:40

For instance, the issue of health care and the issue of seniors are important. The Speech from the Throne, that was tabled by His Honour, is something that we believe is so important to the rest of all of Canada.

Consequently, I believe that as we go forward, the big picture is simply this. Our real bosses – our real bosses – are Albertans. As our real bosses I think the issue of our seniors is so important to them. Our seniors are so important that it is my hope and my prayer that a long-term care centre will be built in Fort McMurray. I think all people across Alberta, especially our seniors, are people that we will never forget. Specifically, the long-term care centre in Fort McMurray is important so that at the end of the day we will treat with respect the seniors that, in fact, have built this province.

As we go forward, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we will not forget our seniors, who have built this province. Let's be proud of our seniors and never forget our seniors, who built this very province that we enjoy together, collectively, our children and our youth, seniors and young people, for the future that is so important. I believe we shall never forget historically the importance of our seniors.

The Deputy Speaker: We still have Standing Order 29(2)(a) for five minutes of comments or questions.

Seeing none, the chair shall now recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore on the throne speech.

Mr. Hinman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and address the throne speech. On behalf of the Wildrose Alliance caucus and our leader, Danielle Smith, I'd like to congratulate the Lieutenant Governor on the delivery of his first Speech from the Throne.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Speech from the Throne is to articulate government's vision for Alberta, but unfortunately this speech lacked vision entirely. It did nothing to eliminate the wasteful spending that has been a hallmark of this government. It did nothing to reverse the record deficits that this government has fallen into as a result of irresponsible spending. The already meagre savings of our resource-rich province are being vaporized by this government's spending addiction, and their only solution is to hope that they can save this by another royalty boom.

This government's first bill, a bill that's supposed to set the tone for the rest of the session, was the establishment of a committee to discuss trade with Asia. Mr. Speaker, whether this government's grand vision for our province is to host a geography lesson for the cabinet or whether it's an economic lesson to find out where the Asian tiger is at, we're in serious trouble.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. The Wildrose caucus is not here solely to point out the failures of this PC government. We are here to offer meaningful alternatives to what we see now. We have an alternative vision for where this province needs to go, a vision where Albertans want to go, and our vision is one where Albertans can trust their government to ensure that health care is accessible, our finances are stable, our environment is cared for, and our property and democratic rights are respected.

Before elaborating on that vision, I want to make one thing clear. While we believe Albertans are ready for a change and that only a new party can offer the change that Albertans want, the

members of the Wildrose caucus are committed first and foremost to representing our constituents. In doing so, we will support the government when they bring forward good legislation, and we are committed to working with them to find solutions that we can all be proud of. That said, like most things this government has done in recent years, this Speech from the Throne was a disappointment for us. We did not see meaningful steps towards fixing our broken health care system or our ailing democratic system, nor did we see any meaningful recognition that past mistakes were made with regard to property rights.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a bit about our vision for Alberta, about some of the things that were missing from the throne speech. The Wildrose vision for Alberta is one to prioritize Albertans' rights and needs rather than the government's wants. Rather than being about government entitlements, we see a government that focuses on what the people of Alberta are entitled to. It is a vision that seeks to root out the mismanagement we see throughout our provincial government and replace it with a government that is not only competent but which is truly accountable and transparent.

Our vision is for a successful and vibrant Alberta, one where business enjoys a clear competitive advantage over other jurisdictions instead of receiving failing grades for the regulatory burden our government inflicts on entrepreneurs.

Ours is also one where the environment is meaningfully protected for the future. Our land will be better protected by respecting those closest to it, the landowners and municipal authorities. Our air can be helped by ensuring that pollution is reduced and that a natural gas strategy is adopted. In addition to ensuring our rivers are clean, the Wildrose will remedy the growing water problem in the south by implementing a strong water storage plan.

Ours is a vision of Alberta where property rights for individuals are sacred instead of one where the system is systematically ignored or rights are even extinguished. Bills like 19, 24, 36, and 50 would be repealed, and land-use planning would ensure that locally elected councils are where the decision-making authority would lie.

It is not only in land-use planning that local autonomy would be respected but also with school boards, hospitals, PDD delivery, infrastructure, parks, pore space. Over the last few years this government has embarked on a shocking crusade to concentrate as many powers as possible around the cabinet table. In the Westminster system there is already a tremendous amount of power in the executive. Here in Alberta we have a big legislative majority on the government side, where the Premier and cabinet go virtually unchallenged even from within the caucus. We have witnessed a few challenges followed by expulsion. The common saying I hear is: this is not the mountain to die on.

Here in Alberta there is a need for greater independence for municipal authorities and less direct interference from cabinet ministers in delivery of services, governance of land use, and other local matters. There is also a need for greater transparency in things like infrastructure spending. This government has been spending our savings in a mad rush to get MLAs to as many ribbon-cutting ceremonies as possible before the next election. Our vision includes a transparent and public infrastructure priority list so that infrastructure projects go forward on a community-needs basis, not strategic pork-barrelling and vote buying.

3:50

Albertans need to know if and when roads and schools will be built, and the construction industry deserves the stability that comes with long-term planning and prioritizing. This also includes

a funding regime for municipalities that allows the municipalities to determine the projects that deserve the highest priority. We would replace the Green TRIP fund with more independent and predictable municipal funding because a city's infrastructure decision should not require the satisfaction of the whim of the minister. The transportation needs of municipalities should be planned and administered by municipalities, not by the province. Whether it's education, infrastructure, or health care delivery, a Wildrose government would have fewer ministries, with less over-reaching powers, allowing for local decision-making by those most affected.

Our vision focuses on fiscal responsibilities, which we haven't seen in this province for some time. Savings funds would be added to rather than emptied. The heritage and sustainability funds were meant for a time when our natural resources could no longer provide the vast revenue streams that we now enjoy. It's true that the natural gas revenues have fallen, but the fact remains that oil is yielding more royalty revenues for this government each year. The result is that our royalties right now are relatively high compared to past standards and astronomically high compared to other provinces. While this government acts like Saudi princes who think that their money can never run out, they're vapourizing our savings and jeopardizing our future.

Like I said earlier, we need to respect the checks in our system to ensure executive powers do not get carried away. The biggest check is with the people. In our vision for Alberta democratic reform would play a major role. Citizens would be empowered to trigger referendums and to recall their members of the Legislature. Accountability, Mr. Speaker, would be a top priority for a Wildrose government instead of being just something to pay lip service to at election time.

Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to stand up for Albertans and govern responsibly. Reannouncing projects and writing legislation to hold committees is not what Albertans are asking for. People are literally dying because of the mismanagement of our health care system, and this government's Speech from the Throne did nothing to calm their fears. We are falling into a fiscal black hole, and this government is doing nothing for the future except praying for another royalty boom.

Danielle Smith and the Wildrose have a vision for Alberta to grow into. We know that centralizing planning and decision-making is wrong. We have a vision for a prosperous province, one that is full of opportunities for all Albertans, not just those with good political connections; an open and competitive market where government and public infrastructure is always tendered openly; a focus on health care; and democratic reform with recall, referenda, set election dates along with free votes. The entrenching of property rights is paramount.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will close with a vision of where this government is blind, and that is one of fiscal responsibility. One must live within one's budget, actually having the discipline to save for the future, creating an actual heritage fund that reaches \$100 billion or \$200 billion, where annual income could actually reduce other taxes in the province to ensure the Alberta advantage in the future. We hear on a daily basis from Albertans that they want a balanced budget. Yes, that means that you have to do a good job in prioritizing your spending, but we can do it, we will do it, and we look forward to serving Albertans in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comment or questions.

Seeing none, does any other member want to speak on the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a thrill for me to speak to the Speech from the Throne. I've prepared for this for a long time.

An Hon. Member: It better be good.

Dr. Taft: It should be good. That's right.

This speech, that was delivered on February 22, spends a fair bit of time on the economy, on investing in infrastructure, competitiveness, adding value to raw resources. It refers to gas and the oil sands and so on. I thought that I would address some of those issues, Mr. Speaker, but do it from a somewhat different perspective. It's a perspective of reality, actually, a perspective that's based on the best available data, provided by primarily Statistics Canada but by a number of other groups as well.

To start off, Mr. Speaker, if it had been a throne speech that we had delivered, we would probably recognize first of all what an incredibly prosperous place Alberta is and what a huge opportunity we have here.

I just want to read a few statements into the record, Mr. Speaker. On a per capita basis Alberta has one of the largest economies in the world: so said the TD bank in 2007. Alberta has a small population, equivalent to about metro Montreal or metro Seattle, and it's spread across an area about the size of Texas or France. It sits in one of the wealthiest, most stable countries on Earth, and we are next door to the largest economy in the history of the world, the United States.

What really sets us apart are the oil and gas resources of this province. On a per capita basis the people of Alberta through their government own the largest reserves of recoverable oil in the world – that's on a per capita basis – 51,900 barrels per person according to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and that was in 2007. One of the unique things about Alberta is that those reserves are actually increasing, unlike in most areas of the world. If you were to value that resource at \$80 a barrel, that's equivalent to over \$4 million per citizen. That's just oil resources. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we're one of the largest exporters of natural gas in the world. So it's not surprising that about half of this province's economy is directly or indirectly supported by oil and gas.

A couple of other pieces of information from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. A full 87 per cent of the world's known oil reserves are state owned or state controlled by countries like the members of OPEC and Russia. Only 13 per cent is openly accessible to international oil companies. Almost half of that accessible oil, 6 of the 13 percentage points, is in Canada's oil sands. Mr. Speaker, in other words, Alberta contains almost half of the entire world's oil reserves that are available for free market development. If private corporations are going to be in the oil business, sooner or later they're almost certain to come to Alberta.

As a result of this resource, in 2010 CAPP forecast that over a trillion dollars – that's a thousand billion dollars – will be invested in Canada's oil and gas industry over the next 25 years. So Alberta really has a supersized economy, Mr. Speaker, and it makes me wonder why so much of the discussion in this Assembly is about cutbacks and restraints and deficits when we should be talking about opportunities and savings and building up our heritage fund and so on.

A couple of other pieces of information. This is information from the TD Bank Financial Group, from a pretty well-known study they did in 2007 on the northern tiger, the Calgary-Edmonton corridor. The Calgary-Edmonton corridor enjoyed a \$15,000 U.S. advantage in GDP per person over the United States. That's in 2007. That's pre-recession, when the U.S. economy was booming and Alberta's economy was actually generating \$15,000

per person more than the Americans. Alberta's GDP per capita is larger than every country in the world except Luxembourg.

Here's something that TD also identified, which I've done some work to develop a bit, Mr. Speaker. This doesn't come up often. Corporate profits – corporate profits, not investment, not revenues – as a share of our economy in Alberta were 22.8 per cent. In other words, almost one-quarter of Alberta's entire economy went to corporate profits, not to government, not to personal income, not to capital investment but to corporate profits. Now, if that seems high to any of the members here, 22.8 per cent, it is. If you look at other provinces, it's about 12 per cent. If you look at the United States, in a good year in the U.S. about 12 per cent of their economy goes to corporate profits. More typically it's running at 9 or 10 per cent.

4:00

Alberta's economy is producing for corporations profits at more than double the level of what's normal in the U.S. or other provinces. That's something we need to think about. Is that sustainable? No. Is it smart? Well, it's great if you're an investor in a corporation in Alberta, but if you're a citizen of this province thinking long term, maybe we want to say: "Hmm. Is that the way to build the future?"

With that information in mind, then, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a few questions. I'm going to start by just trying to address the common sound bite that's thrown out there – we hear it from the third party constantly and frequently from the government – that public-sector spending in Alberta is out of control, that it's soaring, that it's going to bankrupt us all, that we have to cut taxes further or cut royalties more, or we have to cut services. The truth is that once you adjust for inflation and our booming population, that's just not the case.

I spent some time with a couple of economists from the U of A running through the Statistics Canada data, which is pretty readily available, actually, adjusting for our growing population and adjusting for inflation. The Statistics Canada data runs over 20 years. It's available province by province from 1989 up until 2008.

What did we find? Well, once you adjust for inflation and population growth, believe it or not, average spending by Alberta's provincial government in the period 2004 to 2008 was 3.7 per cent lower than it was for the five-year average for 1989 to 1993. In other words – and this was 2004 to 2008, before the brakes were on at all on government spending – we were still spending less than we were 20 years ago. That's not out-of-control spending. All of our incomes are up. Corporate profits have soared.

But if you really look at the trends, government spending is flat. Actually, I shouldn't say flat, Mr. Speaker, because if you plot the annual spending on a yearly basis, it looks a little bit like a roller coaster ride. From 1989 to 1993 it was just over \$8,000, between \$8,000 and \$8,500. Then in 1993 with the election of Ralph Klein there was a dramatic cut. It bottoms out in about 1998. It climbs rapidly from that natural gas boom.

There's a bit of a spike in 2001, which, coincidentally, was the year of a provincial election. We'll all remember the cheques that were mailed out to everybody, I think, over the age of 16 – wasn't it? – in Alberta. Maybe it went to everybody. Maybe it went to every last citizen of Alberta. Yeah. So there's a huge billion-dollar spike in spending on that. As well, there was a very generous settlement with the nurses that actually threw the health care system right across the country out of sync because it was so generous, and it had to be followed up with a generous settlement with the doctors. So you see a real spike there in conjunction with the election in 2001.

Then it tails off a bit, and it climbs up finally in 2008 – and these, I should say, are all standardized to a currency of 2002 dollars to adjust for inflation – to just under \$9,000. So over those 20 years, it went up and down and up and down but showed no long-term trend of rising.

In fact, there are other measures, Mr. Speaker, which are important. Alberta's spending has shrunk as a portion of our overall economy. If we think of our economy as a pizza, 20 years ago it was a medium-sized pizza, and it's grown and grown and grown. It's an extra-large pizza, but you know what? Public services are still just getting two slices. They were getting two slices in 1989; they're still just getting two slices.

An Hon. Member: But they're bigger slices.

Dr. Taft: They're not bigger slices. They're the same slices. It's a bigger pizza.

The question is: who's eating the rest of the pizza? I tell you, there's some good news in here. To some extent personal incomes are up. In our economy personal incomes are up, so individuals are getting a somewhat bigger piece. But you know who's getting most of that pizza now? Corporate profits. That's what's happened.

We need to, I hope, through that information concede two things: first of all, that provincial spending, once you adjust for inflation and population growth, is virtually the same today as it was 20 years ago and that the incredible wealth of Alberta is actually flowing mostly into big business. I think we need to ask ourselves: where is that money going? I don't have that answer. You can't get the answer from the Statistics Canada information, but my hunch is that a huge amount of that money is flowing to Wall Street and Bay Street, right out of this province. I'm concerned. As a Legislature I would have liked this to be in the throne speech. I want to have stronger control as a government over the resources of this province, over the incredible wealth here, because we're going to wake up one day, Mr. Speaker, and the party will be over, and we'll be the last ones to realize that the money is all gone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm probably starting to run out of time. We did an analysis on a whole lot of other areas of spending. We looked closely at health care, and it revealed some very interesting questions. What it shows, actually, is that the biggest increase in health care by far has been not in hospitals and not in doctors and not in prevention. In fact, in all of those areas it's about the same as it was 20 years ago. A huge jump, starting in 1996, in what's called other services: administration, drugs, and contracted-out services. That's the only area there's been a real increase in spending.

Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have seen a throne speech that addressed these issues and was based on this kind of information, which is available. I think the challenge to all of us is to think long term, and I think we probably all want to do that. I think we need to have the backbone, as the former leader of the PC Party, Peter Lougheed, used to say: to think like owners. We own per capita the largest oil reserves on the planet. Are we being sharp? Are we being smart? Are we being assertive and aggressive? Or are we rolling over and playing patsy for the rest of the world? My goodness. We welcome in the government of Kuwait, the government of China, the government of Norway, the government of France, the government of Korea, the government of Thailand, and who knows who else to invest in our oil sands. We ourselves are too timid.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Yes. I was quite enjoying your conversation there. In particular, I had a chance to read through some of the research that you had done that formed the basis of that talk, and I'm wondering if you could tell members a little bit about some of the conclusions you came across with respect to the percentage of social spending and antipoverty spending as it relates to the share of the pie that's been going to corporate Alberta and, more likely, corporate U.S.A.?

4:10

Dr. Taft: That's a very interesting question, and I think it's telling. When we ran the numbers – you plot them on a graph, and a graph is essentially just a picture – sometimes the results were startling. I think for me the single most startling picture, maybe not quite – it was one of the most startling – was the one on social services spending per capita in 2002 dollars. We tracked that over 20 years. We didn't torque the numbers at all. We just took the straight Stats Canada data, adjusted for inflation and population growth. It's actually a dramatic picture because what it shows is that from 1989 until 1993 Alberta is spending \$1,500 to probably about \$1,800. It actually peaked in 1992-93 at about \$1,800, and we were above the Canadian average. This is spending on services for people living in poverty, for seniors, for people who are struggling to get through daily life.

Then from 1993 to '94 this line, that was trailing gradually up and above the Canadian average, just plummets. It's actually quite dramatic. The Member for Foothills-Rocky View is close enough to see how dramatic that line is. Alberta goes from the highest spender, or at least well above average, to dramatically lower than the Canadian average, in one year a 50 per cent decline, in fact, clearly, the lowest supports in the country for needy people, and it stays there. In one year it's cut in half. It goes from about \$1,800 to below \$1,000, and it sits there year after year after year.

Some members here, the Minister of Education and many others, will have heard me argue passionately for support for school meals. Let's feed our hungry kids, kids who go to school every day who are without a meal through no fault of their own. And you know what? I run into a stone wall. I run into a stone wall, and this graph, this information, reflects that. This province alone among the whole country won't put together a bit of money for school meal programs.

In contrast, you know, I want to give credit where credit is due. I think we need to understand reality. A reality-based throne speech would be nice. If we look at the education system, for all the controversies and issues around education I think most of us would admit Alberta has a pretty good education system. Well, if we look at funding for education, not only is it significantly more stable than funding for health care, but it's consistently, other than a very few years in the middle 1990s, just a little above the Canadian average. We can find it in our souls to be just a little bit more generous than others in supporting our education system, and I suspect that stability and that generosity goes a fair ways to explaining why our students consistently do among the best in the country.

I could go on about other issues, policing issues. I was surprised. Policing spending in Alberta actually comes out well below the national average. I didn't expect that. Environment spending is very erratic, up and down. It's often higher than average. Sometimes it's lower.

Anyway, numbers can tell a real story. They do reflect a reality, and it was a reality, as I say, that I could only wish was reflected in a throne speech.

Thanks.

Mr. Campbell: Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 11 Livestock Industry Diversification Amendment Act, 2011

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

Mr. Prins: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and move second reading of Bill 11, Livestock Industry Diversification Amendment Act, 2011.

The primary purpose of this amendment is to enable Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development to exercise full legislative authority for domestic cervids. At present legislative responsibility that deals with the regulation of farm cervids is shared by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, ARD, and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, SRD. SRD's current role pertains to the issuance of certain licences and permits in respect of farm cervids as identified in the Wildlife Act and wildlife regulations. Sustainable Resource Development is supportive of the initiative and has been working closely with ARD for this purpose.

Through these amendments to the Livestock Industry Diversification Act a one-window approach to dealing with domestic cervids will be created. In turn, this will reduce the regulatory burden upon both the industry and government in two ways: first, by streamlining processes and, secondly, by reducing unnecessary administrative duplication. These amendments also reflect a cultural shift in the domestic cervid industry that has occurred over the last 20 or so years, when the Livestock Industry Diversification Act was first written. Indeed, they reflect the application and adaptation of recognized modern agricultural practices to domestic cervid farming as a valid agricultural operation. As such, industry response has been overwhelmingly in favour of this transfer of responsibility, as was indicated to us through stakeholder consultation that took place in late 2010.

This act also has the potential to improve the economic diversification of rural Alberta. In addition to adding domestic cervids to the LIDA act, ARD seeks to broaden the scope of this act so as to have the future ability to regulate other nontraditional livestock species. It is important to note that there are no plans to make any legislative changes to the Livestock Industry Diversification Act as it relates to hunt farms in Alberta.

This amendment is an important step forward for both industry and government.

At this time I would like to move adjournment of debate on Bill 11. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 3 Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 2011

[Adjourned debate March 1: Mr. Rogers]

The Deputy Speaker: Opposition, do you want to speak first?

Mr. Hancock: With respect, Mr. Speaker, it's been moved, and now it's the Official Opposition critic who gets the next opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, please continue.

Dr. Taft: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just trying to surprise everybody and be courteous to the government here.

This particular bill, the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 2011, is I think probably worth supporting when we've had a look at it. It's not a bill that's going to change the course of history, but it's one that addresses some issues that are worth addressing. It would replace the current practice of geology and the practice of geophysics with a new consolidated practice of geoscience. That's perhaps a good thing. I think it reflects a broadening of our understanding of both geology and geophysics.

We would rename the act to the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act and rename the association that we know as APEGGA, just take out one of the Gs as it would turn out, and it would become the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta. I think it's worth noting here that APEGGA is a huge organization. It reflects what I was saying in my comments on the throne speech, the massive natural resources, particularly oil and gas, that we have in Alberta. As a result we have a huge number of engineers and geoscientists, as we'll be calling them now.

4:20

Geoscience won't just include geophysics and geology, but we're talking here about, for example, geochemistry. It's really a bill that keeps the language of the professions moving. It keeps in time with how the world is changing and how we're beginning to understand that all of these different fields are interrelated. They're all part of the same thing. In fact, you know, the geochemists will be working on, I suspect, fluids and chemicals that will be pumped into the ground for fracking. That fracking is led by geologists, and it has geophysical implications. In fact, I think I just heard the other day that Quebec or some of the American jurisdictions are raising concerns about fracking related to earthquakes, which seemed like a bit of a stretch to me, but maybe it's happening. You know what? I would want a geoscientist to give me information on whether that was true or not, so that's the kind of reason I'm supporting this bill.

Mr. Knight: Kevin, it's 20 after.

Dr. Taft: I'm getting good-natured support from the Minister of SRD.

I will conclude my comments, such as they are, just with a definition of geoscience from Penn State University. Pennsylvania is one of the first places that oil in substantial volumes was discovered in North America, and that's why we have Penn State oil in our racing cars.

Mr. MacDonald: Quaker State oil.

Dr. Taft: Quaker State oil. Sorry. I just watched the *Frost/Nixon* movie the other day, and I didn't realize that Richard Nixon was a Quaker. I'd forgotten that. [interjections] Focus. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

What is geoscience? Geoscience includes all the sciences (geology, geophysics, geochemistry) that study the structure, evolution . . .

Oh, maybe this is more controversial than I thought.

... and dynamics of the planet Earth and its natural mineral and energy resources. Geoscience investigates the processes that have shaped the Earth through its 4600 million year history and uses the rock record to unravel that history – it is concerned with the real world beyond the laboratory and has direct relevance to the needs of society.

Modern geoscience is founded on plate tectonic theory.

Now, Mr. Speaker, plate tectonic theory is something that Canadians should be very proud of. Plate tectonic theory was developed by a Canadian named Tuzo Wilson, a very famous Canadian. I don't think he won the Nobel prize. He might have; he should have. It's a great story about how he came to realize that the Earth's crust was divided into huge plates that moved and shifted against each other. It was one of those truly revolutionary theories. I just thought that was a note worth making.

Back to the definition of geoscience.

Modern geoscience is founded on plate tectonic theory which states that the outer part of the Earth (the lithosphere) is composed of a series of interlocking plates in relative motion. All geological processes such as mountain building ...

And we have beautiful mountains in Alberta.

... earthquake and volcanic activity are directly or indirectly related to the motions of the plates.

That's what geoscience is. This bill formalizes the place of geoscience in the laws of Alberta, and I like that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you. I will be brief but wanted to have a chance to get up and speak to this bill before it passed second reading. This is a bill that certainly on its face appears relatively benign. I guess the concern that we in the NDP caucus have is on what's driving this bill, and of course what's driving this bill is the desire of the government to accommodate the obligations under TILMA, which close followers of the proceedings of this House would know is not something that members of our caucus support.

It is a concern because one of the things that we were not supportive of that is a component of TILMA is this notion of potentially sort of a race to the bottom between various jurisdictions and also the capacity that TILMA has to expand the scope of business control over the authority of the Legislature. That arises from the structure of the language around TILMA in that it sets out that everything that's not specifically excluded from TILMA is included, which means that over time that which is included under TILMA grows and grows and grows. By including various matters under TILMA, then the ability of the public bodies to exercise the control, which is vested in them through our demo-

cratic system, over the activities of businesses under TILMA is slowly diminished over time, and for that reason we are not supportive of TILMA.

This bill is a bill that's being brought forward in an effort to streamline and facilitate the application of TILMA. I note, actually, that back when we were having debates about the application and the introduction of TILMA, it was, in fact, members of APEGGA who identified that they were concerned about the application of TILMA to their profession and concerned about what it would do to the ability of members of the Alberta profession of geologists, engineers, and geophysicists to control the quality of work when they were compelled to compete against similar organizations from other jurisdictions that weren't necessarily governed in the same way, that were not necessarily demanding the same quality of work out of their members. As a result they raised those concerns.

I'm not sure what the outcome of that was, and I'm not sure how this bill addresses those concerns or if it does address those concerns. I'd put on the record, though, that given its relationship to TILMA, we have some suspicions, and until such time as the sponsor of the bill is able to assure me that the original concerns identified by members of APEGGA have been addressed, then we will not be supporting this bill. But I'm certainly open to being convinced otherwise.

Those will be my comments for now. I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to speak about it. I do think it's an important issue because of the relationship of this bill to the slow, creeping application of TILMA to the affairs of Albertans both in the public and private sectors and the slow reduction of the public sector's ability to make decisions in the best interests of the population as opposed to simply being compelled to subject themselves to whatever business deals might be established under the auspices of TILMA. At the end of the day that does not make for good public policy. As a result this bill raises some concerns for us.

I certainly do await assurances from the sponsor of the bill that the concerns identified by APEGGA have been addressed and are no longer there, and certainly if that's the case, then, you know, we are open to reconsidering our position on the bill.

With that, I would like to move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, seeing as it's 4:30 and the normal adjournment hour, I guess I would move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

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

Bill Status Report for the 27th Legislature - 4th Session (2011)

Activity to March 10, 2011

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 Asia Advisory Council Act (Stelmach)**
First Reading -- 6 (Feb. 22 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 132-33 (Mar. 1 aft.), 189-95 (Mar. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 2 Protection Against Family Violence Amendment Act, 2011 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 133-34 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 3 Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 2011 (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 134-35 (Mar. 1 aft.), 313-14 (Mar. 10 aft., adjourned)
- 4 Securities Amendment Act, 2011 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 135 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 5 Notice to the Attorney General Act (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 18-19 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 136 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 6 Rules of Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2011 (Olson)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 23 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 136 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 7 Corrections Amendment Act, 2011 (Oberle)**
First Reading -- 73 (Feb. 28 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 137 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 8 Missing Persons Act (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 73 (Feb. 28 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 137 (Mar. 1 aft., adjourned)
- 9 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2011 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 113 (Mar. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 185-86 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 244-47 (Mar. 8 aft.), 254-57 (Mar. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 305-08 (Mar. 10 aft., passed)
- 10 Alberta Land Stewardship Amendment Act, 2011 (\$) (Knight)**
First Reading -- 122 (Mar. 1 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 247-54 (Mar. 8 aft.), 257-58 (Mar. 8 aft., adjourned)
- 11 Livestock Industry Diversification Amendment Act, 2011 (Prins)**
First Reading -- 208 (Mar. 7 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 313 (Mar. 10 aft., adjourned)

- 12 Alberta Investment Management Corporation Amendment Act, 2011 (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 208 (Mar. 7 aft., passed)
- 201 Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011 (Sandhu)**
First Reading -- 55 (Feb. 24 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 73-86 (Feb. 28 aft., passed)
- 202 Legislative Assembly (Transition Allowance) Amendment Act, 2011 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 55 (Feb. 24 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 209-24 (Mar. 7 aft., defeated on division)
- 203 Alberta Get Outdoors Weekend Act (Rodney)**
First Reading -- 152 (Mar. 2 aft., passed)
- 204 Justice System Monitoring Act (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 304 (Mar. 10 aft., passed)

Table of Contents

Prayers	293
Introduction of Guests	293
Statement by the Speaker	
Election Anniversaries.....	294
Members' Statements	
Alberta Business Awards of Distinction.....	294
Long-term Care	294
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	294
Childhood Obesity Initiatives	295
Community Chili Cook-offs in Calgary	295
Calgary Ring Road	303
World Kidney Day	303
Oral Question Period	
Emergency Medical Service Delays	295, 297
Water Quality Monitoring in the Oil Sands.....	296
Villa Caritas Geriatric Mental Health Facility.....	297
Safety in Psychiatric Facilities.....	298
Sundance Power Plant Unit Closures	298
Health Services Financial Reporting	298
Gas Station Leak in Bowness	299
All-terrain Vehicle Safety.....	299
Social Assistance Programs	300
Water Quality of the Athabasca River	300
Drug Shortages	300
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped.....	301
Support Programs for Doctors.....	301
Economic Recovery Initiatives.....	302
Forensic Pathologist Supply	302
Barbless Fish Hooks.....	303
Presenting Petitions	304
Notices of Motions	304
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 204 Justice System Monitoring Act.....	304
Tabling Returns and Reports	304
Orders of the Day	305
Government Bills and Orders	
Third Reading	
Bill 9 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2011	305
Consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech.....	308
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 11 Livestock Industry Diversification Amendment Act, 2011	313
Bill 3 Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 2011	313

If your address is incorrect, please clip on the dotted line, make any changes, and return to the address listed below. To facilitate the update, please attach the last mailing label along with your account number.

Subscriptions
Legislative Assembly Office
1001 Legislature Annex
9718 – 107 Street
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4

Last mailing label:

Account # _____

New information:

Name:

Address:

Subscription information:

Annual subscriptions to the paper copy of *Alberta Hansard* (including annual index) are \$127.50 including GST if mailed once a week or \$94.92 including GST if picked up at the subscription address below or if mailed through the provincial government interdepartmental mail system. Bound volumes are \$121.70 including GST if mailed. Cheques should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Price per issue is \$0.75 including GST.

Online access to *Alberta Hansard* is available through the Internet at www.assembly.ab.ca

Subscription inquiries:

Subscriptions
Legislative Assembly Office
1001 Legislature Annex
9718 – 107 St.
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4
Telephone: 780.427.1302

Other inquiries:

Managing Editor
Alberta Hansard
1001 Legislature Annex
9718 – 107 St.
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4
Telephone: 780.427.1875