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The 28th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, October 23, 2012

Issue 8e

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

First Session

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Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W),
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Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)
Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC),
Government Whip

Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 61

Wildrose: 17

Alberta Liberal: 5

New Democrat: 4

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Luan	Young
McDonald	Vacant
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Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Quest
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Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

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Casey	Xiao
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Hale	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: Good evening, everyone. Please be seated.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1

Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Oberle: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. It is an absolute honour to rise here tonight on behalf of the Premier and ask approval to introduce the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012, for second reading this evening.

Madam Speaker, as first responders thousands of brave and committed men and women across the province rise to the challenge when Albertans need them most. If we ever need the services of firefighters, police officers, sheriffs, or paramedics, we always feel secure in the knowledge that they will be never more than a phone call away.

These men and women often do their work in the most difficult of circumstances. Throughout the day they can face challenges that are beyond our wildest imaginations. They walk into burning buildings without knowing if they will walk out. They open doors without knowing if there is someone on the other side that may harm them. They struggle heroically to keep hearts beating and lungs working without knowing if they will win the race to the hospital. All too often they are confronted with horrific situations that can leave them psychologically wounded and scarred.

Police officers, firefighters, paramedics: the way these brave men and women continue working to save and protect Albertans after experiencing horrific situations is a testament to their resilience. Sometimes what they witness and experience is just too much to bear, and it begins to negatively affect their work and their personal lives. As strong as these men and women are, sometimes they need resources and support to function effectively in their personal lives and at work.

In the past we have asked first responders to defend their need for support and their assertion that what they have experienced is making it difficult or impossible to continue doing their jobs. To date we have required proof that what they are experiencing is a result of the work that they do. That approach lacks both understanding and compassion, and that is why today we are moving the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act to second reading.

We are bringing forward legislation that provides presumptive posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, coverage to over 27,000 first responders in Alberta. This legislation illustrates our understanding that experiencing trauma is a major component of a first responder's job. In fact, it's an expectation. It recognizes the reality of PTSD and the hardship and suffering it causes, Madam Speaker. In essence it is an acknowledgement that those who are psychologically injured providing help often need help themselves, and we are obligated to provide it.

As you know, a clear understanding of the severity of PTSD and its effects has emerged over the last decade, Madam Speaker. Posttraumatic stress disorder is an intense, emotional, and psychological response to a recent or past traumatic event that is

life threatening, very disturbing, or stressful. The effects of PTSD are varied. It can involve reliving a traumatic event through nightmares or flashbacks, it can create emotional numbness as an internal defence mechanism, or it can result in continually being on edge or easily startled.

As with physical ailments and injuries experienced in the workplace, Madam Speaker, PTSD causes real hardships to those who are experiencing it as well as their loved ones. Unlike a physical injury, however, PTSD can emerge weeks, months, or even years after the traumatic incident occurred. Not all wounds are visible. First responders regularly experience devastating trauma. Putting the onus on these courageous men and women to pinpoint which traumatic incident triggered their PTSD is an unreasonable demand. Presumptive coverage through Bill 1 is about lifting this burden from their shoulders and solidifying their workers' compensation coverage.

Although we know more about the devastating consequences of PTSD than ever before and have more resources available to help those that are suffering, we still have the stigma to overcome. Our first responders are brave, but they are humble, and they are trained to put the health and safety of others before their own. They are often hesitant to come forward with PTSD claims and what that could mean to their reputation, to their career, or to their loved ones.

This legislation must reflect that we understand the plight of first responders who are being affected by their traumatic experiences. It must also illustrate that PTSD is not something to be looked down upon or to be hidden. It must also show that we accept that a trauma that was experienced years before can surface at any time, but most importantly, Madam Speaker, it must show that we understand and value the work that first responders do and clearly show that we are grateful for the services that they provide. We want to support first responders with PTSD in whatever way we can so that they can move forward with their lives in a positive and healthy way.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that Bill 1 will be the strongest legislation to address PTSD in Canada. In May the government of British Columbia passed Bill 14, recognizing that a worker is entitled to compensation for mental disorders brought upon by work-related stresses. However, our bill will be the first in Canada to provide presumptive PTSD coverage for first responders. That means that the burden of proof will not be shouldered by these men and women when they need help to overcome the trauma they've experienced as a regular part of their work.

The focus of Bill 1, Madam Speaker, on the first responders is not to deny that other careers can cause stress and trauma. There are many strong, hard-working Albertans that could experience trauma in the span of their career. That is why the Workers' Compensation Act in Alberta already allows and will continue to allow any worker in Alberta to apply for PTSD coverage. This government understands that traumatic situations could happen anywhere. However, these are not necessarily an everyday occurrence for most Albertans. It's not an expectation of their jobs.

The legislation we bring forward today is to say that we understand that for first responders – our firefighters, our police officers, our paramedics and EMTs, and our sheriffs – experiencing trauma is a major and expected part of their work. Bill 1 is reflective of this government's ongoing commitment to the brave men and women who put their lives on the line so that we can enjoy ours, Madam Speaker.

Thank you. At this time I'd like to move adjournment of second reading of Bill 1.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Olesen moved, seconded by Mr. Luan, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To His Honour the Honourable Colonel (Retired) 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.

[Debate adjourned October 23]

The Acting Speaker: May I ask the next person that would like to speak in response to the throne speech to stand and be recognized? The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today as the newly elected representative of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I am both humbled and privileged to serve and represent my constituents in this honourable Assembly.

I want to begin first by recognizing my predecessor, Mr. Ty Lund. Mr. Lund served in this Assembly for 23 years in multiple capacities. He served with dignity, honour, and integrity. His service to our constituency and to all Albertans is worthy of our commendation and praise.

Madam Speaker, I am a veteran. In a few weeks we will once again honour our veterans for the sacrifice they made in preserving our life and our freedoms. I served four years honourably, and I'm a disabled veteran. I also served as a police officer, and I served as a first responder for the Canadian Coast Guard off the coast of B.C. In 2001 I led a three-member Canadian team to the world championship in marine search and rescue. I've had the privilege to serve on the town council of Rimbey, and as I stated earlier, I'm honoured to be the MLA of my constituency. Being in service to others are not hollow words with me. It is fundamental to my character, and it is who I am.

As an MLA I bring to this Assembly a wide range of experiences. I have owned and operated small businesses, and I have taught fibre-optic engineering transmission for Bell Labs. I have tried out for two professional baseball teams, and I was a stockbroker, a commodities broker, a hedge fund manager, and a derivatives market specialist. In between all of that, I raised a family.

7:40

My goal is to apply all my life experiences in service to my constituents. The Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre constituency, my constituency, is a microcosm of this province. The constituency's northern boundary borders the community of Drayton Valley and extends all the way south of Sundre. The constituency's east boundary lies on the east shores of Gull Lake and extends all the way to the Icefields Parkway and the B.C. border. All in all there are 37 communities in my constituency if I count all the unincorporated communities and the summer villages.

Our constituency has a strong agricultural base, a vibrant logging industry, and we are blessed with an abundant amount of oil and gas development. In addition to these industries, we have a very large tourism industry. We are, indeed, a very diverse constituency.

That said, Madam Speaker, it is not our industries that make us special. It is the people who live in our communities, who make up our communities that make this a very special constituency. I have lived and worked in many places, but I've never lived in a place more diverse than the place I live in today, which is Rimbey. I currently live in Rimbey with my wife, Deborah, who is the minister of the United Church; my son, Thomas; and my daughter, Aylish.

I would like to take this opportunity now to thank my constituents for electing me as their Wildrose representative in this Assembly. These people in this constituency are fiercely independent. They're hard-working and honest to a fault. A handshake can still be a binding contract. These are great traits. It is important for me to note, Madam Speaker, that they did elect a Wildrose member to this Assembly. Among the many reasons for supporting the Wildrose party, my constituents have voted against what this government did to diminish property rights and democratic rights, and they voted in favour of a Wildrose government that would restore those rights. While some in the current government may actually deny this reality, the constituents of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre do not.

When they read a law that states that the minister can make a regulation approving the dumping, deposit, or emission of any substance on an individual's land and the only right of appeal is to the minister who did it, when they read a law that says that the commissioner is not required to afford an opportunity to be represented by legal counsel, when they read a law that says that no person has a right to compensation by reason of this act or any regulation made thereunder, they don't need a lawyer to tell them what they've just read. They understand it. In fairness, I would like to point out that this government did try to remedy one of the aforementioned extracts that I just read, but it only attempted to do so in response to the large public outcry and only after repeated denials.

The sad fact is that an absolute right to be fairly and justly compensated when a capricious government decision, be it intentional or unintentional, deprives a property owner of a livelihood does not exist in law in Alberta. One of my goals as an MLA is to enshrine into legislation a property rights provision that would guarantee that individual landowners would be treated fairly and justly. Clearly, I have my work cut out for me. It was extremely disappointing that the throne speech did not mention property rights.

Madam Speaker, my constituency has a variety of urgent needs. The communities of Benalto, Eckville, and Bentley unselfishly support Sylvan Lake's desire in an attempt to secure an urgent care facility. Sylvan Lake is not in my constituency, but such a facility has regional implications. It can provide relief to the urgent care resources in Red Deer. Most importantly, it can save lives in Sylvan Lake, in those surrounding communities.

The community of Sundre is at risk of being flooded by the Red Deer River. This local issue will require considerable political will. I encourage this government to adopt a permanent solution for the citizens and the community of Sundre. They deserve nothing less.

The community of Eckville is in desperate need of doctors. The community of Rocky Mountain House is still waiting for a hospital after being told years ago they were on the top of priorities to get a new hospital. It still hasn't happened.

The community of Rimbey is in desperate need of a new seniors' lodge. The existing lodge was first constructed in the '60s. The lodge has no fire suppression system. The roof needs major overhauls. The lodge kitchen is too small and substandard.

As a result, refrigerators have to be located out in hallways, and food is stored elsewhere in the building. There's just no room.

With regard to the safety of the seniors in that lodge, in one wing of that facility the emergency responders cannot get a gurney down the hallway. Several rooms are too small. The hallways are too small for gurneys to be taken down. Volunteer firefighters must be dispatched on every emergency call to carry a senior out of their room to a waiting gurney. Transferring fragile and distressed seniors in this fashion is both unacceptable and dangerous. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is aware of this issue, and I want to thank him for his support and encourage his office to act swiftly to resolve this concern. Our seniors deserve expediency.

Our infrastructure needs are significant. I was disappointed the throne speech was silent on the topic of setting long-term infrastructure priorities and goals. The citizens of our constituency and Albertans as a whole deserve to know when they can expect infrastructure investments.

One of Alberta's greatest natural resources actually lies in my constituency. We call this resource the west country. The communities of Rocky Mountain House, Sundre, and Caroline and our First Nation communities are the gateway to the west country. On any given weekend the west country may see as many as 60,000 Albertans venturing out into the backcountry to enjoy the parks, trails, and rivers. The need for policing and the need for enforcement of Alberta's wildlife rules and regulations is of paramount concern. These resources are lacking. Law enforcement can take as much as 90 minutes or more to respond to an emergency call. It is my hope that we can correct these shortcomings.

Madam Speaker, as I just stated, the west country is one of Alberta's most valuable resources, and it is being stressed by many competing interests, some man-made, some natural. As the Wildrose MLA representing this region of Alberta, I can assure this Assembly and all Albertans and state categorically that climate change is real and undeniable. One only needs to travel to the Icefields Parkway and witness how far the glaciers have receded over the years to examine the evidence.

This world we live in now has a population of about 7 billion people, and Alberta is creeping ever closer to a population of 4 million people. We also have a huge functioning industrial complex. The Wildrose knows that mankind has a significant impact on the environment. What concerns the Wildrose the most is: what are we doing as citizens, communities, and government to reduce our environmental footprint? Successful, well-thought-out efforts to reduce our environmental footprint are good for our quality of life. It's smart business for our thriving industries. It is the right thing to do for our future generations.

The last subject I would like to address, Madam Speaker, is electricity. Electricity has been problematic for this PC government ever since it deregulated. Although many of the rules and regulations pertinent to deregulation were never applied until much later, the real problem with Alberta's electricity market still exists, and it's twofold. The market pricing system for the wholesale electricity market is fundamentally flawed. The AESO developed a very simple pricing system for the wholesale market that always guarantees that industry will be paid the highest price for the lowest cost electricity. This does not serve Albertans. Alberta's electricity market has harmed hard-working Albertans, our seniors, our small-business owners, and our low-income citizens. It's unjust, and it's not working. I call upon the Minister of Energy to release the Retail Market Review Committee's findings so we can get down to implementing solutions now, not later.

Complicating matters further, Alberta's electricity market has been corrupted due to political meddling in the electricity transmission system. With the greatest respect, Madam Speaker, there is no other way to describe Alberta's transmission system. This government has legislated five transmission line projects that are not needed and approved a transmission system upgrade that has costs spiralling out of control. The projected cost of the \$16.6 billion proposal is now on track to more than double. We are building transmission lines that Albertans don't need, and we are not building the transmission lines that Albertans need. This government has approved two HVDC transmission lines at an added cost of \$2 billion just for the pleasure of using DC technology, only to convert that technology back to AC so we can use it. It just doesn't make sense. Had we just proposed AC transmission lines, it would have saved taxpayers \$2 billion. Imagine what that could have done for education or health care.

7:50

Incredibly, there are no cost controls in place, and as a result, the cost to build the transmission line in Alberta is double what it costs to build a transmission line in any other jurisdiction. There's no rational explanation for these outrageous costs. I hope some of the responsible fiscal conservatives across the aisle took notice of what I just said.

Madam Speaker, Alberta needs a robust, efficient, reliable electricity system. The proper way to design such a system is through a public vetting process that requires a cost-benefit analysis so that the most efficient and economical solution can be approved in the public interest. After all, it is the public that pays.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, and I congratulate you on your appointment.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I do agree with you that the west country is a very valuable resource.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) applies. Anyone wishing to ask any questions or to comment to the hon. member can do so now. The Member for Airdrie.

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd just like to ask the member – I had the opportunity to attend one of the presentations that he gave on the subject that he just spoke about, the electricity transmission lines and so forth, prior to him being elected. I know that he went all over the province to do that with Mr. Keith Wilson as well. I just wonder if he could tell us a little bit about that experience and what he heard and if it had an effect of pushing him into running for office.

Mr. Anglin: I wasn't expecting anybody to question me on electricity, but I will tell the Assembly this – some of you know; I've been into your ridings – I got involved in this situation only because I was a neighbour of individuals who were losing their homes to electricity transmission lines, and it made no sense to me that they would lose their home. When I got in and I dug into this, what I discovered was how corrupt the process had gotten. We have a lot of new PC MLAs here today who may not understand this, but this has a long history to it, and it needs to be corrected.

We may have started on the first step today, but I will tell you this: I still travel around and talk about electricity, and I show up with all of the evidence. I show up with AESO's documents, AltaLink's documents, ATCO's documents, and the EUB documents. I show people what's gone wrong. I show people how this thing has taken on a life of its own and that what we're doing is absolutely, fundamentally wrong.

I have to tell you that it has a lot of bearing on how I ended up running because in this process I had six private investigators tap my phones during an EUB process, and no one in government was ever held accountable. That was my decision to run for the Wildrose. If you allow government agencies to tap the phones of citizens and not be held accountable, that is a threat to democracy, and that's reality.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

We still have two and a half minutes. Are there any other members on 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you for that very impassioned speech. I know this isn't your first time running for provincial office. As a former leader of the Green Party I appreciate your comments on carbon and the fact that it is real. The fact is that its challenges are ever embracing. I'm wondering with your former background and where you are now, I guess, what you – we have a carbon levy. It's at \$15 a tonne. It's based on intensity targets. What are your feelings on this? Are your feelings that it should be more robust? Should it be on actual emissions as they come out of our industries? What's your take on this given your background, or has this changed?

Mr. Anglin: Madam Speaker, actually, I've never changed on this. I fought with the Green Party, who were in favour of a carbon tax, over this very issue. I am not in favour of a carbon tax and never have been, and I still would oppose one.

I think the solution is to reduce carbon emissions. I think that's the key. We are an extremely wealthy province, and we actually have the ability to do that. We just need the political will to carry that out. I sat down with the hon. Minister of Energy and explained this, and I think he listened. I'm going to be taking this up in committee because there are some real solutions here as long as people are willing to be open minded. We can do some things as a province that can actually show the world not only that what we do is good; we can be the leader in the world. I actually believe this.

I'll say one thing. Somebody on the other side just mentioned that I had no proof that someone tapped my telephones. I carry that proof with me. I have it.

The Acting Speaker: We have 45 seconds left on 29(2)(a). Anyone else like to ask a question?

Seeing no one, I would ask the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky to give his response to the throne speech.

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today on behalf of my constituents of Grande Prairie-Smoky. We are so blessed in the north with opportunity and growth and prosperity. This government recognizes that generations of Albertans have worked to create the many advantages we enjoy today.

Madam Speaker, I was first elected to Grande Prairie county council in 1992 and for the last 10 years served as reeve until my recent election. Through the years I served, we saw many changes to Alberta, which have allowed growth in all sectors of our economy. We are blessed in the north with all four pillars, including agriculture, forestry, energy, and tourism.

The constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky includes the city of Grande Prairie, the towns of Sexsmith, Valleyview, Fox Creek, as well as many rural municipalities. Overall it is one of the fastest growing areas in the province. In fact, the last census confirmed a population increase of 16 and a half per cent in the city of Grande Prairie and 13 and a half per cent in the county.

As well, the city of Grande Prairie was recently named the most entrepreneurial city in Canada. As such, I understand the importance of effective planning and wise spending. This is why I was excited to hear about our government's long-term plan to further attract business and investment. I've been involved with issues dealing with economic development in my constituency, so I know first-hand the significance of decisions by our hon. Premier. This government's commitment to simplify regulatory burdens will continue to make Alberta the most attractive place for businesses and help advance our knowledge-based economy.

Madam Speaker, efficiency and responsibility are also themes that I often hear at the doors of my constituents, and I'm sure these are echoed across our province. This is why I'm optimistic about the implementation of results-based budgeting by our Premier. Program budgets will be scrutinized every three years and publicly reported so that everyone can see how their tax dollars are being invested. The future prosperity and quality of life in this province will depend on this type of innovative thinking and will ensure that Alberta will maintain a strong fiscal position in North America.

With more young families moving to the Grande Prairie-Smoky region, Madam Speaker, it is also exciting to hear the Premier's focus on investing in families and communities. The growth of the population of the Grande Prairie region will require the maintenance and building of many schools. This was certainly one of the major issues I heard as I travelled the province meeting with families throughout the summer. The education of our youth is the basis of our continued success, and constituents of Grande Prairie-Smoky recognize the importance of our strong education system.

I am also excited, Madam Speaker, about the way our government is moving forward with respect to health care. The commitment to build family care clinics will help supplement the high volumes in anticipated new hospitals in Grande Prairie that will be opened in 2015. Through the use of multidisciplinary teams of health care professionals at the front lines of care the citizens of the Grande Prairie region and all Albertans will have more treatment options with less waiting. Alberta expects a health care system that will respond to the needs of community and maximize the use of resources available.

As I mentioned previously, I have been involved in municipal politics for the past 20 years in an area that has experienced significant population growth. I have dealt with the challenges that often arise in regions as the region attracts more people, and I can honestly say that our Premier understands these challenges and possesses values needed to overcome the obstacles. This understanding is also true when it comes to Alberta's energy sector.

As a third-generation farmer I have always had a deep love and respect for our environment. Madam Speaker, my grandfather arrived in this province over 100 years ago. He was one of the first 100 people to walk the Edson Trail into the Grande Prairie region, where he homesteaded. My family continues to own and farm this homestead. Agriculture, therefore, is not only a part of Alberta's rich history but also a significant part of my family's history. With the support of my wife, Tina, and our four children, and two grandchildren, I look forward to serving the people of Alberta in our noble cause.

8:00

The economic success of this province and the quality of life of the people are intertwined with the preservation of our environment, everything from farming the land, enjoying outdoor activities, and breathing our clean air. We owe it to our future generations to preserve Alberta's environment and natural beauty.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member, for your comments, your response to the throne speech. I didn't realize that Grande Prairie is growing so fast.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) applies if anybody would like to ask any questions or make any comments.

Seeing none, we'll move on to our next response to the throne speech. I would ask the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo to present his response to the throne speech.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour and privilege to be back in the Legislature and respond to the throne speech given on May 24, 2012, shortly after the last election. Going back, we had about three successive throne speeches. We had one when the hon. Premier ascended to her position, then we had one on February 7, 2012, and then the aforementioned one on May 24, 2012. I must say the highlight of these three throne speeches for me was actually the February 7, 2012, one. That, to me, in comparison to the one on May 24, 2012, had a much clearer direction, a much greater sense of some of the perils facing Alberta, some of the significant challenges that I believed at that time this Premier was willing to take on.

If I just can respond to some of the things that were involved in that throne speech on that date in comparison to the one that recently came out, it says:

Four decades ago our province was just beginning to find its place in an uncertain, fast changing world. New and untested opportunities glimmered on the horizon, and Alberta's government in 1971 resolved to make the most of them, promising to build a society that is not inferior to that in any province or state in North America. It succeeded magnificently.

It goes on later in that throne speech, and I'll quote again:

Now, two generations on, Alberta faces fresh challenges. Long-established ways are being called into question, and comfortable assumptions are being examined anew while Albertans [find] themselves . . . growing older.

I must attest I didn't write that speech, but it seemed to suggest to me anyway that there's a recognition that although the Tory party has been in power for 41 years, there have been different machinations and makeups and markups of what that party has stood for. There was the Lougheed generation from '71 to '85, which in my view did some very good things, very proactive things. They started the Alberta Energy Company. They started the heritage savings trust fund under a recognition that all of the fossil fuel wealth should not be spent in one generation and that one time Alberta will run out of oil and gas or the world will move on. Those truths, I believe, are still evident today and are still worth tackling. That's what I believe it was suggesting in that throne speech of that date.

But since that time, when I saw a Premier who was seemingly harkening back to those days of 1971, the robust leadership under Peter Lougheed, I've seen a walking away from some of that rhetoric, some of the big challenges that are out there: one, our fiscal structure; and two, our energy industry. To be honest here, everything flows from our fiscal structure. If we don't deal with that issue, it's all just smoke and mirrors. We're not dealing with the nub of what's going to set this province up for the long term.

Since 1985 we've had different machinations of Tory governments, governments which I think in essence set up a fiscal structure that was designed not to save, that was designed to spend all the petroleum wealth in one generation. That was the Klein government, and the Stelmach government proceeded on that. The evidence is clear that that's what happened because we're here in this day and age in – what's the date today, guys?

Some Hon. Members: October 23.

Mr. Hehr: Yeah. There we go. On October 23, 2012, that has played out, those two scenarios. A letter in the *Calgary Herald* actually brought that to me when we were harking back at the sad passing of Premier Lougheed, that this is no longer a province of Peter Lougheed. This is now a province that has been set up under the Getty, Klein, and Stelmach eras. To return to that, there has to be some heavy lifting. You can't just talk about it. You have to do some things, okay?

Let's just talk about that fiscal structure as it stands here today. Right now Alberta takes in approximately \$11 billion, \$12 billion in petroleum resource wealth a year. We spend it all. We spend it all on services that we use, going to school, building roads, hospitals, education facilities: all good stuff. I'm not going to argue with that. There has been a fiscal structure set up that takes this one-time gift from the heavens above, a barrel of oil, and turns it into something we spend right now. We all know, Madam Speaker, that once you sell a barrel of oil, you never have that barrel of oil to sell again. We're not converting this into a long-term investment that Albertans can use long after we're out of this Legislature, long after we're gone, when people who remain in this province may be able to take part in using some of this largesse.

I come from the school of thought that we do not have the right to spend all of this oil wealth in one generation. We have an obligation to see the tea leaves as they present themselves. One, we're going to run out of oil and gas, probably not for a long time, but two, the world could move on. That could be in 50 or 60 years. To really deal with that, there has to be a recognition that our fiscal structure is broken.

The clearest comparison to this: we're the lowest tax jurisdiction by a country mile, okay? A country mile. If we Albertans even adopted the B.C. tax code, the second lowest tax jurisdiction of all the provinces, we'd bring in \$12 billion more in revenue a year. Is it a secret what we're doing here? No, it's not. We're just simply taking the easy way out. We're saying: "No. We don't recognize this as being something to save for the future. No. We recognize this as something we're free to use and let future generations deal with it themselves."

If you believe tourism and farming are going to carry the day after oil and gas is gone – I'm not one of those people who believes that. If we stay on this course, essentially what this government is saying is: "By golly, let's have a good time now. Let's keep taxes low. Let's build all these roads and hospitals and schools, and let's look like heroes doing it because we're not going to make anyone pay for it." Okay? That, to me, is fundamentally wrong. There has to be a recognition that there is going to be a day in this province where things are not going to be better than they are today. We're in the best business at the best time. The oil and gas industry is extremely profitable, and the Alberta people should be able to save something from being in the most profitable business this world has ever seen.

We have 25 per cent of the world's oil resources. If we can't figure out how to save something for the future, well, my goodness, we're not trying very hard. We don't have to look further than Norway, where as a society they have said that this is a one-time resource. They as a society have said: "No. We will pay as we go. We will pay what we need to to ensure the poor, the sick, the disabled, the elderly are taken care of. That's our onus. That's our onus as a society. We will pay for it out of the revenues we bring in out of our taxes and go forth from there." Is that an easy argument to have with the electorate? No. Is it one worth having? Yes.

8:10

You know what else? I guess there's another option you can do. Whack the budget by six or 12 billion dollars. Don't monkey around. Take that to the electorate. Say: "No. You guys want low taxes? Great. You're going to get them, but you're not going to get this. You're not going to get that. You're not going to get a road from Fort McMurray paid for by some bonds, again a future generation paying for it. No. This is what you get. These are the taxes you want to pay." And that is a fair proposition as well because that actually will recognize some savings. I don't think it'll be enough, and I don't think the electorate will stand for it. Nevertheless, that is at least a fair proposition for you guys to take to it. Right now this is simply taking the easy way out.

I think there has to be a recognition, and this throne speech seemingly recognizes it. Back to the throne speech that we had on February 7. At that time the hon. Premier said: we are going to look at all revenue sources. If that's too cryptic for you, that's taxation. In fact, I'm friendly with many people in the member's offices. I'm friendly with many people in your party because you're reasonable people, okay? In fact, the thinking at that time was that this is baked into the cake. This is an understanding that taxation in this fiscal structure was broken. I don't think that's changed.

What has just happened is an election. What I see is a government who, four years away from election, is already thinking about the next election, is not willing to do what they think is right. That is saddening, disheartening not only to me but to what we leave behind, for I think the lasting legacy of the last 42 years, or how we're going to be judged, is what we leave behind when it's all said and done, when the oil and gas is gone. I think we as a society, we as this government should set a societal goal. We can save a trillion dollars in the next 60 years to set us up in perpetuity. That's with watching our fiscal side as well as a recognition of the fact that eventually things are going to run out. Is it going to be easy? No.

I tell you what. What's so hard about raising taxes and looking at a taxpayer and saying, "You want to take it in the ear worse somewhere else"? Really, what's the matter with getting up a press conference. "Yeah. We're not going to be the lowest tax jurisdiction by a country mile, but guess what? If you want to move somewhere else, if you want to move your business somewhere else, you're going to take it in the ear worse." That seems like a pretty easy message to sell and go from there. It's really not that hard. Yeah, there'll be some bad days in the paper. Mr. Gunter at the *Sun* will get all angry and all that stuff there, but you already know that, so do what's right.

I didn't know all this about our fiscal structure when I first came in here. I thought the prosperity would be forever. I encourage people on the government side and on this side to actually investigate what our revenue streams are. You talk to people who sit on Treasury Board. You talk to people who have formerly served in that capacity. They know the issue. Everyone knows the issue. The issue is political will.

A person whom I applaud very much on that side of the House, the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, actually ran in the PC leadership and openly talked about the fiscal structure, openly went into debates and said: guys, this ain't good for our long-term prosperity. Have a conversation with him. I think the hon. Premier knows it. I think everyone knows it over there. They're just unwilling to do something. I think you can do it, and I think you'd be abrogating responsibility for good government by not doing it.

Another idea I have is regarding our oil and gas industry. I thought Loughheed had a great idea with the Alberta Energy

Company. Ask yourselves: why is every national oil company in the world here? Pretty easy. You pay royalties, and you make money. I understand. Royalties have to be one thing. There has to be a profit margin in there. But are all these other nations smarter than us that they say, "Jeepers; we'll come to Alberta, make a piss-pot of money, and send it back home to our citizens to enjoy better services"? Like, really. It's not that hard. There are reasons why they are here to make money. If they can make money, why can't we? Something to add to that pot of resources we have when those two things happen: one, we run out of oil and gas, or two, the world moves on. And the world could move on sooner rather than later. All this other stuff we talk about, the little things we do on health care and the stuff we do on education, by all means, that is important – okay? – but you're not going to make it sustainable and predictable for the long run unless you do one of those two things.

Anyway, I'm often wrong, never without an opinion, but thank you very much for allowing me to have my time here today, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, for that spirited response to the throne speech.

Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) is there anybody who would like to ask a question or comment from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo? The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mr. Anderson: Hon. member, can you expand on that often wrong part?

Mr. Hehr: Actually, I used to watch PBS television in the '90s. There was an investment show, and often investment prognosticators are wrong, okay? They do the best with the information they have and go forth from there. It's a 60-40 business we're in. You know, I've said that if you're right 60 per cent of the time, I think you're doing pretty good. We have to deal with the best information available to us.

But I think that in the main the best information available to me at this time is that our fiscal structure with what we're currently doing is broken. One only needs to look at the past 41 years to see that. We have spent \$350 billion in petroleum revenues and managed to save \$16 billion. Hey, I've stolen you guys' crib notes. The heritage trust fund is worth less than it was in 1976. That's a truism, okay? Unless something is done, really, we're just destined to keep on going through this thing, and we'll never get ahead.

That's where I got it from, so there we go.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other members that would like to ask a question or comment through Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, we'll go to our next response to the throne speech. I recognize the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Mr. Lemke: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to rise tonight to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I begin by thanking His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Donald Ethell for delivering a clear and well-articulated plan on behalf of the government of Alberta. I have great confidence that the government under the leadership of the hon. Premier will continue to ensure the long-term prosperity that has made Alberta one of the most affluent jurisdictions in the world.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the tireless work of my predecessors. Our constituency has a proud history dating back to 1905. Stony Plain has the distinction of being one of the original 25 constituencies created along with the province in

1905. It is one of the few original constituency names in continuous use since then. From John McPherson, our first MLA, through to myself, we have had 14 MLAs. I would like to take a minute to recognize Mrs. Cornelia Wood, who until recently was the longest serving woman in the Legislature. She served first from 1940 to 1955. Of course, our very own Pearl Calahasen now has that distinction.

Since 1967 Ralph Jespersen, Bill Purdy, Jim Heron, Stan Woloshyn, and Fred Lindsay have served the people of Stony Plain and are still all active members of our community. I would like to acknowledge Fred Lindsay, who served two terms in this Assembly. He brought his knowledge of the energy sector and policing to his role as a member of cabinet and an MLA, and he left a positive mark on his community and this House.

8:20

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the people of the constituency of Stony Plain for the confidence and trust that they have bestowed upon me. I am honoured and humbled to be representing them in the 28th Legislature of the Alberta Legislative Assembly. I do not take this responsibility lightly. It is a privilege to serve as a democratically elected official.

Clearly, the people of my constituency expect and deserve open, honest, and transparent government. A Member of this Legislative Assembly must remember that they have been given a mandate from the people. They expect me to actively and openly represent their concerns and perspectives to the government. I intend to do that to the best of my abilities and as vociferously as necessary.

What a wonderful constituency it is that I represent, Madam Speaker. We're a vibrant riding of 40,000 industrious people employed in fields as diverse as health care, education, manufacturing, mining, oil and gas. In addition to including its namesake, Stony Plain, my constituency stretches 80 kilometres west of Edmonton and south from highway 16A to the North Saskatchewan River. It encompasses Parkland county and villages like Wabamun, Spring Lake, Duffield, Seba Beach, and Tomahawk along with the Paul First Nation and the Enoch Cree Nation.

The constituency is largely made up of Parkland county. Therefore, much of it is rural and agricultural. One of the most notable attractions in the area is the University of Alberta Devonian gardens. This biodiverse 190-acre property is the most northern botanic garden in Canada. The display gardens, natural areas, and ecological preserves are for public education, enjoyment, and research. Many people in the capital region have had the pleasure of spending the day in the gardens or booking the facilities to celebrate events.

Madam Speaker, Wabamun Lake is one of the many lakes located in my constituency. This popular body of water houses the Wabamun Sailing Club and is well known to water sport enthusiasts around this province.

Lake Wabamun is also the site of much of Alberta's electrical generation, with the Sundance and Keephills power plants. Many Albertans were familiar with the Wabamun generating station, a recognizable landmark that has recently been decommissioned and demolished. However, unit 3 of the Keephills power plant, which began operations in 2011, has replaced it as a major supplier of electricity and employment. This large clean coal fired generation unit is one of the most technologically advanced in the world. The 450 megawatt coal-fired generating unit located about five kilometres south of Lake Wabamun at the Keephills plant is owned and operated by TransAlta and Capital Power Corporation. Carbon dioxide emissions per megawatt are lower than those from a conventional coal generator.

This new generating unit is a critical step in guaranteeing that Alberta's future power needs are met with a reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible source of electricity. It is an example of development which this government endorses, a type of resource development that leads to a cleaner and healthier environment. TransAlta, the operator of the plant, is one of the largest employers in the constituency with approximately 700 employees.

Madam Speaker, another vital employer in our constituency of Stony Plain is the agricultural industry. Historically the constituency has attracted people seeking opportunities in farming the bountiful land. This vital industry has played an enormous part in our area's history and today continues to provide a wholesome, steady livelihood for many of my constituents. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Alberta farmers, which has kept a resilient and strong farming sector in many of our communities.

Landowners' rights was a subject often brought up during the recent election. I am pleased that this government guarantees landowners consultation, compensation, and the courts.

Madam Speaker, the people of this constituency are committed to their families and communities. Some have been here for generations while others are part of the wave of recent newcomers from within Canada and outside of our country, all of whom sought the amazing opportunities that this province has to offer its citizens. I promise to partner with them to achieve a better future for us all. In the past I have had the great honour to represent some of them on Stony Plain town council, most recently as the mayor of Stony Plain. I am proud of the accomplishments that we achieved together in co-operation with other town councillors, neighbouring municipalities, and provincial and federal officials.

In addition to the participation of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, I would also like to acknowledge the eminent role that Parkland county played in co-ordinating the construction of a leisure centre across jurisdictional boundaries. Parkland county is the administration that represents the municipal level interests of many people in the constituency, and in the interests of Parkland county residents, many of whom reside within the constituency of Stony Plain, I look forward to continuing our relationship and making our communities stronger.

Madam Speaker, it is the case that oftentimes a lawmaker as a representative of the people rests his or her success upon the ability to collaborate with others and to effectively listen to what constituents are saying. While serving on town council, we fostered and cultivated effective and productive partnerships, which led to real results for the people of our community. For example, we managed to achieve one of the lowest property taxes in the capital region while maintaining high levels of service, orderly growth, and fiscal responsibility. I assisted the trimunicipal region to increase shared services, which included the building of the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre. I also was involved in helping form the Capital Region Board, which is fostering increased co-operation amongst 23 municipalities.

These are verifiable examples of how collaboration and negotiation can yield important results for Albertans. I will continue to draw on my experience and knowledge of policy to achieve responsive leadership, open dialogue, and accountability. My continuing vision for the constituency of Stony Plain is in the same vein as the Premier's vision for the province. I want to ensure that the riding remains vibrant, continues to grow, and is a safe community for people pursuing health, happiness, and prosperity, a community of hope and a community with a vibrant future.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased and honoured to be a member of this government with its bold plan for the bright future of this province. This is a Premier that understands Alberta families and what their needs are and what they expect their government to achieve. The hon. Premier firmly believes in investing in families and communities across this province because it is a healthy family and a strong community that is the measure of the quality of life that we enjoy. It is the government's priority to encourage and to develop strong and vigorous families and communities. We believe it is the government's responsibility to create the opportunities and provide the support necessary for parents to raise children that grow into healthy and educated adults. We believe in a world-class education system that prepares our children for the economic future and challenges of tomorrow.

In listening to the throne speech, it was clear that this government will invest in the infrastructure that communities need in order to thrive and prosper: the schools, the hospitals, family care clinics, recreation centres, and the highways that connect us to one another. One thing we know for certain is that Alberta is constantly growing, and we need to meet the challenges of that growth head-on by laying the physical foundation for our communities. However, we will be sure to do it in a fiscally responsible manner. We will spend government revenue with the utmost respect to the taxpayers, who expect government to function as efficiently as possible.

This government will invest in the economic future of this province. The throne speech clearly articulated the notion that a strong and prosperous economy is built with human capital and physical infrastructure, and it is this government's pledge to invest in the building blocks of that future prosperity. This government will continue to secure a dynamic economic future for all Albertans, who deserve to share in the wealth produced by the great resources of this province. We also believe in diversifying our economy and making it more competitive, not just nationally but internationally. In order to accomplish this, we will train a workforce that is skilled and adaptable to the changing needs of an increasingly globalized society. This government has fostered a competitive economic position for this province, and it will continue to do so.

Madam Speaker, I must say that I look forward to working with this dynamic team of professionals. I am proud to mention that a third of our caucus is composed of brand new MLAs, myself included. We will build on the past successes of government while enhancing our caucus with new ideas and fresh perspectives. As well, we have an important balance of professionals with business experience and previous political experience at other levels of government. We have caucus members with legal experience, training in information technology, and science backgrounds. Other members of our team have experience in such diverse areas as the trades, journalism, health care, law enforcement, and engineering.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I look forward to continuing the dedication and constructive collaboration of this government and building upon its past successes. We will continue to make progress on the issues that matter most to the people of my constituency of Stony Plain and to all the people of this tremendous province.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

8:30

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Stony Plain, for that very uplifting response to the throne speech.

Standing Order 29(2)(a)? I see the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I recognize the member.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was wondering if the hon. member would comment on Keephills 3. Keephills 3 utilized the technology called integrated combined cycle, which is clean coal technology, and they received their approval to build the plant based on employing that technology. They constructed the plant, and once online they turned right around and applied to the Alberta Utilities Commission to be exempt from clean coal technology and said that they needed to be exempt from that technology because it made them uncompetitive. They were subsequently denied. I was wondering if you would comment on the clean technology that they have promoted.

Mr. Lemke: Well, thank you for that question. I take your word that you're knowledgeable about Keephills 3, and certainly I will do a little research and get back to you in terms of that.

The Acting Speaker: Any other questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, we'll move to our next speaker, and I would ask the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat to deliver his maiden speech.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's with great pleasure and gratitude to the voters and residents of Cypress-Medicine Hat that I rise today to deliver my response to the Speech from the Throne. This is, of course, my first speech in the Legislature, so it's also a chance for me to tell everyone a bit more about Cypress-Medicine Hat: our people, our towns, our city, and our needs.

The people who live in Cypress-Medicine Hat include oil and gas workers and investors, farmers and ranchers, business owners, greenhouse operators, and professional people. We have a large number of semiretired and retired people, who have earned our respect by building our economy, our communities, and our institutions.

Young families are also attracted to the quality of life that this constituency provides. I have heard from a wide range of these young families, and over and over they have told me how important the education of their children is. They want to know where the infrastructure dollars for new schools and renovating older schools are going to be spent. Many are concerned that promises made in the past for the region will not materialize. My constituents are also very concerned about rural schooling opportunities, the length of bus rides, and funding to ensure their children have the quality of education that Alberta can afford.

Our location does not allow us to be part of the highway 2 corridor, and this has contributed to a saying in Cypress-Medicine Hat: sometimes we feel we are the forgotten corner of Alberta. When I hear that, I also believe that people from Cypress-Medicine Hat are saying: "Hey, we're independent. We're strong. We believe in working together to help a neighbour, friend, or community." The adjective "independent" perfectly describes the second-, third-, fourth-, fifth-, and even sixth-generation ranching families who reside, earn a living, and pay taxes in the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency.

John and Kathy Ross, fourth-generation ranchers with Milk River cattle ranches, are now the proud grandparents to one-year-old William Jack Ross, a sixth-generation rancher. Parents Aaron and Rebecca Brower and their three children, Morgan, Lindsay, and Addison, are now the fifth generation on their ranch in the Aden area. These people exemplify those who are concerned about schooling opportunities, ambulatory services, the government's agricultural policies, and, perhaps most of all, property rights.

The adjective “strong” can also be used to describe the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat. Their reaction to our flash flood in the spring of 2010 is a great example. Residents had to care for their families, friends, and in some cases livestock. Many had to flee with little or no warning and then begin the long, arduous task of rebuilding. Incredibly, in some instances the water came so fast and unexpectedly that people had to swim for it.

When the likelihood of another flood developed the next spring, neighbours, friends, and families rolled up their sleeves and laboured to mitigate the chances of it happening. Unfortunately, there are currently many affected people still 29 months later that have not fully been helped by our government. I’m calling upon our government to make this a priority.

The taxpayers and citizens of Alberta were not honoured in this process either. In fact, the *Medicine Hat News* has reported that \$19 million was paid to individuals for flood assistance and restoration, but incredibly up to \$20 million was paid to the government-contracted company for administering this program. Albertans ask that our government help people fairly and quickly, and many instances outlined that this didn’t happen. Albertans deserve better.

The people of Cypress-Medicine Hat are both independent and strong. There is an amazing group of friends, vegetable growers, and businesspeople who believe in working together, for example in greenhouses. On less than a quarter section of farmland they’ve turned it into a business enterprise worth an outstanding \$55 million a year. I am referring to Redcliff’s greenhouse vegetable packaging co-operative called Red Hat and their associated growers. Their mission statement is “to be the best local distributor of fresh produce,” and, Madam Speaker, they sure do deliver on that promise.

There’s also a lot of history in Cypress-Medicine Hat. This year we had the Medicine Hat stampede celebrating its 125th year. We also had the towns of Redcliff and Bow Island both having extensive celebrations for their 100-year anniversaries. We are already looking forward to the 100-year celebrations of Burdett and Foremost, that will take place this summer.

There’s a location in Cypress-Medicine Hat that I would love to share with you. It is 1,234 metres above sea level, the highest elevation on the prairies between Banff and Labrador, and actually it’s the same elevation as Banff. I’m referring to Elkwater and the interprovincial park Cypress Hills. All of a sudden the hills and trees just seemed to pop up from the prairie, and what a great spot for recreation, wildlife, and just getting away. It’s been over 100 years since a natural cleansing forest fire, thus there are lots of history, vegetation, and activity that we must be careful with.

Cypress-Medicine Hat also includes about the southeastern third of Medicine Hat, and I would be remiss if I did not mention Medicine Hat College, its 2,500 full-time students, along with its excellent reputation for academics and trades. Medicine Hat is a first-rate city with a strong cultural community. Our extensive local theatre, our jazz, our Tongue on the Post festival, and our performing arts centre, the Esplanade, are second to none.

Sports take a back seat to no other community: our Western Hockey League team, the Medicine Hat Tigers, and our Western Major Baseball League team, the Mavericks, and extensive recreation and minor sporting opportunities.

Do you want to see the Great Wall of China someday? You don’t have to go overseas. Just come to Medicine Hat and visit our historical Medalta Potteries and all of its historic china products. It’s fully equipped with an artists-in-residence program and more than 100 years of clay works, china, and entrepreneurial history.

8:40

Many will know that Medicine Hat’s nickname is the Gas City. About 100 years ago Rudyard Kipling described Medicine Hat by saying that it has all hell for a basement. Now, it’s no secret that the price of natural gas is down, and it has been for some time. It’s also no secret that many jobs and firms and equipment have left Cypress-Medicine Hat since the royalty review of 2007. This has left our housing market, our business opportunities, our employment wages, and our growth trailing much of the rest of Alberta. With this in mind, I hope and trust that this government’s plans for the natural gas industry will improve this current situation.

But Cypress-Medicine Hat is known for more than its gas. It’s also known for its sunshine. In fact, it’s the national leader for cities for total hours of sunshine, with approximately 2,500 hours of sunshine per year, or close to an amazing 330 days of sunshine. Very often we’re the hot spot in Canada, comparing our daily temperatures to other Canadian cities.

Like many constituencies, there are also things in our communities, especially regarding infrastructure, that could be improved. We are grateful that the government of Alberta has started a \$220 million hospital expansion, but my constituents are still concerned about the lack of action and the promises on this project. In 2008 the first sod-turning took place, the second one was identical in 2010, and last week there was a third announcement. Still today the project has not moved forward at a pace that communicates to the people of the southeast corner that they are important. My constituents remember that the initial expansion promise was for a considerably greater project, announced at \$480 million.

As well, when the Deputy Premier comes to Medicine Hat and introduces three out-of-town MLAs as your local representatives, well, Medicine Hatters can’t help but wonder how important their needs and wishes are to this government.

My constituents are grateful, though, that the government of Alberta finally announced plans to build an overpass at Dunmore Road over the Trans-Canada highway. This is a very dangerous intersection – our Medicine Hat mayor, Norm Boucher, has expressed tremendous concern – with 150 accidents there in just the last two years.

The Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency is comprised of two counties, Cypress and Forty Mile. It is important to know that both counties are transportation and commodity based. Both the agriculture sector and the oil and gas sector are key players with many opportunities for tourism and recreation. This, of course, makes our road system and the quality of these roads essential to all citizens and taxpayers. In Cypress-Medicine Hat we know that the people of Alberta and Fort McMurray who travel highway 63 need our help, and once that twinning is progressing, please remember there is only 60 miles of highway 3 between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge not twinned and that highway 61’s pavement and shoulders need attention, with many, many serious accidents on it.

In addition to the increasing flow of truck traffic for commodities there are many reports and beliefs that the Bakken oil field and other oil activity will dramatically increase, making highway 61 from Manyberries to Etzikom to Foremost all the more important.

Alberta is also the only province with only one 24-hour border crossing with our neighbours to the south. For at least 15 years the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat have been extolling the virtues of working with the Americans and the federal government to open up the Wild Horse border crossing to more extensive hours. The economic impact of the development of an alternative port of

entry to move equipment and machinery faster, more safely, and affordably needs to be considered.

There are two other important economic drivers in my constituency I'd like to mention. Defence Research and Development Canada, or DRDC Suffield as it is known, employs over 200 people and supports our military, NATO forces, and private industry with cutting-edge research in explosives, equipment, safety, robotics, and much more. In Foremost there is an exciting initiative taking place to develop an airspace and improve the local airport to become a Canadian and world leader in flying unmanned aerial vehicles out of sight. Currently the legalities are such that unmanned vehicles can only be flown within the sight of the operator. However, the potential for police, search and rescue, pipeline surveillance, and who knows what else is tremendous. As we develop the ability to fly these unmanned vehicles further and further, this could become a great economic driver for us. Foremost and Cypress-Medicine Hat have the topography, climate, and the people to make this initiative a great success.

In conclusion, let me say once again that I am grateful to the constituents of Cypress-Medicine Hat for the opportunity to serve them in the House, whether they are from Schuler, Redcliff, Medicine Hat, Bow Island, Seven Persons, Aden, or points in between.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, for that very insightful response to the throne speech. I was waiting for you to mention how great the Medicine Hat Tigers are, and you didn't disappoint me.

Standing Order 29(2)(a). Is there anyone who would like to ask a question or make a comment? The hon. member from Canmore.

Mr. Casey: Banff-Cochrane, but close.

The Acting Speaker: Banff-Cochrane. Thank you.

Mr. Casey: As more of a comment, I guess, than anything, a 40-year friend of mine is responsible for much of the work at Medalta pottery, Les Manning. Les Manning just received the Order of Canada, I believe two weeks ago, for his contribution to ceramic arts in Alberta, Canada, and around the world. As you know, he teaches around the world. I just wanted to add that on to your Medalta pottery piece, that we're very proud of him. He was a resident of Canmore for 25 years and still is a very close friend of mine. Thank you for mentioning Medalta.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Are there any others that would like to comment under 29(2)(a)? Member for Edmonton-Riverview, under 29(2)(a)? Please proceed.

Mr. Young: I just want to comment. I had the opportunity to go back to Medicine Hat this summer, and I was so impressed by the HALO air ambulance service and the community initiative that brought that together. I just wanted to point that out. It was fantastic the way the community got together for medical ambulance service in the area.

Mr. Barnes: Yes. Thank you very much for mentioning that. We have a great, great group of volunteers. They raise approximately \$875,000 to service that whole southeast area. There is a little bit of a concern, though, with the fact that they receive zero funding from the province. STARS, of course, receives somewhere between 20 and 30 per cent. I understand there's a chance of an

initiative from Saskatchewan helping with HALO so that we can service the southwestern part of Saskatchewan as well. Thanks for pointing out how hard those volunteers work.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. I have a comment. In the last few years I also travelled quite a bit in the province. I have been in Medicine Hat once, but I didn't know you have such wonderful pottery. As a teapot collector I would like to know if you can pass the address on to me. I would definitely like to visit that pottery place sometime next summer. I really enjoyed your speech. Thank you.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you very much for that. If you could ever come down and see the artists in residence, who come from around the world to work out of Medicine Hat and make things happen. Again, the society that's making this happen has done a wonderful job of creating opportunities for people that are interested in pottery, and the museum is really growing as well. I would be happy to do that. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, we'll move to our next speaker for his maiden speech, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm honoured to rise here today to reflect on the Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. I would also like to begin by thanking the Lieutenant Governor for his thoughtful words and unwavering commitment to our province and our country. His Honour has led a distinguished career dedicated to public service through his work as a peacekeeper and humanitarian. I hold the utmost respect for his work serving the people of our province.

I would also like to thank the hon. Premier for her leadership and her effort to ensure that the work our government does consistently reflects the values, goals, and aspirations of Albertans. Madam Speaker, with her guidance this government has set in motion a clear, focused, target-driven mandate.

8:50

I stand here as a Canadian, an Albertan, an Edmontonian who has been bestowed the privilege of representing the constituency of Edmonton-Riverview, for which I'm humbled and honoured. I would also like to acknowledge the former MLA from Edmonton-Riverview, Kevin Taft, who served the constituency well and maintained support throughout his career through his community engagement.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Kevin this past week on community issues relating to the exciting developments at the University of Alberta's south campus, a large area of untouched land in the core of Edmonton on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River amongst mature, vibrant communities. Edmonton-Riverview representatives have had a history of service to the community before serving as MLAs and after in different roles. Previous Edmonton-Riverview MLAs include Karen Leibovici and Linda Sloan, who continue to represent and advocate for community as members of Edmonton city council.

The area of Edmonton-Riverview is certainly an impressive constituency with a long history. Edmonton-Riverview consistently records the highest voter turnout in the province, 69.2 per cent in the past election. Crestwood Community League was the first of the organized community leagues, founded in 1917 by a group of residents as the 142nd Street community league. Based on the ideas of neighbourhood and social club, it later stressed a

wider use of existing public facilities and co-operative joining of residents in a community for civic, social, and recreational activities.

Edmonton-Riverview is a constituency, but the families, individuals, organizations, and businesses don't see themselves as a constituency. They see themselves as a community, and they see themselves as Albertans. These are the communities of Laurier Heights, Belgravia, Malmo Plains, Crestwood, Parkview, Elmwood, Windsor Park, McKernan, Meadowlark, Jasper Park, West Jasper Place-Sherwood, Lansdowne, Grandview, Lynnwood, Lendrum, and Parkallen.

I'm repeatedly amazed by the collection of vibrant communities, and with all of them there is a river that runs through it. The river is an ongoing source of pride for Edmontonians that use it and the communities near it. It is a natural space that serves a wide variety of recreational users: off-leash dog parks, running trails, challenging single-track bike trails, the Edmonton Rowing Club, the Valley Zoo, the Whitemud equestrian centre, and the Trans Canada Trail.

Edmonton-Riverview is also home to the University of Alberta, an institution of learning that serves as a key cornerstone to the growing knowledge economy and innovation for the province. I've experienced this excellence in fostering knowledge and learning at the University of Alberta, having earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's of business administration at the University of Alberta School of Business.

Excellence at the University of Alberta isn't reserved for learning and research. As an alumnus of the University of Alberta Golden Bears hockey program I've experienced excellence not only with the national championships with the Bears, Pandas, and all the other teams but also the values of teamwork, hard work, commitment, and delivering on a shared vision. The saying that it's amazing what can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit is often quoted, but it is a principle that the Golden Bears hockey program demonstrated and that I continue to use as a guiding principle. Individually all have an ego and are all too quick to point fingers, but a successful team doesn't point fingers or feed into egos. A successful team lives by a set of principles, values, and works collectively to deliver on a vision. Members of a team are not the same, but they work together as one.

Admittedly, in sports I was not the highly talented player that you might think. I wasn't blessed with natural talent, but I did know my role and took pride in working much harder, and we were successful. As the whip I find myself in a new position as an MLA but in a very familiar position, building a team and delivering on a vision with the leadership of our Premier. This summer I took the opportunity to conduct numerous health consultations across the province, two in Edmonton-Riverview, on both sides of the river I might add, but also in Medicine Hat, Sylvan Lake, Pincher Creek, Rocky Mountain House, Fort Macleod, Calgary, Lethbridge, Taber, Drumheller, and others. I had the opportunity to attend Carmangay to see their facility. I went to Hanna and Youngstown and heard of grazing lease issues and disaster support.

Each time that I would visit and speak to the community stakeholders on a local issue, I would be asked: what is an MLA from Edmonton-Riverview doing here? Each time I would explain that our Premier is very clear. We are here to govern the whole province, and I feel it my duty to understand the issues across the province. We certainly need to understand and advocate for the issues in our constituency, but we also need to understand the issues across the province, north and south, rural and urban, big city and small town, agriculture and industry, energy and environment, all the issues of Alberta.

I was born in Calgary, and as a young boy my family relocated to an acreage outside of Sherwood Park. My mother, Beverly, would travel east to Tofield, where she worked as a nurse, and my father would travel west to Edmonton, where he worked as an electronic technologist. My extended family spans across the province from Vermilion, Magrath, Cardston, Taber, Calgary, and to Camrose, where our family farm still is today. Today I live in the community of Crestwood with my beautiful wife, Leanne, who has a busy practice as a lawyer, mediator, and adjudicator and is an amazing mother to my two children, Abigail and Taylor.

With the priorities of resource stewardship, economic futures, and family and communities the challenge is balancing the delivery of these services while being fiscally conservative. I'm often asked: how did you get involved in politics, and have you always wanted to be a politician? I certainly didn't want to be a politician when I grew up. I joked that as a police officer bad guys would take shots at you, but as a politician everybody does. I explained that I was a police officer for 17 years. I worked 12 years in operations, or what is known as the street, and realized that simply focusing on law enforcement is not enough.

I've always been an advocate of holding those responsible accountable for offences, but that alone is not enough. We cannot simply arrest our way toward greater public safety. My passion for community has motivated me to inspire initiatives that focused on creating relationships with communities in a way that allowed prevention and intervention efforts to build long-term solutions. This work afforded me the opportunity to deliver a breadth of experience, spending time in emergency response as a beat officer, a criminal investigator, in community engagement, in crime prevention, and in information management.

My policing career was guided by principles and values, including by those of another conservative politician, a man by the name of Sir Robert Peel, who in 1829 laid out a set of principles that brought policing into the modern era, in particular the belief that the police are the public and that the public are the police. Other cornerstone principles are those championed by Robert Trojanowicz, the father of community-based policing, and his belief that working with community as partners in public safety leads to greater public safety and vibrant communities. As every member of the Edmonton Police Service knows, the values of community and family are essential.

Another cornerstone was in 1979, when Herman Goldstein developed problem-oriented policing, an approach that seeks to address the underlying causes of crime, not simply a manifestation of it. A few years later George Kelling and James Wilson brought about the broken windows theory and changed the way that we looked at communities by identifying that simple things like broken windows were important and that communities need to be engaged and involved in their neighbourhoods to build vibrant communities.

As a police officer working downtown for about 10 years and later as a community liaison sergeant working on Whyte Avenue for several years, I became heavily involved in community and association groups. It was through this engagement that I sought to get involved in politics. I joined the Conservative board of MP Laurie Hawn as well as the Edmonton-Riverview PC Association. Before long I found myself on the executive and then as the president. Leading up to the election, I would be asked if I was interested in running. I did not leave policing. Rather, I continued to serve the public in a different role with a larger mandate.

Supporting the greater public good through community involvement has always been a passion of mine. Alberta families play a significant role in building the future of our province, and as their representatives it is our responsibility to advocate for their

concerns and for legislation that protects families and helps them to reach their potential.

As His Honour said in the Speech from the Throne, this begins by investing in families and communities. This province's commitment to Albertan families is evident in its ongoing creation of the social policy framework. The future of our social policy depends greatly on the ideas of our community members. We've reached out to Albertans to turn their ideas into action through a social policy framework initiative, which has been ongoing this summer.

His Honour's Speech from the Throne also addressed the importance of public service. The public service in our province is strong and offers Albertans a great standard of living. It is directly connected to the future and success of Alberta's economy. Our government continues to invest in public service and in the infrastructure that supports it to secure Alberta's economic future.

9:00

Madam Speaker, I believe it is critical that we continue to invest in our public sector while remaining fiscally conservative. The Speech from the Throne laid forth a strong fiscal framework that will help us to achieve this promise. A part of this strong fiscal framework is our government's unwavering commitment to transparency, which promotes trustworthy leadership that generally takes Albertans' concerns to heart. The Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation will review Alberta's freedom of information and protection of privacy and oversee fundamental changes to the way we do business. I'm looking forward to working with the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin in this regard.

In closing, I would like to thank the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview for giving me this opportunity to represent them. To His Honour the Lieutenant Governor: thank you for sharing your words about the future of our province through the Speech from the Throne. To all the members of this House: I look forward to working with each and every one of you as the session continues. We are a dynamic group of representatives of which I am honoured to be a part as we work to do the best we can do for all Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview. That was a very engaging maiden speech.

Standing Order 29(2)(a). Are there any members that would like to comment or question? The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you for recognizing me. Just to be honest, I'm sort of befuddled by the term "fiscal conservative." This just might be me sitting on this side of the fence, you know. I don't know if you were paying attention to my throne speech and some of the things I brought up there. Don't worry; I'm a one-trick pony. I'll keep going on that theme over and over in case you missed it. Nevertheless, I look at our financial layout. Right now we're the highest spending government of all the provinces. I understand that. It seems to me that we're in a high-wage, high-inflation area. It costs more to run a business here. Why wouldn't it cost more to run a government here? At the same time, we're the lowest taxed jurisdiction in this province. I pointed out the fact that we're the lowest taxed by a country mile. Does this model, this fiscal structure that you were talking about, fit with your version of fiscal conservatism?

Mr. Young: Thank you very much for the question. I think that at the end of the day we need to deliver services to Albertans, and we need to do it keeping an eye on what we spend. What we're

looking at is our spending. The revenue side is difficult to control. There are world economies and lots of factors that come into play. We have a budget. We need to look at how tight we can keep to that budget. In terms of the tax structure the Alberta advantage is an important part of that, not just as a revenue stream.

Mr. Hehr: I'm going to follow up on that. I'll try and frame it in terms of royalties. We spend every last dime of fossil fuel resources we bring out of the ground. Is that our right and privilege here as a society to spend all this at one time? Is that your vision of fiscal conservatism?

Mr. Young: I think we need to save. I think we need to spend and deliver services and work within our budget. I think part of our budget also needs to be building up savings, and that's through the heritage trust fund, through the sustainability fund. We need to deliver services now but also in the future.

Mr. Hehr: Well, how much of that royalty revenue should we save? We spent it all, \$350 billion, over the course of the last 40 years. How much is a viable thing to save, and then where do we get the shortfall from?

Mr. Young: Well, we're having ongoing conversations with Albertans on that budget, and they've been telling us that we need to save, and we also need to deliver services.

Mr. Hehr: I know that, but you also know what I just told you. We spend all \$12 billion of the resources we're bringing in now, okay? We've spent virtually all the \$350 billion we've brought in since 1971. We have services we have to deliver. How much of that should we save for the future, and how much should we ask citizens to pay for? Or is the current model you have, this fiscal conservative model you talked about in your speech, your definition of fiscally conservative?

Mr. Young: Well, sticking to your budget is certainly fiscally conservative. On the revenue side things are going to ebb and flow, and we need to stay within our budget.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Clear.

The Acting Speaker: Thanks, hon. members.

Are there any others? The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I actually had the pleasure to talk with Mr. Young when he was in Carmangay this summer. I just want to congratulate you on being an MLA and for your past history as a peace officer in the city of Edmonton. It's good to have people like that as part of this Assembly, so thank you for that.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members who would like to comment or question under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, we'll move to our next response to the throne speech. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise in order to respond to the Speech from the Throne given back on May 24, 2012. Before I get to the substance of the throne speech, I'd like to of course begin by thanking the voters of the riding of Edmonton-Strathcona for their support in the last election. Edmonton-Strathcona is a diverse riding with a population that consists of students and professors and public service workers and artists and writers and young families and tradespeople and small-

business owners and seniors. Collectively they share, notwithstanding that diversity, a unique level of, shall we say, hopefulness and advocacy and engagement.

When I say hopefulness and engagement, there is that hopefulness and engagement when it comes to things like the arts, when it comes to matters of equality and justice, when it comes to matters of education, when it comes to issues relating to the protection or the acknowledgement even of our environment, when it comes to issues around basic principles of fairness, and overall when it comes to issues that are focused on building the strength of our communities as it relates to the overriding quality of life experienced by individual Albertans, that is understood by all of us.

There is a general consensus in Edmonton-Strathcona, certainly not without exception – obviously, that's what a democracy is about – but, notwithstanding, a general consensus that we don't do well if we're not all doing well, that we don't measure our success if we're not all succeeding, and that simply looking at the bottom line of certain, you know, multinational corporations here or certain corporations there is not the way to determine if we as community members and we as an extension of those community members are doing our job to promote and increase and enhance the quality of life experienced by all Albertans.

That being said, I just want to reiterate how pleased and proud I am to represent that riding because it truly is a diverse riding, and it's a riding that gives so much to the province overall in terms of its academics and its arts and its theatre and its small-business community and its entertainment section. I'm very, very proud to be able to represent it.

It's interesting to listen to people give their maiden speeches when it's their first year, when they've just been elected, when they're new MLAs. In a way it makes me just ever so slightly sad because I think back to the level of enthusiasm and expectation I had when I gave my first speech in response to the Speech from the Throne. I have to say that here we are now, and this is the fifth Speech from the Throne that I will be responding to, written by the second Premier since I've been elected. I feel like I've had more than simply five years go by in terms of the way I look at what we've done here.

I think, though, that certainly one of the things that I did when I first started here and something that I did as a student of politics in my other life, whether it was in this province or other provinces, when I looked at a government and I evaluated that government and that government's leadership, was look at whether that government had a vision and was trying to achieve something and was succeeding in achieving something that would leave a legacy about which members of those governments or people who participated or worked with that government would be proud when they left, whether you could point to initiatives or projects or improvements in the quality of life for the people whom you serve when you leave.

9:10

Or, conversely, are you in a situation – and I have seen governments like this before and not just Conservative governments – where you're simply doing everything you can to hold on to power, and your presence in the Legislature is more about your personal position as an MLA and staying there? Then you're sort of working collectively, somewhat frantically with your colleagues to just hold on to power, lurching from crisis to crisis, coming up with one plan here to answer this problem and another plan there to answer that problem. Then two or three years later you go back and look at those plans and those promises that you made in

response to this problem and that problem, and not only were you pushed off your agenda so that you're no longer looking at what you've achieved, what your vision was, what it was that brought you into politics, but all those plans and all those issue management strategies that your communications folks advised that you use have gotten nowhere. So you find that, really, you've made lots of grand statements, but the plans continue to be just plans for more plans and further plans.

I remember I think it was my first or second year here when the government came out with directive 74, the plan to reduce tailings ponds in Alberta. I remember that it was very frustrating for me because I was able to go back to 1972, I believe it was, when my father raised the issue of the growing tailings ponds and the threat that they presented to wildlife and wildfowl in the environment. And here we were, you know, whatever it was at that point, I guess just about 30 years later. We were finally bringing in directive 74, and we finally had a plan to start planning to reduce the growth and the footprint of these tailings ponds.

Now, here we are two or three years after that, and only two of the nine major corporations who are growing those tailings ponds are even in compliance with the plan to make a plan to ultimately plan to reduce our tailings ponds. The other seven aren't even in compliance with the plan to make a plan. Now, when you consider how much paper and how many trees were cut down to put out the many press releases which happily and gleefully announced the plan to make a plan to make a plan, you'd think that if those resources had been dedicated to maybe trying to get those other seven companies to be in compliance, we might be closer to having a record here in this Assembly that we could be proud of. But we don't.

So I can't help, unfortunately, reading this Speech from the Throne through the lens of a lot of plans that haven't really gone anywhere. When you think about legacies, you think about what it is when all of us are talking to our grandkids and saying: "This is what happened when we were in this Assembly. This is what I can point to. I was part of this. I made this change. I got them to change this idea." Or: "I took this particular proposal to my caucus and it became real." Whatever the conversation is, you need to be able to point to something. I'm afraid that this government at 40, whatever many years old it is, is not doing so well in the legacy-building department.

Now, I will say that at the beginning of this government's term back in 1971 and then probably for the first 10 years there was some pretty significant legacy building. I'm afraid, however, that not only have we lost that sense of governance and that ability to build legacy but, in fact, this government is feeding on that previous legacy. It's not just not growing; we're actually reducing it. There are, of course, a few obvious examples of that. I mean, in the early days of this government significant effort was devoted to developing a robust oil and gas industry that would carry this province into the future and spread great wealth and innovation and economic development to all Albertans, and there was, obviously, great success in that regard.

When that decision was first made and those projects were first initiated, the idea was to benefit the greatest number of Albertans possible, to marshal our resource in a way that benefited Albertans. Here we are 45 years later, and the percentage of our resource that is marshalled for Albertans has dropped by about two-thirds. It's a pittance of what it once was. So someone is marshalling our resources, but it's not Albertans anymore who are marshalling our resources, or it's a much, much smaller number of Albertans who are marshalling that resource. Meanwhile the liability to future generations as a result of marshalling that resource grows every day. It's probably grown a hundred-fold

since those initiatives first began. Think about that. What is the legacy that this term is going to leave?

Another example, the human rights code, Bill 1, the first Conservative Premier's, Premier Lougheed's, was our human rights code, a time of pride in Alberta, the first human rights code, the first human rights commission in Canada. Here we are 44 years later, and two years ago or three years ago we introduced a piece of legislation that permanently scarred – scarred – our human rights code, embarrassed this province in relation to the rest of the country, and put a permanent scar which is unprecedented in any other similar piece of legislation in this country.

Today we introduced an Education Act. We have now become so equivocal on the Bill 1, that Premier Lougheed introduced, that human rights code, that once-proud statement of principle, that we've decided that we are not quite comfortable putting it into an Education Act that outlines the terms and conditions under which education in this province is supported and funded with public dollars. It's shameful. It's a level of cynicism which is really not surprising for a government, I suppose, that is 45 or 44 years old. But it is unfortunate.

You need to think about what the legacy is that will be left after this term, and so far it's not looking so good.

We've talked about our education system as a whole. The throne speech doesn't make any specific plans for when we're going to finally join the rest of the country and move to full-day kindergarten. I'm throwing it out there. Maybe sometime in the next four years if you guys want to have something to run on, something that you can touch and point to, you might want to get moving on that plan. I've seen no indication that we're going anywhere on it, notwithstanding that it was a promise made by the Premier repeatedly during her efforts to become your leader. It's an important issue that we need to build on and that I'm disappointed to see no movement forward on.

Now we're in a position where we're dealing with, as the Member for Calgary-Buffalo stated and did a really good job of outlining, an unrealistic situation here. Nobody is making hard decisions. Everyone is making easy decisions, and they're not even easy good decisions. They're just easy decisions. It's really important for everybody here to think about the legacy that we're going to leave. We need to think about what we're going to ask our kids to clean up. How much debt are we going to ask them to sacrifice to pay off? How much money are we going to ask them to pay to clean up the environment that we are simply not dealing with right now?

We can come up with plans and more plans and committees and more committees, but nothing is changing on the ground. Absolutely nothing is changing on the ground. We're about to go into deliberation on one of the largest growths in the oil sands that we've had in many, many years, and we have no more information on which to base that decision than we did 10 years ago because we're really not moving; we're just talking about moving. So the ultimate liability of that will be left with our kids.

I don't mean to be such a downer. I know I sound a bit like a downer right now. I guess that's what comes after five years. Who knows? Maybe in 10 years, if I get re-elected, I'll be happy again. Then suddenly maybe the rose-coloured glasses have just never come off; I'm not sure.

I simply ask you to think about what is the legacy. Simply staying in power? That's not a legacy. It's an act, but it's not a legacy. It's not something that you're proud of. It's not something you tell your children about. It's not something you write about. It's not something that people remember when you're gone. Right now this throne speech contains no legacy. It just contains empty

promises geared towards holding onto power with very little that you can hold onto, touch, or hold accountable. That needs to change, and I hope it does.

Thank you.

9:20

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, for your thoughtful response to the throne speech.

Standing Order 29(2)(a). Anyone with a comment or question? The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Hehr: I enjoyed your comments as always. The introduction of the Education Act struck me as sort of one of those things. What do you think the aversion is to this party now, the one that under Lougheed started the human rights legislation? What do you think is the big aversion to simply recognizing sexual orientation as a protected right in this province, mentioning that we will not tolerate discrimination in any form or fashion that this government touches? What is the aversion?

We saw it for 10 years of Klein, when he wouldn't recognize it in the human rights code, we saw it in bill 44, and now we see it here in this Education Act. It seems to me that Albertans have moved so far past this, yet this government is still willing to segregate people on this characteristic that has nothing to do with their human worth.

Ms Notley: You know, I was talking about the difference between taking a position and pursuing a vision and leaving a legacy that you can be proud of versus scrambling to hold on to power and polling that 30 per cent or 25 per cent of the population that you need to swing to win that critical number of seats. It's a cynical, cynical, cynical move on the part of this government. They abandoned the principles that I think the majority of them on that side right now know are right in order to stave off a threat from their right flank. Albertans actually expected them to move forward and stand up for those principles that they believe are right. Certainly, the Premier made every effort to make it sound as though she would. Instead they've capitulated to a very loud minority, a small group of Albertans who are not prepared to move ahead with the rest of the country and certainly the majority of Albertans.

Sometimes something is just right. The human rights code is one of those few documents that you would think there would be consensus on with everybody, that it is just right. You don't back away from it. You don't get nervous about it. You don't stop making eye contact and think: well, I'd better not mention this in school because someone might be taking offence. When we start thinking that way about something as basic as the human rights code, we have capitulated in a way that is really, really damaging to the overall culture of our province.

I find it particularly ironic that that move is accompanied cynically with the so-called antibullying language. It is crazy-making because, of course, it's that very drive that underlies the decision to back away, not make eye contact, and remove reference to the human rights code from our Education Act of all things. Why wouldn't we say that that should be honoured? It's simply a statement of principle. It didn't mean anything when it was in there before, and it wouldn't mean anything now. It's meaningful in its absence. It has become meaningful in its absence, quite frankly. It wasn't meaningful before, legally, at all. It was simply a statement of principle. But its absence now is a statement to Albertans that we can be bullied.

It's so ironic that the government is trying to suggest that there's antibullying language in the Education Act because they're

leaving the door open for bullying to go unanswered because the very tools that you would need to answer it – teachers are now being told that they need to be very careful about talking about them without first running through a whole bunch of hoops.

So it's really a mess that they've created because of, in answer to your question, simply a lack of backbone and a desire to get elected over a desire to make a principled decision.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Is there anyone else who would like to comment or question the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, we will move on to our next presenter in response to the throne speech, the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane for his maiden speech.

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the tough job you're doing tonight. I don't envy your position at all, trying to remember everyone's constituencies.

I would like to start by thanking the Honourable Lieutenant Governor for his inspiring words and his commitment to this great province. At the same time I would also like to thank our hon. Premier for her dedication and loyalty to the people of Alberta. I have to say that I couldn't be more proud, after getting to know the Premier, to be a part of her government.

Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise before you in this Assembly as the newly elected Member for Banff-Cochrane, and I have to say that given the previous speaker I am especially proud to be a newly elected member that brings enthusiasm, innovation, and commitment to this government to make things work and to make things better for all Albertans.

The faith and obligations placed on me by the people of this constituency are both a humbling and a daunting experience, but I'm more than ready to get on with the task at hand. However, I must begin with a true regret, which is that my father is not alive to witness this day. My dad, Horace Casey, was a rural politician in Ontario for my entire childhood. He served as a councillor and reeve of Thurlow township as well as warden of Hastings county. During those years council meetings would often adjourn to our kitchen table, where politics was discussed until it was time for everyone to go home and milk their cows.

Politics was the language spoken at our table, and while I do not have a degree in political science, I can assure you that I have served a very practical apprenticeship, discussing all matters political with some of the most down-to-earth and honest men I have ever had the privilege of knowing. My father would have been exceptionally proud of me today, and of course it is every son's ultimate desire to gain that respect and blessing.

Madam Speaker, my wife, Pennie, and I moved to Canmore in 1973 as 21-year-old newlyweds. From the first time that we saw the Rocky Mountains pushing up from the foothills, there was little doubt where we would spend our lives. To say that it was love at first sight is an understatement. Canmore and Alberta have both been very good to us, giving us the ability to withstand recessions, raise a strong, healthy family, and achieve goals beyond our wildest dreams.

We have two adult daughters, Alison and Shannon Casey, and a new, second-generation Albertan born last August to Shannon, Casey Lazzarotto. By the way, Madam Speaker, for those that have not had the experience, all the verbose things that people tell you about being a grandparent seem initially to be a little exaggerated, but they are all absolutely true.

Madam Speaker, I was first elected to town council in 1995 and elected mayor in 1998. During that time we were experiencing a growth rate of over 10 per cent, which is almost an impossible rate

to sustain. The challenges were divisive, complicated, and seemingly insurmountable, much like today, but it was a great way to cut your teeth in politics.

After a three-year break back in the real world I was re-elected mayor in 2004 and held that position until April 23 of this year. During that time we developed one of the first successful municipal housing corporations in Alberta and established a regional waste commission and the first regional transit commission in the province. We also pioneered the concept of wildlife movement corridors and developed a process of screening developments to ensure sustained benefit for the community and minimize impact on the environment.

In spite of having rigid environmental and development regulations, Canmore had over \$1 billion of construction investment in the last 10 years, which is no small achievement for a community of 12,000 people. All of this happened, Madam Speaker, in the middle of a major economic downturn. This success proves it is possible to have strong environmental and development regulations while still enjoying the benefits of economic growth, sentiments that were also expressed by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor in his Speech from the Throne.

The responsible development of our natural resources is extremely important, and I'm more than confident that our Premier will protect our environment while advancing world-leading resource stewardship and further improving Alberta's advantage in the global marketplace.

Madam Speaker, Banff-Cochrane is an incredibly beautiful and diverse constituency. In fact, many of the images that people from around the world associate with Alberta are found within this riding. Beginning in the east, there is Rocky View county, the town of Cochrane, and the hamlet of Bragg Creek. Nestled in the foothills of Rocky View county are some of the most beautiful and productive ranches found anywhere in Alberta. This area is incredibly proud of its western heritage and rightly so. The town of Cochrane is the largest urban centre in the constituency, with 18,000 residents. It serves as a commercial core for the area and is a wonderful blend of urban and rural lifestyles. It is also home to a diversity of industries, the largest being Spray Lakes Sawmills. The hamlet of Bragg Creek is a picturesque community tucked away in the forested foothills south of Cochrane and bordering Kananaskis Country.

9:30

Kananaskis Country, Madam Speaker, is a proud product of Peter Lougheed, who wanted to set aside this remarkable place for future generations, a true legacy. This area is 4,000 square kilometres of unique mountain and foothills landscape where conservation, recreation, and industry coexist. There are six provincial parks, four wildland parks, and 39 provincial recreation areas that represent two-thirds of the total area of Kananaskis Country. Commercial activities like oil and gas exploration and timber harvesting also occur in the region.

Bordering the west side of Kananaskis Country is Banff national park, Canada's first national park and UNESCO world heritage site. It is over 6,000 square kilometres of valleys, mountains, glaciers, forests, meadows, rivers. Contained within the Banff-Cochrane constituency are icons such as Lake Louise, Moraine Lake, the Valley of the Ten Peaks, and Temple Glacier to name but a few. Banff park is also home to some of Alberta's most popular ski areas: Lake Louise, Sunshine Village, and Norquay. The town of Banff forms a commercial hub for the park and has just over 8,000 permanent residents. However, on a busy summer day that number can swell to an estimated 25,000 visitors. Madam Speaker, Banff has a tourism history going back over a

hundred years. Virtually no visitor to Alberta misses the opportunity to experience the natural splendour of this area, and I would doubt that many Albertans have not been there at least once.

Together the towns of Banff and Canmore form the major mountain destinations for Alberta. Canmore has a population of 12,000 permanent residents and 6,000 nonpermanent residents that have second-home properties in the community. Since the closing of the coal mines in 1979 Canmore has grown as a tourist destination and a popular second-home location, primarily for Albertans. It is also home to the Canmore Nordic Centre, a legacy of the 1988 Olympic Games, which hosts national and international cross-country and biathlon events each year. These events are made possible because of the \$26 million renovation and upgrade that were completed by the provincial government in recent years.

Madam Speaker, Canmore's neighbour is the municipal district of Bighorn. There are several small hamlets in this area, with Exshaw being the largest at 400 residents. It is also home to most of the major industrial and mining operations in the constituency, those being Lafarge, Baymag, and Graymont. The MD is also home to timber harvesting, ranching, oil and gas, and tourism industries. Between Bighorn and Rocky View county is the Morley reserve, which is home to three bands, the Bears paw, Chiniki, and Wesley bands. The bands recently developed the Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino and previously developed Nakoda Lodge, which is without doubt one of the most magnificent settings in the foothills. There are also many beautiful ranches located on the reserve up against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains.

With all the natural beauty and abundance that Banff-Cochrane has, it is sometimes hard to imagine that there are some very real challenges facing us. As an example, Madam Speaker, much of the constituency is struggling to meet the demands of years of sustained growth and development pressure. Provincial transportation, education, and infrastructure have fallen behind, leaving traffic congested and schools overcrowded. Cochrane in particular is in desperate need of improvements to the intersection of highways 22 and 1A, and their schools are so overcrowded that the stage in a gymnasium is currently being used as a classroom.

Tourism is a primary industry in the west portion of the riding. It is one of the major economic drivers in the province, yet it is perceived by many to be a nice-to-have but not an essential part of the Alberta economic well-being. It is time that tourism is recognized as the industry it is and is supported by the province in a similar way to other recognized industries.

Banff and Canmore are without supportive living and long-term care facilities for seniors in spite of the fact that recent assessments have demonstrated the need. In the eastern slopes region the lack of current land-use planning has resulted in ongoing conflicts between recreational users, community groups, and industry. It is essential that we move ahead on the South Saskatchewan land-use plan to address many of these issues. I'm proud to say, Madam Speaker, that the government is currently working on resolution to many of these issues and will continue to. Of course, all of our constituencies have similar issues, but working together as a team, both sides of this House working in the best interest of all Albertans, we can find reasonable resolutions to many of these challenges.

Madam Speaker, while the opportunities in Alberta are plentiful and the quality of life remains the highest in Canada, this government recognizes that building and maintaining such a prosperous province comes with many challenges. As someone who is familiar with issues that arise from population and industry

growth, I can say with confidence that our Premier will face these challenges with intelligence and integrity. I'm excited about our Premier's commitment to further invest in public services and infrastructure across our province, commitments that will not only benefit the constituents of Banff-Cochrane but will help secure Alberta's economic future. As the Lieutenant Governor mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, making strategic investments in both human capital and infrastructure will strengthen our province.

I look forward to working collaboratively with my hon. colleagues in order to address the challenges we face so that we can ensure that future generations enjoy the opportunity and prosperity we have today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, for that very informative maiden speech. I have to say that, indeed, you do live in one of the most naturally beautiful constituencies in this province.

Standing Order 29(2)(a). Is there anyone who would like to comment or ask a question of the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane? The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you. To the member. You mentioned that you have no long-term care or seniors' facilities in your riding there, and it's an issue. Can you address that more and explain to members what that means to your community and what the need really is?

Thank you.

Mr. Casey: I think that the recent assessment had that we needed about 110 beds for supportive living at least in the community. There's a renovation going on in the lodge currently. We had a fire in our lodge that, thankfully, no one was injured in. During the rebuilding of the lodge it became obvious that there needed to be supportive living. It looks like there's going to be an opportunity to combine some of the new construction with that, so we will be getting some beds.

The truth is that currently for anyone living in the Bow Valley, so in the Banff-Canmore area, really – if you need supportive living, a lot of people end up going to Calgary or to High River, leaving the valley. For some it's like taking a sailor away from the ocean. You know, if you can't look out every day and see the water, you feel that you're lost. For people that have lived their lives surrounded by those walls that we call mountains, taking them out of those environments at an old age really is a hardship for them.

I mean, I think we've certainly had some success moving forward, but it's a desperate need, and it's something that we need to move forward on for sure.

The Acting Speaker: Any other members who would like to comment or question the Member for Banff-Cochrane under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, I would ask the hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General to respond to the throne speech.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on your recent election and, I believe, one of your first evenings in the throne.

It's an honour for me to rise today in response to the speech by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Don Ethell, on May 23, 2012. As I considered my remarks for this evening, I wanted to mention, you know, that like many people in this Assembly I'm from another province. It talks about the promise of Alberta, the

fact that we attract so many people from other provinces. Indeed, I am an immigrant from Saskatchewan. I moved here from Regina via Saskatoon 12 years ago, and I think the Member for Calgary-Lougheed is also from Saskatchewan.

9:40

Madam Speaker, this is my second term as an MLA, although the riding names have changed. I had the privilege last term of representing the constituency of Calgary-Egmont from 2008 to 2012. Calgary-Egmont has a long history in our city, having been represented by Merv Leitch starting in '71, also by David Carter, who became the Speaker, and former minister Denis Herard before me. Now, the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 2010 changed the name of the riding to Calgary-Acadia, as well as some other minor changes, reassigning the communities of Ramsay and Kingsland to Calgary-Fort and Calgary-Glenmore, respectively, and adding the community of Southwood while maintaining the existing areas of Willow Park, Maple Ridge, Acadia, Fairview, Riverbend, and Manchester within its borders.

Now, many asked me why the name was changed. The original name of Egmont was named after the Earl of Egmont, Fred Perceval, who had actually a 28-room house where, interestingly, Southcentre Mall is today. I'm told that the staircase from the house is now in the Black Swan pub on Southport Road. Madam Speaker, the reality is that my office received repeated calls from Edgemont, a subdivision in the far northwest of Calgary. So we did not contest the name change as the name of Acadia reflects the modern reality of our constituency. Indeed, much has changed in Calgary since it was named Egmont in 1971.

Madam Speaker, anyone who enters public office, regardless of party affiliation, deserves credit, and I want to say thank you to the four others who ran against me for putting their names forward and supporting our democratic system. I'd also like to thank the approximately 7,000 people who placed their confidence in me at the ballot box. This is an increase in percentage from the 2008 election. More importantly, I would say, the turnout was up to 59 per cent, up substantially from the 36 per cent in 2008. I think that's great news all around.

Madam Speaker, I held office hours and will continue to maintain activity within my own constituency but also want to welcome my new constituency manager, Christina Steed.

Madam Speaker, my family originally came from southwestern Saskatchewan, near Fox Valley, a short drive across the border from Medicine Hat. My ancestors are German, and my late paternal grandfather, Jake, ran a gas station and service shop. His wife, Frances, was a teacher's aide. My maternal grandfather, Phil Hauk, was a teacher and principal, and my grandmother lives today in Calgary and is 95 years old. My mother, Marguerite, is a retired teacher who operates a property management company in Calgary, and my father, Brian, is a retired insurance adjuster who works part-time in the same city. All of these individuals I've mentioned have encouraged me on my quest for public office. Frankly, since I was 13 years old and knocked on doors on a cold night in Regina, this has always been my ambition.

We have many rights under our constitution, and with the right to vote, I would say to anyone here, to all Albertans, comes the responsibility to exercise that vote. Members of all parties must continually encourage the people to vote and not just during election time but throughout the four-year cycle of the government.

I've had a few occupations – banker, part-time singer, lawyer, real estate investor, and entrepreneur – but none has given me the sense of community and service as public office. Some of my best

days in public office have been as minister of housing and urban affairs because that has shown me the compassionate side of Alberta. Madam Speaker, we've been able to assist people with affordable housing as well as the homeless people in a financially responsible manner through private-sector partnerships. At the same time, we've housed 3,995 formerly homeless people. Also, the private-sector partnership model saved over \$1 billion over four years.

I've also had the opportunity, of course, to serve as Solicitor General and now as Minister of Justice and Provincial Secretary, and I look upon myself as having 3.8 million clients, except that I don't have to send out a bill anymore to these clients. I have to say this in jest, of course, because I along with every member here is proud of his or her profession.

Looking forward, my key priorities will continue to be prudent financial management in my department and a continuation, of course, of the safe communities initiative. I'd like to thank my ministerial staff – Mat Steppan, Chad Barber, Josh Stewart, Avery Trimble, Shannon Clarke, and Arlene Yam – for their constant assistance, particularly as we prepare on a very important initiative, and that is to begin the Alberta property rights advocate, something that I look forward to having a key involvement in.

Madam Speaker, during the course of a campaign we owe a debt of gratitude to all of our volunteers, and there were close to 200 volunteers on my campaign. Many people in this Assembly are of many different faiths, and according to my own faith I'd like to thank God for giving me the rare opportunity of being one of 829 to serve in this Assembly.

Ronald Reagan said that each generation goes further than the generation past because it stands on the shoulders of that generation. Along these lines I'd like to say a special thank you to someone I lost just before the election, my grandfather Phil. I've met many people since becoming an MLA, but I can tell you that he's the greatest person I've ever met. He taught me the value of hard work, service to the public, respect for our heritage. I don't know of anyone who would match his spirit of generosity. Shortly before he died, he shared with me that he had thought about running for public office but didn't actually have the opportunity because he had five small children.

I want to say thank you to my parents, Marguerite and Brian; my long-time friend Pierre Poilievre, Member of Parliament for Nepean-Carleton, for his always objective and curt counsel; all of our donors; and, of course, the Premier for all of her support throughout the campaign.

Madam Speaker, regardless of our partisan affiliation, may we strive to improve our public's view of this Chamber and of public officials every day that we are here.

With that, I would move to adjourn debate, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister, and thank you for that very gracious response to the throne speech.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 1

Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012

(continued)

[Adjourned debate October 23: Mr. Oberle]

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill 1, the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012, which would give presumptive coverage for posttraumatic stress disorder for first responders. This is the kind of bill that is easy for a member of the opposition to rise and speak in favour of.

I would say that when we look at our first responders, they have a quite different job than most of us. When they go to work in the morning, for them to have a meaningful day at work they are heading into situations that most of us end up running away from. I was struck by this when I was on my way down to Fort Macleod to have a meeting with the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod. It was the day of those terrible wildfires down south. I'd called Chief Weasel Head on the Blood reserve to find out how things were going, and I was grateful to hear that things were going well with the firefighting efforts. I spoke with Terry Michaelis, the mayor of Milk River, later that day, and he also commended the incredible work of the first responders.

I had driven past a home that was on fire while I was on my way down, just outside of Claresholm. I knew that there was an incredible amount of demand in the south to deal with those wildfires. I was a bit fearful of what was happening at that home, but as I was driving by, having called in a 911, I was pleased to see a Claresholm firefighting unit heading in the direction to take the fire out. On my way back from Fort Macleod I stopped in to see how the fire had gone. Unfortunately, they couldn't save the house. The other home had been burned down. They told me that an old fella with his dog had managed to make it out safely.

What I was struck by was just how down to earth these men were in talking about the very dangerous work that they had done that day. This is what we see with our first responders, that very real, everyday heroism, that commitment to duty, that commitment to honour, and the incredible courage that they display. I've seen that as well when I went to a Pride event at the Edmonton Police Service and spoke with the tactical team there. I am also going to be going on a drive-along with sheriffs to see what they see first-hand every day. Then, of course, we all know the kind of trauma that our paramedics see every day on the job. I think that all of us in this Legislature feel great gratitude and thank them for the work that they do.

I also had the great fortune in the last six weeks to go to the firefighters' balls for both Okotoks and High River. In High River our chief there, Chief Len Zebedee, received a diamond jubilee award for his 28 years of service. It was a great honour for me to witness that. His wife, Pat, gave a prayer as a firefighter's spouse, and I can tell you that there wasn't a dry eye in the room. Pat's son Cody, who's also following in Dad's footsteps at Heritage Pointe, was compelled to get into the firefighting service because of the experience of his father and the great and incredible leadership his dad had shown. So Pat is a mom as well as a wife giving that prayer every time that bell rings.

9:50

In Okotoks Chief Ken Thevenot spoke passionately about the work of this Chamber in adding chronic illnesses to workers' compensation coverage, and he wanted me to pass along to my colleagues in the Legislature his great gratitude for seeing those illnesses added to workers' compensation coverage.

We know that this is dangerous work for many of our first responders. We all know there are physical risks that they face. We all know, as well, that there are chronic illnesses that many of them face. We also know that there is psychological stress that our first responders face. Bill 1 accepts that this level of psychological

stress is work related. Fortunately, we've seen that it is relatively rare.

We've got 27,000 first responders in Alberta: 13,500 are firefighters, both full- and part-time; 9,200 are paramedics; 3,800 are police; and 700 are sheriffs. In the last two and a half years the Workers' Compensation Board has approved 22 cases of post-traumatic stress disorder coverage. Of that, four were first responders.

Now, that might seem to indicate that those who go into this profession are particularly hardy, and from what I've experienced, that is certainly true. But it may also suggest that there is a culture within these communities that makes it difficult for them to reach out for help when they're facing psychological stress. I think that this amendment goes a long way towards changing that culture so that those who do suffer from this illness are able to seek help, able to get the medical services that they need, and able to either get back to work or counselled into another profession. We know that the extreme trauma or the chronic trauma that they face on a day-to-day basis can take its toll on many of them. They deserve our support, and they deserve to be able to get help.

We will be proposing some minor amendments to the legislation, which I hope will be well received by the government. In particular, I would say that with my own riding, in High River and Okotoks, we've got a hybrid department of full-time and part-time paid firefighters as well as volunteer firefighters, so we would like the government to consider the addition of volunteer firefighter coverage. We know that they don't need income replacement, but they do need their medical costs covered in the event that they are diagnosed with this illness.

With that, I'm supportive of the government's initiative in this regard. We intend to work with the government to see this passed, and I commend the government on bringing it forward for debate in this Legislature and being the first government to propose this type of presumptive coverage.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Is there anyone else who would like to speak in second reading to Bill 1?

Mr. Young: I just wanted to reiterate the importance of this. I've experienced a couple of things personally, and often the culture of, "Just push the issue down," is prevalent in first responders. Whether you're a tactical guy or a community guy, you end up seeing some things, whether it's a terrible case of a stabbing or a homicide or some of the horrific ones of young, young children, whether it's sexual abuse or in the nature of those.

As well, you know, a lot of our members get exposed to infectious diseases, needle pricks. I personally had a guy who had HIV spit blood in my eye. Then you have to go home and talk to your wife and deal with that and go through the whole ordeal of getting tested and all those types of things.

People can be tough on the outside, but those feelings are not addressed. You deal with the incident at the time, whether it's cutting down a suicide victim or finding another one who's been in a garage for some time. Those memories and those feelings you carry with you. They don't just go away from one incident, but they build over time. So reflecting those emotional issues of first responders as well as fire and ambulance and that is certainly the right thing to do. I should also add that the services are proactively dealing with this, talking about everything from suicide prevention to support and psychological services, but this adds in a layer of support that is certainly well supported.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members that wish to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to stand and debate this important piece of legislation. First off, I would like to say that I am pleased to see the Premier and this government bring this forward and recognize the importance of this issue.

Posttraumatic stress disorder is a devastating condition. I've had the opportunity to meet with various stakeholders over the course of the summer break to discuss this bill, and some of them have opened up to me about the stresses, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview just did, that they have experienced while on the job. The reality is that there are few professions that have such prolonged and consistent exposure to the types of events that our first responders see on a regular basis. These incidents would cause nightmares in the average citizen, but for our first responders they're just part of the job, part of the everyday routine. However, some of these experiences may have a more traumatic and long-term effect.

Now, due to the extreme nature of some of these stories that were shared with me, I'll spare the details to this House, but I think it's important to remember that when an infant dies or a toddler drowns or when a mother is breathing her last breaths and asking a first responder to pass a message on to her children, it's those people who have to go home at night. They have to look their wives, their loved ones in the face. They have to go to bed. They have to get up the next day and go and do the exact same thing over again.

This is the reason that we need to get this bill right. Although first responders possess strength that is commendable and their ability to make swift and decisive decisions under the stress of extreme situations is very incredible, we in society at large need them to be able to function at a high level in order for them to fulfill their roles of protecting us. They understand their role and know full well what it is they've signed up for. Our role should be to return the favour. We need to support them and their families when posttraumatic stress disorder is diagnosed, and we need to ensure that the treatment that they receive is one that allows them to take their lives back. We need to ensure that we don't play politics with their mental well-being.

Now, there are many positives in this bill. The presumptive nature should go without saying, and again I'd like to congratulate the government for recognizing that. The inclusion of EMTs, peace and police officers is a very logical decision as well. There will be discussion in this House if other, I guess, careers should be added to that mix, and I am happy to start where we're at now.

I'm pleased to see that the bill also explicitly notes that the diagnosis will be contingent on the most recent edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association. With that, we can confidently move forward knowing that our first responders will always be diagnosed with the most current information possible. That said, I would like to flag that the standards are set to change next year, when the DSM-5 comes into play in May, and that may impact whether or not individuals who may not have qualified leading up to May of 2013 may then be able to under the new model. It may present a challenge for the WCB, and I would just like to flag that.

I'm also particularly pleased to see that this legislation covers first responders who are or have been a first responder, and I'm hopeful that the compensation will be offered to those who have struggled to receive coverage from WCB for this condition in the

past. In my constituency there is an individual who spent 26 years in the military and as a firefighter, and about 10 years ago he started suffering the trauma of posttraumatic stress disorder. He could not get coverage from the WCB, so he spent years of his life and \$30,000 of his own money to receive the treatment just to allow him to sleep at night. I'm hopeful that this legislation may allow for some recourse for him to recover the costs of his treatment.

Now, I do have some serious reservations about the phrase "unless the contrary is proven." There is a widely held belief that the WCB is inherently set up to dismiss or reject claims. Further, a Mental Health Commission of Canada advisory committee in a submission entitled *Stress at Work, Mental Injury and the Law in Canada*, final revision, dated February 21, 2009, at page 16 notes:

In some important ways the uncertain legal situation surrounding mental injury at work mimics that which surrounded physical injury at work during the late 19th century. And ironically it was the fact that employees were winning more of their claims against employers during that period that led to the introduction of Workers' Compensation legislation.

It goes on to say:

Workers' compensation law is at an ethical and practical crossroads with regard to whether or to what extent it can and should hold the line against employee claims for stress related disability.

I can table five copies of that, please.

10:00

Well, Madam Speaker, it seems that this is an ethical problem that our WCB doesn't seem to have. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier, 20 of 42 claims presented to the WCB were rejected in just the last two and a half years. I believe it may be problematic for us to pass this legislation under the pretext that first responders are going to receive the treatment that they require, yet we are leaving it up to administrative laws to determine their accessibility.

According to another paper filed by *Clinical Psychology Review*, tabled here, that summarized 28 studies of PTSD in first responders, research suggests that approximately 10 per cent of all first responders may meet the criteria for PTSD and could benefit from some form of treatment. In Alberta that number would equal 2,700 of our men and women on the front lines. Now, according to WCB four of a potential 2,700 have claimed PTSD coverage since 2010. That's quite a difference, and I suggest that we explore why. Why only four when it should be closer to 2,700? Perhaps it's due to the negative stigma attached to mental disorders such as PTSD and amplified with first responders.

In a PhD dissertation exploring PTSD in first responders, it is suggested that there is an unwritten code in these fraternities or families of first responders that you do not appear weak, that you do not express emotion. Those who do appear weak face the fear of rejection from their co-workers, and those who take it a step further face being put on reduced duty and perhaps losing their job on the front lines altogether, which all too often is a part of the identity of who they are and what makes them the person that they are.

This administrative stress, these feelings of abandonment by the people closest to them and the depression linked to this, can compound that trauma. I believe that those first responders who are suffering from PTSD should have access to culturally competent clinicians who are familiar with the research and realities that first responders face not only in the field when dealing with the crisis that instigates the disorder but also the very real stressors that exist within the organizations that they work in.

Four out of 2,700. The others are possibly self-medicating, drinking to fall asleep at night, taking drugs to stop the nightmares. We need to do a better job of educating the general public about mental health, and we need to do a better job educating our first responders about the realities of stress-related trauma. We need to do this because these are the people that we ask to protect us and save our loved ones in the time of crisis. It is in all of our best interests to ensure that they are able to perform those duties when we need them to. I believe we need to embark on an educational campaign specific to first responders and help these people come to terms with their disorder, to have the confidence to seek help without the fear of rejection from their peers, and ultimately to get their lives back.

This legislation will be the first of its kind in Canada, and the precedent it will set is the reason why it's so imperative for us to get this right. We need to set the bar high to ensure our first responders are provided with the best practices of posttraumatic

stress disorder treatment and that they are not encumbered by the administrative laws of the WCB. I look forward to working with my fellow members on all sides of the floor to strengthen this bill and will certainly support it moving forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to move to adjourn debate at this time.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the hour and the fact that this is the first day of session, I think we should all perhaps go home early tonight. I would move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:05 p.m. to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

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