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The 28th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, December 3, 2012

Issue 26

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

First Session

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Anglin, Joe, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)
Bhullar, Hon. Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)
Bikman, Gary, Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND)
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL),
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Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)
Campbell, Hon. Robin, West Yellowhead (PC),
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Casey, Ron, Banff-Cochrane (PC)
Cusanelli, Hon. Christine, Calgary-Currie (PC)
Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Acadia (PC),
Deputy Government House Leader
Donovan, Ian, Little Bow (W)
Dorward, David C., Edmonton-Gold Bar (PC)
Drysdale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
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Fawcett, Hon. Kyle, Calgary-Klein (PC)
Fenske, Jacquie, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC)
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W)
Fox, Rodney M., Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)
Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)
Goudreau, Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (PC)
Griffiths, Hon. Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)
Hale, Jason W., Strathmore-Brooks (W)
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),
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Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)
Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)
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Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
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Official Opposition Deputy Whip
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Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),
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Rodney, Hon. Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
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Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),
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Leader of the Official Opposition
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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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STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

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Blakeman	Quest
Donovan	Rogers
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Eggen	Sherman
Fenske	Smith
Goudreau	Starke
Hehr	Strankman
Jansen	Towle
Luan	Young
McDonald	Vacant
Olesen	

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Quest
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Jablonski

Anderson
Casey
Dorward
Eggen
Kubinec
Sandhu
Sherman

Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

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Dorward
Fenske
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McDonald
Notley
Saskiw
Wilson
Young

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Fraser	Notley
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Jablonski	Sarich
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Jeneroux	Swann
Johnson, L.	Wilson
Kang	Young
Kubinec	Vacant
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DeLong
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Dorward
Forsyth
Goudreau
Jablonski
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Quest
Sherman
Smith

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Bhardwaj	Olesen
Brown	Pastoor
DeLong	Rowe
Fox	Sarich
Fritz	Starke
Goudreau	Strankman
Jeneroux	Swann
Kennedy-Glans	Webber
Luan	

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

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Bhardwaj	Notley
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Hehr	Sandhu
Jansen	Saskiw
Jeneroux	Towle
Johnson, L.	Xiao
Kennedy-Glans	Young
Kubinec	

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Donovan	Starke
Fenske	Stier
Fraser	Webber
Fritz	

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Barnes	Kubinec
Bilous	Lemke
Blakeman	Leskiw
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Calahasen	Stier
Cao	Webber
Casey	Xiao
Fenske	Young
Fraser	Vacant
Hale	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 3, 2012

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. Dear Lord, may we as elected members always do the right thing for and unto others for we are but servants chosen by others to bear the burdens, the challenges, and the duties of public life as entrusted to us. Amen.

Hon. members, please remain standing now as we begin this week with the wonderful singing of our national anthem led by Mr. Paul Lorieau. I invite you to participate in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Mr. Olson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly today a group of 51 very bright students from Griffiths-Scott middle school in Millet. That's in my constituency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose. They're here to have a look at the building and hear about the history of the place and also witness the legislative process. I had a chance to chat briefly with them just before question period, and they indicated that they're all very much enjoying the experience. I'm going to have a chance to engage with them again soon because Griffiths-Scott middle school is having a grand opening of their new school next week on December 13. I know they're all very excited about their new school. With them are teachers and leaders Glen Donlevy, Hayley Snowden, Gary Hill, and Susan Schmidt. I'd ask them to all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Dorward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you a grade 6 class, a German bilingual program from Forest Heights elementary school in Gold Bar, who are here with their teacher – I'm going to make sure I get this right – Frau Marion Fritz and a parent, Mrs. Kathy Colwell. These bright minds have been here all week. They're in the School at the Legislature program. I just visited with them. It's my hope that these students will take an avid interest in government during their time here and – who knows? – maybe replace me in this seat someday. I would now ask that they rise and please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride and all the love in my heart that I introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly the greatest gifts that a man can get from God, and that's my wife, Mishelle, and my two sons, Carson and Thaine. I have to tell you that anything good that I've ever done in my life is because of the good woman who stands behind me, and everything good that I'll do is for those two kids up there. I honour them, and I'll work hard for them and for the rest of Albertans. My kids want to send a message to the Premier, and that is: we stand with you, and we certainly stand behind you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services, followed by Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly two young ladies who are currently working in the Department of Human Services. Nicole Nunes is completing her practicum for a master's in social work with the Ministry of Human Services. She's been with the ministry since May of this year and is currently working with the social policy framework team to analyze the feedback gathered during our public engagement process. She spent seven years working in direct service delivery with the social services field, mainly in the not-for-profit sector, including work with the offender, immigrant, and refugee populations and also with the housing first initiative. Nicole has an interest in policy development, particularly in how policy and front-line delivery connect. She's come to the right place.

Stefanie Roskopf is a policy intern currently in her first eight-month placement with the Ministry of Human Services. She has been assisting in the creating of communication tools for the literacy and essential skills program offered by the ministry. After Christmas Stefanie will be moving on to her second eight-month placement, with Municipal Affairs. Stefanie is interested in working in International and Intergovernmental Relations upon completion of her internship in August of 2013. Stefanie is a graduate of the University of Alberta and currently resides in Edmonton.

Nicole, to my good fortune, is not only working for me, but she's also my boss. She's a constituent in Edmonton-Whitemud.

I'd ask Stefanie and Nicole to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by the Minister of Culture.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a group of guests who are members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. These workers are from Monterey Place assisted living and represent nearly 90 staff members that continue to be locked out by their employer, Triple A Living. We're now well over the five-month mark. Once again they're here to remind this PC government that private operators like Triple A Living are receiving government subsidies yet paying salaries up to 27 per cent lower than industry standard. I'd now like my guests to rise as I call their names and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly: Ester Castillo, Sharifa Mohamed, Nicole Stromquist, and Maricel Tabile.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture, followed by Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you Mr. Brendan Newman. Brendan is a policy analyst for the Department of Energy and a recent graduate of the University of Alberta with a degree in classics and history. My deputy, Barry Day, and I had the honour of hosting Brendan on a tour of the Provincial Archives this morning. The tour and lunch was an auction item that Brendan bid on, raising \$170 for the United Way. I'd like to ask Brendan to stand now and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a constituent of mine, Melissa Barr. I had the pleasure of meeting Melissa two years ago, when she first got her job as a reporter for the *Bonnyville Nouvelle*, our weekly area newspaper. She stood out right away, right from day one, and was noted for her professionalism, honesty, and integrity when reporting both sides of any story. I am happy that she's joining us here at the Legislature and wish her all the best in her new career. I would now ask Melissa to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. Welcome, Melissa.

1:40

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie after Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. John Mandlis. John is a hard-working Albertan and a concerned citizen. He's been watching question period this session and is quite concerned about what he sees and hears. Most troubling, he tells me, are the Tobaccogate allegations that bring into question the integrity of the office of the Premier. He encourages all Albertans . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, you probably know that it's inappropriate to raise or refer to a matter that the Speaker has not yet ruled on when it comes to a question of privilege. So I'll ask you to redo your introduction if you would, please.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He encourages all Albertans to make their voice heard and to sign the petition to ask the Premier to order an independent investigation into the matter and step aside until it's complete. I'll ask John to rise and . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, let's just ask your guest to rise and receive the applause.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the Minister of Health.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to the whole Assembly Darlene Lennie and Sheena Phillips of the Métis Urban Housing Corporation. The Métis Urban Housing Corporation does an excellent job of providing affordable rental housing for aboriginal families, working with the president of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Audrey Poitras, and the president of Métis Capital Housing, Wendy Goulet. They are working very, very hard to ensure that the corporation will be able to continue functioning at the highest level of efficiency. I'd ask my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health, followed by the Minister of Justice and the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Horne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members Dr. Shyamala Nagendran and her husband, Mr. Jay Nagendran, who are Edmonton-Rutherford constituents. Accompanying Dr. Nagendran are her parents, Mr. Ratna Ratnasingham and Mrs. Gowri Ratnasingham. Dr. Nagendran, as you may know, was nominated for a minister's seniors' service award for her volunteer efforts, which included starting a fitness and wellness club where seniors can exercise and learn about health and wellness as well as socialize. Dr. Nagendran recognized a need to improve the quality of life for seniors 10 years ago and sought very valiantly to address this need. She has also organized weekend workshops focusing on seniors' health, including information sessions given by health professionals. Her work is very inspiring. I'm honoured to introduce her to the members of the House, and I'd ask my guests to rise and receive our traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice, followed by Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two individuals from picturesque Calgary-Acadia. They are Glynn Hendry and Karin Finley, both of whom work with Qualico Developments in Calgary. Qualico, of course, is one of the largest fully integrated, privately owned real estate companies in western Canada. I welcome them to the Assembly and ask that all members please give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. First, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two outstanding Albertans from my constituency, the mayor of the village of Myrnam, Ed Sosnowski, and his CEO, Gary Dupuis. Both are outstanding municipal leaders and community members. I'd ask both to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Your second introduction, please.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Cathy Gladwin. Cathy is a representative of Indoor Tanning Is Out, an organization dedicated to promoting and educating Alberta's youth about the dangers of tanning beds. Cathy is a member of the board of the Alberta Public Health Association. I would ask Cathy to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two wonderful ladies who have quickly become friends to me during the long consultation I've undertaken while working through the development of my private member's bill: Miss Angeline Webb, a senior public policy adviser with the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT division, and Miss Anna Mann, an executive director with the Alberta Caregivers Association. I look forward to continuing our friendship during and after our work together on my compas-

sionate care leave legislation. I ask that my two guests seated in the public gallery please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, followed by the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two quick introductions today. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 24 visitors, incredibly bright young students from the Ponoka composite high school, and their teachers Mrs. Maryann LaFrance and Mr. Brady Teeling. Please give them the warm and traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier, followed by Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you a very special individual, a young individual, David Roezinger. Some of you may have seen him in the hallways of the Legislature over the summer as he served as the ministerial intern. What makes him very interesting in addition to that is that he just completed three months of volunteering in Peru, where he was engaging in humanitarian projects such as reforestation in Peru, and in doing so, he overcame a morbid fear of spiders, I understand. I would ask him to rise and receive our welcome.

The Speaker: Lacombe-Ponoka, you had a second introduction? Please proceed.

Mr. Fox: Yes, I did. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second introduction is a very special young lady from the Ponoka composite high school. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Miss Lisa van der Westhuizen. Please join me in wishing her a very happy birthday today.

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

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly our caucus team at the Legislature. These assistants are seated in the members' gallery. These hard-working, responsible, and dynamic individuals deserve recognition for all the work they do for their members. I'll ask them to stand as I mention their names: Emly Anderson, Caroline Breakey, Rhonda Checknita, Lindsay Cooke, Tanja Crnogorac, Lisa-Marie Gaucher, Ashley Geis, Shannon Hamelin, Jennifer Kirkelund, Ryan Loney, Benjamyn McKay, Candyce Neill, Marilyn Nixon, Ryan Osterberg, Carlie Pochynok, Robert Stephenson, Marshall Thiessen, Bryan Tower, Zack Ziolkowski, and in my own office, Darcy Diachinsky. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Statement by the Speaker

Oral Question Period Rules

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we proceed with the next couple of phases of our Routine today, a brief reminder. First of all, no preambles again today, please. Let's get the maximum number of people up that we can. That worked well on Thursday. Secondly, no personal attacks. Those are two very critical rules that we must abide by. Thirdly, let me bring to your attention pages 502 and 503 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, wherein it states that "a question should not . . . deal with the subject matter of a question of privilege previously raised, on which the Speaker reserved his decision." As you know, we have

that exact case before us right now. So that clarifies that, and with that note we will proceed to the next stage of Routine.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, a point of clarification under Standing Order 13 with regard to that last finding. Just a question of clarification.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I've just given the clarification.

Mr. Anderson: I just want to know: is it regarding – obviously, we cannot speak regarding the assertion that the Premier has intentionally misled the House, but can we talk about Tobaccogate, the conflict of interest?

The Speaker: Hon. member, thank you for your question. I've just clarified what is and what is not within the rules, and I just asked you to abide by it. We'll judge you accordingly as things proceed.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Tobacco Recovery Lawsuit

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government deserves a prize for fiction. Their stories on issue after issue read more like fairy tales than fact. On the budget they insist more borrowing and more debt is actually a balanced budget. On the issue of MLA pay they tried to convince us that the new pay of \$156,000 is less than the old pay of \$145,000. Now on the tobacco lawsuit the fantasy is just as absurd, with the Premier insisting a decision isn't a decision. Does the Premier still insist her decision selecting . . .

Speaker's Ruling

Questions about the Subject of a Privilege Motion

The Speaker: Hon. member, this issue is just exactly what I referred to. If you wish to rephrase your question, I'll allow you this one opportunity to do so. It is against the rules to raise issues about a question of privilege which is before the Speaker for consideration and he has not yet ruled on. That was part of why I just stood up to say what I just said. Recast your question. It'll be allowed.

Tobacco Recovery Lawsuit

(continued)

Ms Smith: I'm seeking clarification on whether the Premier still insists her decision in regard to the International Tobacco Recovery Lawyers is not a decision.

Speaker's Ruling

Questions about the Subject of a Privilege Motion

The Speaker: Hon. member, let me just read this again in case some people missed it for whatever reason. On page 502 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* it states very clearly, "Furthermore, a question should not . . . deal with the subject matter of a question of privilege previously raised, on which the Speaker reserved his decision." Now, those are the rules, and that is quoted verbatim from the text that I cited. This particular point of privilege was raised by one of your own members, hon. leader. Let us proceed with your question rephrased if you would, please. Thank you.

We have a point of order noted. The leader of the New Democratic opposition.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 13(2), which says, “The Speaker shall explain the reasons for any decision on the request of a Member,” my question is this: given that the point of privilege is exactly on the point of misleading the House and nothing else . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, please have a seat. I’ve just explained this twice now. I’m not going to explain it a third time. The rationale is in the ruling that’s in the *House of Commons*, and I’ve just enunciated it and read it out twice.

Let’s please abide by the rules as they exist. We’re not here to invent them or remake them at this stage. If the House leaders wish to do that and apply a local rule here, then I invite them to get together and have that discussion. In the meantime let us proceed with the balance of the question from the hon. Leader of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition.

Tobacco Recovery Lawsuit (continued)

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’ll move on to my first supplemental. Given that the Premier still insists she played no role in choosing the firm and instead points to her successor in Justice as the one who made the decision, then why is it that in the nearly 100 pages of documents received on this matter, the name of . . .

Speaker’s Ruling **Questions about the Subject of a Privilege Motion**

The Speaker: Hon. member, please have a seat. Shall I read this a third time, then? Let’s not get down to that level, please. You’re all somewhat experienced now in parliamentary practice and procedures. I’ve allowed a lot of leeway, particularly for new members, including you, Leader of the Official Opposition. I’ve allowed a lot of leeway for first-time members from the government side, from all the other parties.

When a law exists, it exists for a reason. Let us contemplate for just a moment what society would be like without any laws at all or if people chose to break them even after they have been admonished, reminded, perhaps chastised once, twice, three times. What kind of a society would we have? What kind of Assembly would we have? I ask you to ponder those questions.

I’m not up here to hear myself speak. I’m up here to help you understand your roles if that’s the case and to enforce the laws as they exist. These are not my personal laws. These are not your personal laws. These are the laws that you agreed to abide by when you took your oath. I would remind you to please start sticking to them more fervently, or I’ll have to remind you again to do so.

Let’s move on with your second main set of questions and see how they go.

Tobacco Recovery Lawsuit (continued)

Ms Smith: Given that the Justice department wrote an e-mail to CBC on July 5 stating that on December 14, 2010, the then Justice minister determined that TRL consortium provided the best made-in-Alberta litigation – the decision was communicated to the consortiums and law firms shortly after – would the Premier still insist that this was her successor’s decision?

The Speaker: Hon. member, I do not understand why you continue to go against the law which I’ve cited three or four times now. Please, if you’re not prepared to rephrase, I’ll just move to the next person on the list. You have one last shot.

Oil Price Forecasting

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, there’s a new report out that casts even more doubt on this government’s projections for energy revenues. They’ve used \$108 a barrel to calculate the next couple of fiscal years, but now Bank of America Merrill Lynch in their 2013 energy outlook raises the alarm about the potential impact that shale oil production may have on benchmark oil prices. They see a possibility of \$50 west Texas intermediate over the next 24 months. What is the Finance minister’s plan to adjust should this become the new reality?

The Speaker: The hon. President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Horner: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the hon. member’s question. It’s a good question because we have had one financial estimator come up with a fairly low outlook. We are monitoring, as I’m sure the federal government is, as I’m sure all governments across Canada are, all of the private and public forecasters. There’s a lot of variance out there right now in terms of those forecasts. In fact, at our second quarter we adjusted downward our forecast for the rest of the year to \$92 and change. That puts us at the low end of all of the other provinces and the federal government.

Ms Smith: Given that the Wildrose caucus pointed out over a year ago that the shortage of pipelines was costing the Alberta treasury \$2 billion to \$5 billion in additional royalty revenue, how is it that the Finance minister missed factoring that into his most recent projection?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horner: Well, it’s curious, Mr. Speaker, because if I missed it, then the federal government missed it, then the Saskatchewan government missed it, and I guess the Official Opposition missed it, too, because they accepted and endorsed this year’s revenue projections that the Wildrose pledged. The party counted on a 30 per cent revenue increase by 2016 to pay for the Dani dollars that were supposed to be out there.

Ms Smith: We actually made an adjustment on the Finance minister’s rosy projection, so that’s not quite true.

Mr. Speaker, given that the \$108 is yet another piece of government fiction, the projections that they have for the next couple of years, and that in-year savings don’t even begin to address the \$3 billion plus deficit, where is the Finance minister’s real plan to address the current and future drop in current revenue?

Mr. Horner: Well, Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting when you look at the Wildrose budget program that they put out. To get their \$18 billion surplus now, they’d need to see \$223 per barrel as their price for oil, a little optimistic on their end. The budget coming forward will have an operating plan, a savings plan, and a capital plan, and it will be balanced. Is it going to be an easy budget? Absolutely not. There is no new money in next year’s budget. I’ve said that a number of times. We’ll be prudent and responsible with Albertans’ finances.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, did you not ask a main and two supplementals already? I believe I have you completed for now.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by the leader of the Liberal opposition.

Tobacco Recovery Lawsuit (continued)

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are billions of dollars up for grabs in the largest litigation case in Alberta's history, yet this Premier can't tell Albertans how much they are on the hook to pay for this government's latest scandal. We know the government in Newfoundland disclosed . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'll just let you rephrase, okay? This is your first warning. I've already given others. This is yours. You must not refer to an issue that is here as a question of privilege, so I'll allow you to rephrase.

Mr. Saskiw: This is about the contingency agreement, Mr. Speaker. We know the government in Newfoundland disclosed the key terms of their agreement, in that case a 30 per cent contingency. At that rate there are \$3 billion of potential legal fees at stake. If the Premier has nothing to hide, can she simply show us the terms of this agreement and the other proposals laid out by the competing firms?

The Speaker: Hon. member, you rephrased the question and didn't refer to anything specific in it, so I'll allow the answer.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me. I'm referring directly just to the contingency-fee agreement here pursuant to your ruling. I have spoken to Alberta's counsel, and it's important to note that the plaintiffs here are everyday Albertans. The defendant is big tobacco. Our counsel has advised that making the contract public . . .

The Speaker: Thank you. You've touched on the tobacco issue, which is the subject before the Speaker right now for a ruling.

Let's move on with your next supplemental, please. No preamble.

2:00

Mr. Saskiw: Given that the managing partner of the firm that was awarded the contract publicly stated today that he has no objections to the terms of the agreement being released, how can this Premier expect Albertans to ever trust another word she says until she comes clean with the facts and shows us the contract?

The Speaker: Hon. member, let's try your final supplemental, please, and see if it's within the rules.

Mr. Saskiw: Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with the point of privilege.

Given that the government's own department states that the review committee considered all three firms to be capable of conducting the litigation, will the Premier stop blowing smoke, do the right thing, and lay out the documents showing us the agreement as well as all the offers?

The Speaker: Hon. member, it's very difficult to tell exactly what is being referred to here the way the question is being phrased. However, I'd invite the hon. Minister of Justice to make a comment if he wishes.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much again for recognizing me. I will indicate that I went back to my constituency office on Friday, and on Friday I returned many people's calls.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Speaker's Ruling **Questions about the Subject of a Privilege Motion**

The Speaker: Let me remind you of the rules I just read once again. There is no choice but to follow the rules that guide this Assembly. If certain members wish to take umbrage with that, that is up to you and your House leaders to discuss and determine. In the meantime I have made it very clear what the reference is with respect to how question period is to be conducted.

I don't wish to remind either members of the opposition who are phrasing the questions or members of government who are attempting to answer the questions, but the minute you raise the issue in the context of the point of privilege that is before the Speaker, I am obliged to rise and remind you that that is outside the rules that govern question period. So that is how we shall proceed.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to 13(2) I know you have explained it, but I now really have a very genuine question.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I've already ruled on this matter.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, could I please ask for clarification?

The Speaker: I've already given you comment with respect to how the rule applies. Now, if you want to take a moment and find *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, pages 502 and 503, I would invite you to do that. [interjection] I've already given clarification and justification, and that is the end of that.

Let's go on to the hon. member of the Liberal opposition. [interjection] You have the floor, hon. member of the Liberal opposition.

Ethics Commissioner Referral

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to talk about the Tobaccogate scandal, that has Albertans questioning the Premier's decision to award a lucrative tobacco contract to very close political allies although she claims to have nothing to do with it. That's not what I want to talk about today. What I want to talk about is that when similar allegations of abuse of office were raised against Alberta's envoy to Asia, the Premier forced him to step down pending an investigation. To the Premier: now that similar allegations are dogging you, why the double standard?

The Speaker: I didn't hear what your preamble's first few words were, but I'm going to allow the answer if someone on the government side wishes to answer.

All right. Hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, with your next supplemental.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, the double standard is that this same Premier ordered Alberta's envoy to Asia to step aside and stay home.

The Speaker: Hon. leader, you know there are no preambles. I've just indicated that, so please recast your question without preamble and proceed.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, given that the double standard is that this same Premier ordered Alberta's envoy to Asia to step aside and stay home until she could have the matter investigated, this should be easy for the Premier. Madam Premier, will you order an independent investigation and step aside?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's very important that we ask these questions, and I appreciate the hon. member's question. The reason is that I believe that it's important, when these issues come up, for the appropriate people to make determinations independently. I understand that this matter has been referred to the Ethics Commissioner. I welcome that. I've said that for all of last week, and I stand by my comments with respect to this and look forward to the outcome of that and will certainly abide by any decisions of this House or the Ethics Commissioner.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, without preamble.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Premier insists that she did nothing wrong, that she didn't make the decision, that she allegedly has nothing to hide but given the growing piles of documents to the contrary, the integrity of the Premier's office has been brought into question. To the Premier: will you order an independent investigation . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, let us move along here.

We're going to the hon. leader of the New Democratic opposition.

Mr. Mason: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Gary Mar faced allegations of misusing his position for inappropriate purposes, the Premier forced him to step aside until her investigation was complete. Now that the Premier is facing allegations of possible conflict of interest and bias, it's a different story. To the Premier: why won't she follow her own direction to Mr. Mar and step aside until these serious allegations are thoroughly investigated?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, what happened in that circumstance, as I understand it – and it wasn't something that I was involved in; it was our clerk of the Executive Council because Mr. Mar is a public servant – was that the matter was investigated by the Ethics Commissioner. As I understand it, Mr. Mar continued to be a public servant during that process. I have no more detail than that with respect to that, but what I will say is what I've said before. I understand that there are people who are asking these questions. I certainly appreciate that they're asking those questions. It doesn't change the fact that I stand by my comments, and I welcome the investigation.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Premier just told the Assembly that she wasn't involved in that and given that there were a number of public statements that she made at the time, including "We've asked the Ethics Commissioner to [take a] look at this," if there's a breach, then there have to be some consequences as a result of that. Her officials said that Mr. Mar would be on leave without pay during the investigation

only with the Premier's permission. Why did she just tell the House she wasn't involved in that?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, this was clearly a matter that the clerk of Executive Council dealt with with respect to a public servant. That's the end of the matter.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, what's sauce for goose is sauce for the gander.

Given that Albertans need to have confidence that their Premier knows how to avoid situations that might create a conflict of interest or the appearance of bias and given that they have a right to demand complete honesty as well, why won't the Premier do the right thing and step aside until this matter is fully investigated?

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'm not sure what the hon. member was referring to. He didn't seem to mention any case in particular if someone from the government side wishes to answer.

The hon. Minister of Justice to provide something briefly.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When I went home to my constituency office on Friday, there were a lot of matters discussed, but, you know, the biggest thing I keep hearing from our constituents: they'd rather talk about schools, hospitals, roads, police, things that we can do to improve their lives.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Let us move on to Calgary-Fish Creek.

Family Care Clinics

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the health inquiry under way and a long list of evidence of our doctors being bullied and intimidated, it's clear that this government continues to mismanage our health care system. What better example today than this government's plan to build 140 of these family care clinics with no idea how much they'll cost or how we'll pay for them, and as is typical with this government, it's become more apparent that they have no idea how to staff these clinics. My question is simple. How does the Health minister plan to staff family care clinics without pulling nurses and front-line staff away from hospitals and primary care networks?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is doing a lot of things in health care. What we did this morning was that with the assistance of the hon. Premier we opened the Kaye Edmonton Clinic, a \$484 million dollar facility that will provide a variety of front-line services to Albertans, including consultations with specialists, including access to diagnostic imaging under one roof. This facility and the operations that go on within it will work very closely with both primary care networks and family care clinics that are serving the capital region, staffed by competent, enthusiastic health professionals who believe in the benefits of primary care for the communities they serve.

The Speaker: Hon. member, your supplemental with no preamble.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you. Given that this minister has repeatedly in this House refused to tell Albertans the cost of family care clinics per patient and given that the number we have documented is \$300 per patient for family care clinics versus \$62 per patient for primary care networks, will he finally tell Albertans how much these clinics will cost?

2:10

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what kind of health care policy the Official Opposition is developing. The work that this government is engaged in is improving all aspects of primary health care across the province. If the hon. member wants to focus on the merits of one particular model over another, that's certainly up to her to do. We're interested in providing better access to family physicians, nurse practitioners, dietitians, and other professionals, supported by a common set of standards and tools that truly equip them to do the job.

Mrs. Forsyth: Given that this government is facing a deficit and given that this minister can't tell us the cost of family care clinics versus primary care clinics, I'd like to ask him one more time. What is the cost per patient for family care clinics versus primary care clinics?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to play with the dynamics of health economics, I leave that up to her. What we're interested in is building and improving upon the work of primary care networks – there are 40 of them – serving Alberta. We are looking at similar opportunities with family care clinics. As the hon. member knows, we're spending over \$181 million in support for PCNs today. We've allocated a further \$75 million in this budget and for the budget for the next two years to support family care clinics and other primary health care initiatives. That adds up for us.

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

Physician Supply

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's really concerning and discouraging to my constituents when they can't find a family doctor, yet we hear that we don't have a shortage of doctors in the province but do not have doctors in the right places. My question is to the hon. Minister of Health. What can be done to make sure that we have doctors in the right places and that we can find a doctor when we really need one?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horne: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the hon. member's question. Currently there are approximately 80 per cent of Albertans reporting that they have access to a family physician, but as the hon. member notes, many Albertans report that they don't have that access. There are a number of things that we're doing. We are currently hosting 330 places in our medical schools in Alberta. That compares to Ontario at about 500 spots. We have some very specific programs that support family physicians, particularly in rural areas, and provide incentives for them to come and practise in specific communities. Also, local communities play a very important role in designing and implementing programs to attract physicians.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that a large proportion of the population of east Calgary does not have a family doctor, what can be done to increase access to quality and consistent health care?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing that we have done is that we have opened a family care pilot project in the hon. member's area, in east Calgary. We are working to support doctors by

providing them with access to other health professionals, other equipment in order to enable physicians to spend the majority of their time on patients with the most complex needs. This allows, of course, other professionals to supplement that work by addressing the more everyday needs through the resources provided by other professionals. This teamwork is working for Albertans.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, since we do have a shortage in the province of doctors in the proper locations, what is being done to expedite the accreditation of foreign-trained medical professionals and their entrance into the health care system to alleviate this burden?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for asking because this is a question that many of us as MLAs face from constituents. We're working very closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, and as the hon. member knows, licensure of physicians is done provincially across the country. I personally talked about this issue with other ministers of health across the country. I don't think there's an easy answer because every province has a different approach to licensing, but I can tell you that here in Alberta we have provided other opportunities for physicians awaiting their licensure through the clinical and surgical assistance program and other initiatives.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Now the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, followed by Edmonton-Manning.

Personal Care Standards in Seniors' Facilities

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Associate Minister of Seniors made outrageous claims about our most vulnerable seniors in care, and I quote from *Hansard*: "The number of showers, the amount of bathing, the amount of safety provided in our seniors' facilities is what's appropriate and what's needed." However, caregivers are saying emphatically that they're not being consulted and would not agree with only one shower per week. Additionally, health care professionals are indicating that they are not able to provide more than one shower per week, not because of the care plan but because of the lack of priority from this government. To the Associate Minister of Seniors: will you now finally admit that one shower a week for seniors in care is not appropriate, as you said last week, but rather it's completely unacceptable, disrespectful . . .

Mr. VanderBurg: Well, thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, I think that one thing for sure is that between the families and the residents the family care plan and the care plan that's developed within the facilities is a plan that meets the personal hygiene needs, meets the safety needs, and makes sure that the wellness of that resident is there. Because of the questions last week I said that I would have a further look at this just to ensure that things are being done properly.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, your first supplemental without preamble.

Mrs. Towle: Given that a number of seniors in long-term-care nursing beds and continuing care facilities may be incontinent, in diapers, and unable to wash themselves, how many showers per week does the Associate Minister of Seniors believe that those seniors deserve?

Mr. VanderBurg: Mr. Speaker, all seniors deserve the appropriate level of care, not just what's laid out in their plan but

what's appropriate. In some cases it may be a shower, in some cases it may be a bath, and in some cases it may be a sponge bath. That's not for politicians to decide. That's for caregivers to decide. And I'll stand by that.

The Speaker: Hon. member, your final supplemental.

Mrs. Towle: The direction comes from you. Take responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, how long do seniors in our province have to suffer before this minister takes action and issues a directive to all licensed care facilities in this province that guarantees all Albertans in care access to the basic necessity of a shower or bath more than once a week? A simple directive.

Mr. VanderBurg: Mr. Speaker, I stand by my word last week when I said that I would have a further look into this to clarify any misconceptions that may be out there.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Regulation of Tradespeople

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I commend the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs for his work on Bill 5, passed last week in this Assembly. This was a great first step, but there is much more work to be done. My question to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education: what's being done to regulate home builders as well as roofers, exterior finishers, and framers?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to answer this question on behalf of the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education. I spoke with him early last week about this issue. The government works closely with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board to ensure the appropriate training standards for all trades, including those related to home building, including carpenters and roofers. Any person learning a trade is required to participate in an apprenticeship program that includes both on-the-job and technical training that can last up to four years. That includes optional certification trades.

The Speaker: Hon. members, let's keep the noise down to a bare, bare minimum if we could, please. It's very difficult for the chair to hear some of the questions and answers, and I'm sure it's difficult for members in the galleries to hear as well.

Hon. member, your first supplemental without preamble.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education: are there any regulations to protect home builders from below standard work done by nonticketed people working in the trades?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education encourages homeowners and other consumers who are considering hiring such an individual to check whether they are registered as an apprentice or certified as a journeyperson before committing to work. Staff from the minister's department regularly visit employers to inform them about the benefits of training and trade certification.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the same minister: does your ministry see any value in regulating optional certification trades when it comes to home building and structural integrity?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can also advise this House that all trades in Alberta are reviewed on a regular and continual basis both by industry and by government. Residential site managers continue to co-ordinate the work of many skilled tradespeople and suppliers. In addition, Alberta was the first jurisdiction in Canada to designate residential construction site manager as a designated occupation.

Thank you.

2:20 Personal Care Standards in Seniors' Facilities (continued)

Mr. Hehr: Since bringing it to this Legislature's attention that seniors and people with disabilities living in the Dr. Vernon Fanning centre were only receiving one bath a week, my office has been inundated with phone calls and e-mails that lead me to the conclusion that this is not an isolated occurrence. In fact, many of our seniors in long-term care are only receiving one shower a week. For example, former Judge Tom McMeekin, a senior with multiple sclerosis living in the Colonel Belcher care facility, last week stated on CBC unequivocally that he only received one shower a week; otherwise, he had to pay for it. To the Associate Minister of Seniors: are you now willing to admit that this is a widespread problem throughout our long-term care centres in this province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said previously, I understand the issue for the families and the residents and the caregivers. I understand that there's a care plan given for each and every member. But I do commit to this member that I will have a further look into this matter.

Mr. Hehr: Well, he shouldn't need to look at it any further given that in 2011 the Alberta Disabilities Forum report identified that one bath a week is a serious problem and recommended at least two baths a week. Will this minister tell the House when this policy will be changed at our long-term care centres?

Mr. VanderBurg: Mr. Speaker, the one issue that I remain firm on is that the safety, the well-being, and the personal hygiene needs are met in the care plan. I want to ensure that the residents and their families are assured that the proper care is given to their loved ones. I will ensure it, and I will promise to this member that I will have a further look into it. I'll go and visit this centre as soon as I can as well.

Mr. Hehr: Well, given that the policy in long-term care centres like the 10 operated by Carewest and others is that seniors will receive, and I quote, at least one shower a week, when will this government adequately support long-term care centres so they can change this policy to at least two showers a week?

Mr. VanderBurg: Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that the policy is what the senior or the resident of the facility needs. Not one bath, not two baths, not three baths, but what's appropriate and what their personal hygiene needs are. I can assure you that

the caregivers in these facilities with their families are the ones that are best to determine what those appropriate levels are.

Ms Notley: There aren't enough of them to do that.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, we know this is a serious issue, but it doesn't require any interjections, so please let's refrain from them.

Edmonton-Calder, followed by Calgary-Fish Creek.

Collective Bargaining with Teachers

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In her leadership campaign the Premier promised to restart discussions with the ATA to reach an agreement that would include more prep time for teachers and a review of class sizes. The ATA took her at her word, crafting a framework agreement that focuses on the quality use of time and effort in the classroom. To the Education minister, who has just rejected this more than reasonable proposal from the ATA: have you ignored the will of the Premier, or was the Premier just saying anything to get elected at the expense of both students and teachers?

Mr. J. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, the way he ended that question – you know, this is about the students. That's who it needs to be about. The last proposal was one of many that have come back and forth over the last six months. I can tell you that we have been working very hard to try and get to a deal, which is never an easy thing to deliver when you're talking about potentially around 35,000 different employees right across the province working in a number of different schools and communities. There are a couple of sticking points, but we have invited the ATA back to the table and were surprised when they pushed back from the table on Friday, which was unfortunate. But I hope they'll be back this week, and we can continue working on this.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that teachers face significant workloads as they deal with everything from the inclusion of high-needs students to the unique demands of rural schools and given that the minister has broken the Premier's own promise by dismissing a reasonable proposal that respects the government's fiscal constraints while still addressing teachers' concerns, can the minister please explain why he is rejecting the teachers' appeal for quality classroom time and reasonable time?

Mr. J. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, 30 seconds is hardly enough time to get into it. The member mentions the unique demands of rural schools. That's exactly one of the reasons we can't accept the most recent proposal because, in my mind, it would put small rural schools in jeopardy and the ability for those schools to be flexible in their planning. We're not going to do that because we want to put the students first.

The other piece of the agreement we just couldn't agree with was essentially giving the ATA veto power over any policy, regulations, or legislation we want to bring forward that has anything to do with the profession. Mr. Speaker, right now we're looking at the teaching quality standard, we're going out to do a regulatory review on the Education Act, and we wouldn't be able to do those things.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that teachers said explicitly that they want progress, not hard caps in view of rural areas and so forth – and they did tell you that, Mr. Minister –

and given that the minister's comments have confused the matter and misrepresented the teachers' framework agreement, when will the minister hit the books, learn how to negotiate properly, and stop dealing out broken promises by actually building an agreement that's best for everyone in this province?

Mr. J. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, we're all working hard to try to do exactly that. What we're trying to do is put the students first. With respect to hard caps, soft caps: you can couch it any way you want, but if you want to tie time to the amount of minutes or the amount of hours in a week that a teacher can work, whether it's 31 hours or whether it's 907 hours of instruction during the year, you're going to limit the flexibility of small rural schools; you're going to put them in jeopardy. Again, the second piece is that we're not prepared to give a veto to the ATA with respect to anything that might happen policywise or regulationwise to do with the profession.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, followed by Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Pipeline Network Review

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northern Gateway pipeline, the Keystone pipeline, and the possible pipelines to eastern Canada are essential to the prosperity of Alberta. We have seen opposition to these projects based on concerns of pipeline integrity. Unlike the Premier's national energy plan, the Alberta pipeline review has the potential to alleviate many of these concerns. It's expected that Group 10 Engineering will be done its final report and submit it at the end of this year. Will the Minister of Energy release these preliminary findings from Group 10 Engineering to the members of this Legislature before they are altered by the ERCB or the ministry?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this important matter. I appreciate the question, a thoughtful question from the hon. member opposite. The pipeline inquiry that I commissioned earlier in the year will address three important aspects: operations, water, and response capability. We expect to see that report from the independent third-party group that's working with the ERCB. I commit to this hon. member that I will provide that report, have it released publicly without anybody else doing anything to it, and it'll be available as part of the discourse and the review that we're doing of pipelines in this province. We want the highest quality performance.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that that's the answer I was expecting and the importance of this review and given that the retail market review is still sitting on the Energy minister's desk and the provincial flood-mitigation report stayed behind closed doors for almost six years, will the minister commit to releasing the findings of the Alberta pipeline review as soon as he gets it to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, that's what I indicated earlier in the year when I commissioned and asked the ERCB to do this work. Obviously, there will be other folks who will be looking at this as well. I'll release it to the entire world – not just the committee, the entire world – to take a good look at this when it becomes available.
Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the ramming through of the ill-fated Bill 2 without any substantial amendments and the difficult task that the ERCB now has in becoming part of the new energy regulator, will the minister admit that the ERCB will not be able to adequately complete its recommendations by the March 31 deadline?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what we want here is the right answer, not always the quick answer, so what we will be doing is ensuring that there is a thorough review by the ERCB. Even though it is in a time of transition, it's perfectly capable of doing the work that it's been assigned to do. It goes through tens of thousands of applications every year in governing and regulating the energy industry today, and I expect that work to continue until we get the new Alberta energy regulator up and operating by June of next year.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky, followed by Little Bow.

Highway 43

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's provincial highway 43 is one of the province's busiest highways. It connects northern and central Alberta and is the northernmost link of the Canada-Mexico corridor, which continues down all the way to Mexico. However, it also has the reputation of being one of Alberta's most dangerous highways. That is partly due to certain sections of the highway that have not yet been twinned. My question is to the Minister of Transportation. What is this government doing to help ensure the safety of the drivers on highway 43, and when will we see its completion as promised in 2007?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member should know that we have invested more than \$370 million to support highway 43 projects since 1990, providing critical infrastructure for the region. Further to that, we've invested \$26 million to twin the final stretch of highway 43 between Valleyview and Grande Prairie. Twinning preparation work through the Sturgeon Lake First Nation has started, with an expected twinning completion date of the fall of 2014. I say to the hon. member that our focus is on the safe and efficient movement of people and commodities through the region, and we'll continue to support those things.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McDonald: Thank you. Given that highway 43 is a high-traffic conduit for many of the Peace region's manufacturers, especially the stretch between Valleyview and Fox Creek, does the government have a plan to repair the heaves and ruts that plague this section of the highway?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, the engineering design for the road rehabilitation is currently under way. Once the design is done, we'll of course prioritize it against projects across the province, considering traffic volume, safety, infrastructure conditions, and the economic activity in the area when we create our public three-year construction plan. I understand why the hon. member is concerned. Roads break down at different rates. But I want to

assure the hon. member that we take precautions. We evaluate it every spring and try to take action as appropriate.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we continue to see maintenance problems on these roads, and people's lives are at risk. When will the minister provide a maintenance schedule that is applicable to these conditions?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is right in saying that rehabilitation projects are important. We do prioritize them on the strength and smoothness of the roads, input from our field personnel and stakeholders, and, yes, traffic volumes and safety concerns. Highway maintenance is conducted as needed, with frequency and response time based on our best judgment of the needs and available budget. I encourage the member to inform my office if there's a particular condition that is less than what Albertans should expect, and we will do our best to react accordingly.

Water Rights

Mr. Donovan: Mr. Speaker, in the Little Bow riding and other ridings in southern Alberta people raised the concern that the government has been unclear if it's going to protect the principle of first in time, first in right in the elimination of irrigation permits that cover the leftover water rights that become available through efficiencies through the efforts of irrigation districts. To the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development: will the minister state with certainty that she is not going to take away the traditional irrigation rights of Alberta's farmers in irrigation districts?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to take that question on behalf of the hon. minister, who is doing good work on behalf of Albertans at an international conference with respect to climate change, which would have been interesting had somebody else won the election. I would be pleased to take that question under advisement and ask the hon. minister to get back to the member.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just wait till 2016.

Does this government plan to rescind the prior appropriation of water rights for farmers by using the strong arm of the land-use framework?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, the land-use framework is a model designed to ensure that we have a thoughtful conversation before we do things in this province. It ensures that when our kids and our grandkids in 50 or 75 years look at the landscape that is Alberta at that time, it looks something like the landscape we have today, that it is appropriately developed and appropriately planned to respect the landscape that we're so proud of today.

I'll pass that question along to the hon. minister as well.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: can you please assure me and my constituents that this gov-

ernment does not intend to override the water rights that Alberta farmers have been entitled to for 118 years?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, that is one of those questions that actually is easy to answer. Of course nobody is overriding water rights. We're addressing long-term planning issues in this province. We're ensuring that we're protecting property rights, that we're protecting water rights. We're ensuring that future Albertans have access to the resources they need to develop this province and to live a high quality of life here, the kind of life we experience today.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

High Prairie Health Care Centre

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For 12 years, 12 long years, the people of High Prairie and region have been waiting for a hospital which will serve their needs. Well, we finally got one, and I want to thank the Minister of Health. However, from a recent public meeting our facility appears to be missing some areas of importance. My question is to the Minister of Health. Could you please tell my constituents why our new hospital does not include important areas like dialysis or a second operating room?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, must congratulate my colleague the hon. member for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents for the new hospital. We have allocated an additional \$70 million over and above the original cost projection for this facility, in fact, to expand services. One of the services, as an example, that is included in the High Prairie hospital is a CT scanning unit, which will make it possible for residents to receive those consultation services at home in High Prairie. Additional services in the future will depend upon the growth of the community. Services like dialysis and chemotherapy are certainly possibilities in the future, but the population projections, in fact, do not support the need to integrate those services at this time.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's very important information.

Should the community, however, be willing to partner with us, would you consider such partnerships to help with this need, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. That would be a hypothetical question, however, and I wouldn't be prepared to give a detailed answer at this stage. What I can say is that we have designed this facility specifically so that it can be expanded in the future. Its physical characteristics are such that it can be expanded. It will leave room to consider the addition of other services, and we're, of course, always happy to work with the community in that regard.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I'm very thankful for the work that you have done.

My final question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. The proof is in the pudding. When can we see action begin on this site?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There'll be a lot of activity happening over the next couple of months that isn't visible in the community, but rest assured that a lot of work will be going on behind the scenes. By year's end we'll start a tendering process for project scoping and construction. By next spring major construction activity will begin with the installation of pilings, the foundation, and off-site work. These activities will continue throughout the summer. At the same time site development and construction of the superstructure, which is construction above the ground, will be taking place.

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

Ownership of Resource Revenues

Mr. Hehr: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't quite prepared for this question. Nevertheless, it's an honour to ask a question to the Minister of Energy. It's regarding the fact that we have 14 national oil companies here who are all drilling oil, paying royalties, and sending large sums of money back to their home countries. I know at one time we had the Alberta Energy Company, which did some of this and had tremendous returns for the Alberta people. Why is it that we don't have an Alberta energy company today so that we can earn more profits from our oil?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will well recall that there once was the Alberta Energy Company, and it became an opportunity for all Albertans to participate in the wealth creation of the province. Albertans had those shares that became publicly available on the marketplace, and it served its purpose at that time in life. Today in Alberta we have a very robust – very robust – private sector that is fully capable of finding the capital and investing in energy assets in this province and developing them on behalf of the owners.

The Speaker: Hon. member, do you have a supplemental, or should I move on to Bonnyville-Cold Lake?

Mr. Hehr: I have a supplemental.

The Speaker: You do? Okay. Proceed.

Mr. Hehr: Given that these national oil companies are here and they're drilling oil and I assume they're doing pretty well, will the minister admit that there seems to be a lot of money to be made in this business and that maybe we should get into it? If they can make money at it, why the heck can't we?

2:40

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, we actually are making money at it because we, being the people of Alberta, own the assets. We get royalties as a result of it. The province of Alberta secures taxation as a result, income tax, from the people who are working here. The government of Canada gets income taxes. There's tremendous wealth created for all Albertans in the current system we have today.

Mr. Hehr: Well, I understand, sir, that these national oil companies, who represent other countries, pay their royalties and still make a whack-load of money, that they send back home. Doesn't it seem odd that these national governments can make money in this business, yet we can't?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we Albertans as the owners of the resource actually do very well out of this arrangement. Roughly 50 per cent of the development in this province and the production that's sold is actually controlled by Canadian-owned companies or Canadian-controlled companies. As a result, there's great wealth created in this province. The system works really well for Albertans. That's how we have hospitals, that's how we have roads, and that's how we have schools in this province. It's because of the success of the energy industry in this province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds from now we will begin the first of six members' statements, starting with Red Deer-North.

Members' Statements

Inclusive Education

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, did you know that we have over 600,000 kids in our schools in Alberta? Some of these children struggle every day to overcome a learning disability or to learn English. Others need a little more work to keep them busy, and some just need some help to catch up on certain subjects. While some of these challenges would fall into what we have often called special needs, the truth is that all these kids are special, and their learning needs are important.

That is why we as a government have changed our approach from just funding special needs to ensuring that all kids have the supports they need to learn. In the last provincial budget, Mr. Speaker, we provided school boards with an additional \$68 million in funding, a 22 per cent increase. We asked them to develop programs and supports that will serve all kids no matter what their learning needs are, and the school boards are delivering.

For example, in my constituency Red Deer Catholic regional schools kicked off their school year with a full day of professional development completely focused on inclusive education. Topics included ways to create inclusive classrooms, ways to improve classroom support, and how to effectively support students socially, behaviourally, and academically. Red Deer public school also continues to do a lot of great work to support inclusive learning. In fact, they've made inclusion of all students one of their three main goals. I am proud that they recognize that all students are diverse learners and are implementing supports to make sure they all succeed, and all the while they are maintaining the significant supports they have always provided for our children that struggle with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the efforts under way to support all our special kids, and I encourage all members to check out Alberta Education's website to learn more about inclusive education and to check their local school authority's website to see the great work happening on the ground.

The Speaker: I had the Member for Airdrie. Someone on behalf of?

Mr. Saskiw: Mr. Speaker, given your ruling that we cannot talk about the Premier's involvement in the tobacco scandal . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's move on, then, to Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Calgary-Fort.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a day that was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations to promote understanding of disability issues and the rights of persons with disabilities. Albertans with disabilities have a great deal to contribute to our communities, but sometimes they face barriers to inclusion. This could include physical barriers like lack of wheelchair access or social barriers like negative attitudes about employing people with disabilities.

Increasing the awareness of the challenges that persons with disabilities sometimes face as well as the contributions these individuals make to our province is an important step towards creating more inclusive communities. That's why we are celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities across our province with special events and presentations of awards from the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

This year's award recipients are Mezaun Lakha-Evin of Calgary, winner of the Gary McPherson leadership award; Mark Iantkow, recipient of this year's newly created award, the Marlin Styner achievement award; Dory Rossiter of Lethbridge, winner of the award of excellence in public awareness; the Camrose Association for Community Living training mentorship program, winner of the award of excellence in employment; the Early Access to Supportive Education school, or EASE, in Red Deer, winner of the award of excellence in education; the city of Red Deer, winner of the award of excellence in community; and a personal favourite of mine, the Reducing the Social Isolation of Rural Deaf Albertans Project Team of Sherwood Park, winner of the award of excellence in community.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our efforts to promote this day, I invite all members of this Assembly to support initiatives to make their communities more inclusive.

Thank you.

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

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights, which falls on December 10, this coming Monday. The declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, sets out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms which all people from all nations are entitled to without distinction. This declaration seeks the rights of individuals over the rights of society.

Today in many parts of the world individuals are still living under oppression by their governing authorities. Their dictatorship governing bodies retain their power by perpetuating the myths that their action is in the name of the people or for the good of the community or society. We should always question and be wary when politicians use the pretext: in the name of the people.

As Canadians we live in a province and a country where our government respects human rights as its core value and with a justice system where an individual is not guilty until proven. We live in a land where individual rights to private property ownership are intrinsic and common sense, and our justice system allows individuals to protect their rights.

Mr. Speaker, while others may talk about violation of property rights in theoretical terms, I would like to tell the Assembly what violation of property rights really is. Not too long ago my family was persecuted by the Communist regime in the old country for

property ownership. The land and property that our family owned for many generations was confiscated without any compensation, without any right or process to dispute. Here, with our existing good laws and our open justice system, this situation has never happened and will never happen in Alberta, in Canada.

I'm pleased to be part of a government that protects individual rights, freedoms, and private property ownership. Indeed, we are fortunate to be living in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Métis Urban Housing Corporation

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Métis Urban Housing Corporation, owned by the Métis Nation of Alberta. The Métis Urban Housing Corporation was incorporated in 1982 to provide affordable, adequate, and appropriate rental housing for low- and middle-income Métis and other aboriginal families within Alberta's urban centres. At its heart is the goal of improving housing conditions for Métis and aboriginal communities by offering an alternative to mainstream housing. Such alternatives include the urban aboriginal housing program, which provides rent at 25 per cent of total household monthly income, an affordable market housing program which provides accommodation based on a fixed rental rate that is determined at 20 per cent less than market rates. The corporation also partners with area associations such as Habitat for Humanity and the urban native housing program to maximize their capacity to serve in Alberta's communities.

2:50

Alone the Métis Urban Housing Corporation currently houses over 3,000 tenants in 881 units across the province and is the largest section 95 aboriginal housing program in Canada. Acting as a property manager, the corporation is responsible for renting and maintaining these units, which includes everything from paying property taxes to inspecting and repairing damaged units. With a staff of only 50 full-time and part-time workers, this amounts to quite a workload, Mr. Speaker. The Métis Urban Housing Corporation is accountable to the Métis people through the Métis Nation of Alberta and to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation under section 95 of the National Housing Act.

It is this balance between accountability, responsibility, opportunity, and sensitivity that, I believe, lends to the Métis Urban Housing Corporation's success. I rise today in honour of this success and the continued dedication that the corporation's team demonstrates in serving their people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Services for the Disabled

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme this year is Removing Barriers To Create an Inclusive and Accessible Society for All. Over 1 billion people around the world live with some form of disability. In Alberta half a million people, or 1 in 6 Albertans, live with a disability.

The barriers faced by people with disabilities take many forms, including the physical environment, societal attitudes, and even discrimination through legislation and policy. Creating and fostering an inclusive environment where these barriers are removed should be the goal of this government. Evidence shows the entire

community benefits when people with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in society.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we are doing enough in Alberta. There has been very little movement in employment for people with disabilities in the last 25 years. Young people and seniors alike are often warehoused in our hospitals because there's not enough room in long-term care or community care. The government should commit to finding spaces in the community for our disabled population.

As we heard last week, the general guidelines within some AHS facilities are to provide a minimum of one bath a week. While people in care have the option to pay extra if family members do it, I received many calls and e-mails from people who feel the government is off-loading its responsibility when it comes to this issue. We should increase bathing frequency and accommodate a needs-based bathing schedule above the minimum to ensure hygiene, health, and safety as well as dignity for those in care.

While it is difficult to hear, it needs to be said that we are all disabled people in waiting. The healthy bodies we inhabit will age and become infirm, or, like me, some of us may have an accident or illness which leads to disability. But the fact remains that all of us will be disabled one day. With self-preservation in mind, Mr. Speaker, we should ensure opportunities are in place for people with disabilities to live in dignity and to their maximum potential.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five oral notices of motion. The first:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 3(9) the fall 2012 sitting of the Assembly shall stand adjourned upon the Government House Leader advising the Assembly that the business for the sitting is concluded.

The second notice of a motion:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 7, Election Accountability Amendment Act, 2012, is resumed, not more than two hours shall be allotted to further consideration of the bill in Committee of the Whole, at which time every question necessary for disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The third notice is:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 7, Election Accountability Amendment Act, 2012, is resumed, not more than two hours shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill at third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The fourth is:

Be it resolved that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing may meet at the call of the committee chair to review the standing orders and report any proposed or recommended changes to the Assembly.

The fifth is:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly concur with the continuation of the Alberta Treasury Branches Act.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, followed by the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta-Northwest Territories division,

I'd like to table the following report titled Support for a Wellness Foundation. The Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention commissioned an Ipsos-Reid public opinion survey of Albertans. Specifically, the APCCP-developed survey assessed the level of public support for increasing investments in prevention and health promotion in the form of an independent wellness foundation and various revenue sources for funding a foundation. The survey was completed between March 5 and March 12, 2012, by 869 Albertans between the ages of 18 and 55 years. I'm providing the requisite five copies of the report.

Thank you.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising to table five copies of five different articles that I'm required to table because I referenced them on Thursday. I'll just quote briefly. They're all written by the Leader of the Opposition. The first is entitled Right To Smoke Also an Issue of Property Rights; the second, High Taxes Push Tobacco Underground; third, Government Must Butt Out of Tobacco Picture; fourth, Anti-smoking Lobby Does More Harm than Good; and, finally, Quebec Recruits Taxman for War on Tobacco. I'll provide all copies to the Clerk.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some tablings. I referenced the Alberta Disabilities Forum report from 2011, which clearly indicates that many people with disabilities are only receiving one shower a week throughout this province.

I also have a couple of e-mails I wish to table. One is from Mrs. Diane Powell, who indicates that her husband was only receiving one shower a week.

I have another e-mail here, from Mr. Jake Kuiken, who lives in Silver Springs in Calgary, indicating that his mother received only one shower a week for a number of years.

Another e-mail, from Nancy Cameron, who indicates that she was having various challenges with showering for her husband in his stay in long-term care.

One more tabling – actually, I'll figure that out for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and I'll come back to that tabling.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings. The first is a press release entitled Keystone Delay Costs Alberta Treasury Billions, and I have the requisite copies to illustrate the cost of the differentials in oil and gas.

The second is an article dated December 1 entitled Analyst Makes Bombshell Prediction of \$50 Oil, and More Production than We Could Possibly Know What To Do With. I have the requisite copies as well, Mr. Speaker.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the House that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mr. Denis, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, page 53 of the Law Society of Alberta code of conduct.

The Speaker: Hon. members, our next point here would be to discuss and determine points of order. It's been a long time since we haven't had any, but today we have no points of order. Thank you for that to everyone, I'm sure.

That having been said, I will proceed now with the ruling on the point of privilege.

Privilege Misleading the House

The Speaker: Hon. members, as I indicated just a moment or two ago, as chair I'm now prepared to rule on the purported question of privilege raised by the Official Opposition House Leader last Thursday, November 29, 2012. The debate on this issue can be found in *Hansard* for that day at pages 1184 through 1189.

In a proverbial nutshell, the allegation by the Member for Airdrie is that the Premier deliberately misled the Assembly when she denied that the decision was made to retain a particular law firm for conducting litigation related to tobacco use while she was Minister of Justice.

In terms of formalities notice of the purported question of privilege was received in the Speaker's office at 10:54 a.m. on Thursday, November 29, 2012, so the requirements of Standing Order 15(2) regarding notice have been met as the statements were alleged to have been made in the Assembly the day before.

3:00

The chair notes that Standing Order 15(5) permits members to raise a question of privilege "immediately after the words are uttered or the events occur that give rise to the question, in which case the written notice required under suborder (2) is not required," but no one raised any objection on this point, and the chair imagines that had it been raised, the Opposition House Leader would have said that he needed time to review *Hansard*. In any case, the Official Opposition House Leader carefully and succinctly cited the relevant authorities on the issue of deliberately misleading the Assembly, including this Speaker's ruling of May 30, 2012, which can be found at page 96 of *Hansard* for that day.

In making his presentation on the point of privilege before us today, the Official Opposition House Leader indicated that deliberately misleading the Assembly was a form of contempt, which, as the chair pointed out in another ruling, last Thursday, at page 1190 of *Hansard* for that day, is treated as a question of privilege. The point is made in *Erskine May's Treatise on The Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 24th edition, at page 254. It reads:

The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt. In 1963 the House resolved that in making a personal statement which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, a former Member had been guilty of a grave contempt.

Now, before ruling on the purported question of privilege before us today, the chair wants to remind members that this application places a Speaker of the House in a difficult situation because the Speaker's usual role is not to determine the merits or veracity of questions or answers in the Assembly. In fact, the Speaker's role in question period is stated at page 510 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, which states: "The Speaker ensures that replies adhere to the dictates of order, decorum and parliamentary language. The Speaker, however, is not responsible for the quality or content of replies to questions."

The Speaker's role in the Assembly is to ensure that members are allowed to exercise their historic, if not ancient, and constitutionally recognized right to freedom of speech to the greatest extent possible consistent with the rules, the conventions, and the practices of the Assembly. On that point, any member alleging that another member is deliberately misleading the Assembly will be swiftly called to order by the chair and asked to withdraw the comments. In the chair's view, there have been numerous and far

too many instances of this type of exchange occurring in this House during this fall session. The only time that this type of allegation may be permitted is when a member raises a purported question of privilege that a member deliberately misled the Assembly, which is one reason why Speakers have continually cautioned members that these allegations should only rarely be brought, as was indicated in my ruling, in fact, of May 30, 2012.

Now, to return to the matter raised by the Official Opposition House Leader, his allegation is that the decision was made to retain a law firm for tobacco litigation by the Premier when she was Minister of Justice and that statements to the contrary by the Premier constitute, in his opinion, deliberately misleading the House. The test for such situations both in this Assembly and in the Canadian House of Commons is that articulated by David McGee, a former Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives, and stated in his book, *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*, third edition, 2005, at pages 653 and 654. This test was recited by the Official Opposition House Leader last Thursday and also by this Speaker on May 30, 2012, but it bears repeating one more time. It reads as follows:

There are three elements to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt by reason of a statement that the member has made: the statement must, in fact, have been misleading; it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time the statement was made that it was incorrect; and, in making it, the member must have intended to mislead the House.

The Official Opposition House Leader was clear that, in his view, the decision had been made on awarding a contract to a law firm before the Premier resigned from cabinet in February 2011 to run for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta.

The Member for Edmonton-Calder was more equivocal on this point and was perhaps more careful in his choice of words as he referred to “a process which ended in [a] decision being made” at page 1187 of *Hansard* for last Thursday, which was not, with respect, what was alleged by the Official Opposition House Leader. He alleged that the decision had been made.

This is an important distinction, hon. members. If the Premier or the government had denied that a process was under way to select a firm to handle the tobacco litigation prior to February 2011, then different considerations come into play in a forthcoming ruling. However, the allegation that the decision was made by the now Premier on hiring a law firm to conduct the tobacco litigation was firmly rejected by the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, by the Government House Leader, and by the now Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

On the three elements of the test the Government House Leader was quite clear and succinct at page 1188 of *Hansard*, where he stated:

There are clear explanations about what the process was. There are clear explanations about the result, how the decision was made. There's no misleading. There's no intent to mislead, so there's no mens rea. There's no actual misleading.

By definition mens rea means guilty mind.

The distinction between the process and the final decision on selecting a law firm was in fact addressed by the minister of agriculture when he said at page 1188 of *Hansard* for last Thursday the following:

Those are the facts as I know them, and I think that that supports the position of the Premier that there was no final decision. She may have identified a firm that she thought was appropriate, and this firm, again, I'm told, was also selected by Nunavut.

In his comments last Thursday at page 1187 of *Hansard* the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General indicated that the then Minister of Justice, now Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, authorized the contingency agreement with the law firm on June 21, 2011.

A government of Alberta news release which the chair has discovered, dated May 30, 2012, and entitled “Alberta to launch lawsuit against tobacco manufacturers,” indicates that “Alberta has retained Tobacco Recovery Lawyers LLP since June 2011, a consortium of law firms, to file the lawsuit on its behalf.”

Now, in this case much hinges on the interpretation of the decision to hire a firm. Certainly, the chair admits that this is getting into a case of semantics, but it is evident that there was no final decision made as to the selection of a law firm for the tobacco litigation when the Premier was Minister of Justice. Clearly, a process was in place, but that was not the basis of the purported question of privilege.

3:10

Accordingly, the chair cannot find that the three parts of the test have been made out. The determination of whether the Premier's statements were misleading is entirely subjective and depends greatly on the exact nature of the words used. The chair cannot find that the second and third parts of the test have been made out; namely, that the member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was made that it was incorrect and that, in making it, the member must have intended to mislead the House.

All three ministers who spoke to the issue vehemently denied that any decision had made at the time the Official Opposition House Leader alleges. Certainly, the Premier was unequivocal that she did not make the decision on the matter of retaining the law firm when she responded to questions on November 28, 2012, at pages 1107 through 1109 of *Hansard* for that day and which statements are at the core of this purported question of privilege.

Members may think that this a very difficult test to meet, and the chair would agree. That is precisely why such allegations are hardly ever found to be prima facie questions of privilege. Versions of events and interpretation of those events by members may and frequently do differ. This difference is a characteristic of parliamentary debate and is one reason why the chair has referred frequently to paragraph 494 of *Beauchesne's*, sixth edition, at page 151, which states:

It has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by Members respecting themselves and particularly within their . . . knowledge must be accepted. It is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by Members as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident.

The same point is made in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, at page 510, which states, commencing at line 6, the following:

In most instances, when a point of a order or a question of privilege has been raised in regard to a response to an oral question, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is a disagreement among Members over the facts surrounding the issue. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege.

For the reasons that the chair has just spent some considerable time articulating this afternoon, there is no prima facie question of privilege. Accordingly, under Standing Order 15(7) there are no further proceedings on this matter. This matter is now concluded.

Orders of the Day

Written Questions

[The Clerk read the following written questions, which had been accepted]

Health Transfer Payments for Aboriginal Peoples

- Q5. Ms Smith:
Of the transfers received from the federal government, what is the total amount earmarked for health care for aboriginal peoples in Alberta, and where and how were these funds spent during the past three fiscal years?

Housing Transfer Payments for Aboriginal Peoples

- Q6. Ms Smith:
Of the transfers received from the federal government, what, if any, is the total amount earmarked for housing for aboriginal peoples in Alberta, and where and how were these funds spent during the past three fiscal years?

Addiction and Mental Health Strategy Consultation

- Q11. Mrs. Forsyth:
Which physicians, psychiatrists, or pharmacists were consulted on Creating Connections: Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health Strategy, dated September 2011?

New Registry Offices

- Q12. Mr. Fox:
What are the criteria for determining the location of new registry offices in Alberta, and do the communities of Blackfalds, Chestermere, and Redcliff meet these criteria?

Medicine Hat Infrastructure Projects

- Q13. Mr. Pedersen:
What government of Alberta infrastructure projects are currently scheduled for Medicine Hat, and what are the projected costs and completion dates for each infrastructure project?

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: I recognize the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Disaster Recovery Programs for 2011

- Q4. Mr. Barnes asked that the following question be accepted.
Have all the claims submitted to the 2011 southern Alberta disaster recovery program and the 2011 spring southeastern Alberta disaster program in regard to the June 2010 South Saskatchewan River basin flooding been finalized, and what is the longest claimants had to wait to receive payment?

The Deputy Speaker: I recognize the hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. I propose that this question be accepted as amended to:

Have all of the applications to the 2010 southern Alberta disaster recovery program and the 2010 spring southeastern Alberta disaster recovery program been finalized, and how long did it take applicants to receive a first

assistance payment once they provided all required information?

The first part of the question as written cannot be answered as the June 2010 South Saskatchewan River basin flooding resulted in two programs: firstly, the 2010 southern Alberta disaster recovery program; and secondly, the 2010 spring southeastern disaster recovery program. That's a bit of a mouthful. Those affected by the June 2010 flooding were eligible to apply under these two 2010 programs, not under the two 2011 programs as indicated pursuant to the written question.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, an accurate response cannot be given to the second part of the written question as it is currently written. For an accurate response the question should indicate a reference to the necessary information which is required for the processing of applicants and the payments to all claimants.

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency stays committed to delivering disaster and financial assistance as quickly as possible to communities who are impacted by unfortunate disasters and emergencies.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

On the amendment, hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak against the amendment. What has actually happened in practice is not what's happened in writing. I make note of one young couple who had thousands and thousands of dollars of damage done to their property, who shortly, sometime around three or four months after the flood, received a cheque with no explanation for somewhere around \$1,400 or \$1,500. When they queried as to what the cheque was for, it took some time to get an answer that it was for a filing cabinet. This was the story I was told.

During the campaign I had a town hall at a small hamlet called Walsh that has approximately 50 or 60 people living in it, I believe. I had approximately 60 or 70 people at my town hall, many of whom spoke about how the rules were not clear. It was absolutely impossible for them to figure out in many instances what needed to be supplied, what needed to be submitted so they could in turn get what was coming to them from uninsurable losses.

There were also many instances where some claimants had had up to 10 government-hired adjusters, government-hired contractors show up at their property, take a look, submit reports, write reports, but the one level of truth was that no one could make a decision. No one could answer as to what they were entitled to and what they had to do to get it. So the problem with the phrase "once they provided all required information" is that there were many, many people out there who had no idea what the required information was. I believe that this government's failure to make it clear caused some indecision and some injustice in the community.

The problem with the other part of the would-be amendment, the "first assistance payment" is that people in Cypress-Medicine Hat that were affected by the flood: our hope is that these people would be helped fairly and quickly. The flood, of course, ravaged Saskatchewan at the same time, and Saskatchewan had a program of giving every person that was affected I think it was \$3,000 – it might have been \$3,500 – and then handling their complaint from there. Obviously, the money was to initially . . .

Mr. Lukaszuk: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Point of order, hon. member. The Deputy Premier has risen on a point of order at 3:20. That has been noted. Proceed, hon. member.

3:20

Mr. Barnes: Okay. Thank you. Then from there they were supposed to file the rest of their paperwork to satisfy their claim. In many cases that I've heard of in Cypress-Medicine Hat, people that were affected greatly by the flood received several cheques in several instalments.

I think that for the citizen of Cypress-Medicine Hat, the taxpayer, the goal and the hope is that these people will be treated fairly and quickly. Many of them have come to my constituency office in the short time I've been an MLA and mentioned that they're still waiting for a cheque. They're still waiting for an answer. They're still waiting for paperwork. I believe that if we accept when the first assistance payment was made and once they've provided all the required information, when they are not sure what that required information is, that this could drag on much, much longer and cause stress and the unfairness that that causes.

Mr. Lukaszuk: A point of order. Mr. Chairman, I suggest that you should be dealing with the point of order at this point in time. This is not question period, and I would like to speak to it now.

Point of Order Exhibits

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, it has been brought to my attention that certain members are holding up props during this process, as in something that indicates whatever. I'd just remind hon. members that it is inappropriate to hold up . . . [interjection] Hon. member. It is inappropriate to hold up any items that represent a prop at any time during debate in this Chamber. If anyone is guilty of that offence, it's inappropriate, hon. member.

I'll recognize the hon. Deputy Premier to speak to the point of order, and then I'll cut to the next member.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you that you are being very generous in your comments. I imagine you have been advised by now by your table clerks, but I have also advised you. I have to tell you I'm rising on this point of order with a little bit of trepidation because I have a great deal of respect for this House, and I want to make this clear to you and particularly to people who are watching this on TV right now that I hope that we hold this House in a higher esteem and that those actions are not reflecting on all members of this House and particularly the reputation of this House.

It has been brought to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that while the member has been speaking, his own member of the Wildrose, the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, quite deliberately is holding a sign behind him so it does become visible on monitors and television cameras, a sign that is definitely inflammatory and slandering the government. That is behaviour that we wouldn't condone in this House, and I think that the member not only owes an apology to his own caucus member who is speaking – and he's posturing behind him – but I think he owes an apology to this entire House.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Lukaszuk: I'm citing section 23(h), (i), (j), and (l) of our standing orders.

The Deputy Speaker: Those are the citations, and so noted.

I'll recognize the hon. House leader of the opposition.

Mr. Anderson: I think you've dealt with this subject already despite the somewhat ironical, self-righteous protestations by this Deputy Premier. I would respectfully say that you've dealt with this. I don't know if the member, being new to this Chamber, was familiar with the rule around props. I will make sure to express that rule to my caucus as we move forward so that won't be a problem again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. House leader of the opposition.

Hon. members, the clarification is given, the admonishments. I would declare this point of order closed, and I would recognize the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat to continue on the amendment.

Debate Continued

Mr. Barnes: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I'll just finish with a couple of stories and ask the government to address these seriously. A young family with four children had a lot of trouble navigating the process. Temporary housing was provided. They were unable to navigate the process in a way that made things happen on a timely basis, and right now they're still in the middle of trying to fix their house so they can return to it.

A very good business in Cypress-Medicine Hat and a business-person provided me documents like this that show paperwork back and forth from Alberta Environment, from the disaster relief people. He appears to have the go-ahead to do some work. He went out and did the work and then received more conditions on receiving payment and now is faced with a written demand for money and a potential lawsuit from the service provider, who appears to be absolutely entitled to their payment. But, again, this change in the way that all information was supposed to be required, in the way the rules were never provided has caused great hardship, great stress for families who were affected by an event that was totally out of their control and uninsurable.

I would ask the government to take these issues seriously, to help these people as they fairly deserve, and I would ask all to not support this amendment because I believe it is not a step forward in helping the people that deserve help.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Others on the amendment? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've continuously seen with what I would suggest are quite straightforward written questions that the government is somehow forced to tweak the language and amend them to not embarrass itself. We see that right here as well. The phrase "once they provided all required information" is very broad. If an individual has met the prerequisites and provided substantially all of the information, those monies that they're entitled to under the legislation should be provided.

I find it quite hypocritical that when the government wants money, when the MLAs want money – you know, in 2008, the first day they were there, they gave themselves a 34 per cent pay raise. Here they gave themselves an 8 per cent pay raise. But when it comes to someone who's had their property damaged in a horrible incident, it takes years and years and years to provide them the money.

Mr. Speaker, I would speak strongly against this proposed amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others on the amendment? The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, agree that this is a shameful way to treat people who have suffered losses through acts of nature. The very reason that we have insurance is so that these kinds of things can be taken care of. Like the very worst of the insurance companies, they're denying claims, and they're slow in settling claims, and they're causing hardships for people who have already suffered unquestionable hardships. They're looking to their own government for the relief that's promised them.

I think it's shameful, and I, too, would not support the amendment. I don't know why they can't just answer the question.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek on the amendment.

Mrs. Forsyth: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I always find it interesting as a member of the opposition, some of the wordsmithing that goes around. I remember this flood distinctly because I was one of those people years ago that was hit by the flood when it hit Fish Creek. I believe it was – oh, gosh. At that time it had to be – I'm not sure if I can say his name – the hon. member who ran for the leadership. If I'm out of order, please tell me because I know you can't use people's names in the Assembly here. Gary Mar happened to be the minister at the time and was dealing with this horrific flooding in Fish Creek park and all the things that were happening to the people. I happen to back onto Fish Creek park and the Bow River. It was quite a sight to see.

But I think one of the things that frightens me on this written question – if you go to the original written question, the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has asked the question:

Have all the claims submitted to the 2011 southern Alberta disaster recovery program and the 2011 spring southeastern Alberta disaster program in regard to the June 2010 South Saskatchewan River basin flooding been finalized, and what is the longest claimants had to wait to receive payment?

It's a pretty straightforward question, and I don't see why that can't be answered. Of course, we faced that last week when we were dealing with written questions, when I asked the Health minister the exact, identical, same questions, and he accepted one and couldn't accept the other and tried to amend the other one. It's funny how when they don't want to answer a question, they change it around.

3:30

What I find striking is that the amended written question will read as follows. They've taken out "have all the claims," which means we've gone now from "claims" to "applications" in the fifth word, and I struggle with that. Then it goes on to:

... to the 2010 southern Alberta disaster recovery program and the 2010 spring southeastern Alberta disaster recovery program been finalized, and how long did it take applicants to receive a first assistance payment once they provided all required information?

I think the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has spoken very passionately and eloquently in regard to his constituents, and I think he's even shared some personal information on how some of his constituents are suffering. I mean, the year 2010? It's 2012, and we still have things that are not answered, so I am going to, along with my colleague from Cypress-Medicine Hat, not support the amended question but support the original question as written on the Order Paper under Written Question 4.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to speak against the motion. I remember particularly when this tragedy first took place. To withhold the information from the public is a disservice on multiple levels, and I want to just focus on one of those. If the system is not working well – and I pose that question: if the system – what we need to know is this information to make a proper evaluation. If it's not working well, if we get this information that validates that, then we can make adjustments accordingly to make sure that the system works well. What's being asked here is nothing more than what is, I think, the duty of this government, to disclose information. This government has said that it is going to be more transparent.

These people who were directly and adversely affected down in the Medicine Hat area deserve a prompt response to a number of issues. These particular questions are really about whether or not we dealt with the matter in a judicious and swift manner. If there are people that are still unsettled in the sense of dealing with these claims, then not only do we need to know as a legislative body, but we need to then act on that if that's the case. Now, if there are no claims, then say it to be so. But, to me, this is something about the operations of how we're going to function not on a policy level but on a practical level in dealing with these types of disasters. If we're going to make corrections moving forward or if we need to make corrections moving forward, this is the critical information that helps us as an elected body to make those decisions. Without that, we cannot make that decision.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to speak against this amendment. There wasn't a whole lot affected within the constituency of Medicine Hat, but there were a couple of instances. I think the key thing here is: "receive a first assistance payment once they provided all required information." The issue was, pretty much, confusion right from the start.

We in Medicine Hat lost one of the founding industries of Medicine Hat. It was the I-XL brick-making plant, and it was severely flooded. Some of the rules and requirements around those people and that kind of a business were very extensive, and they just simply decided to walk away. It wasn't worth proceeding. They didn't feel that they would be treated properly. They actually ended up shutting that factory down, and we lost about 70 employment positions out of that shuttering. I don't know if the government could have stepped up and maybe done something differently to prevent that from happening, but that's what happened. When I look at this, talking about providing all required information, I kind of wonder how that was addressed with those individuals.

The second one was the Ross Creek par 3 golf course. That was off the highway. Because it was tied to another business, the rules and regulations set out didn't allow these people to actually even make any claims at all. It was very disturbing to these business owners, the fact that, again, they were victims of an unforeseen natural disaster. They were exempted right from the start.

I think that, again, when you're talking about providing all the required information, I think we have to look at: is this information actually meeting the needs of individuals facing a natural disaster claim? If not, we should look back because if it's not working for these folks, it certainly didn't work for a number of

the individuals, as my fine member indicated, in Walsh and Irvine. I think there's an indication that it wasn't helping the homeowners, and it wasn't helping business, so obviously there needs to be some clarification on what this information is, what it was, what's going to happen to make it better.

I'll just end by saying that I won't support this.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mr. McAllister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should go back to the amendment and, I guess, why everybody is opposing it. It was a written question from the member to ask on behalf of his constituents, so his constituents put him here to ask a question. He asked that question, and the government member has said, "We don't like your question, so we're going to amend it to suit us," not the constituents that he's asking the question for but the government, so they can answer exactly what it is that they want to answer.

A couple of more points to make. By striking out "in regard to the June 2012 South Saskatchewan River basin flooding," by striking out "and what is the longest claimants had to wait to receive payment" and substituting "and how long did it take applicants to receive a first assistance payment once they provided all required information," what the amendment is essentially saying is that we don't want to answer what you asked us because, clearly, it's not going to look very good on us. The answers aren't going to be flattering to the government. That's okay. Sometimes they're not, but you have to be able to ask the question without an amendment from the government on a written question. I don't believe there's anything illegal going on. I think my cohort here is just trying to stand up for the people of the Medicine Hat area, and well he should. It's what he's here for. It's why they put 17 of us over here and, I would suggest, a lot more after the goings-on today.

Ross Creek golf course: wonderful owners. I know them well. I've played there. I actually had the pleasure of playing at that golf course that was flooded out with my son and his class when he went to Notre Dame academy in a tournament, which we lost in a playoff, Mr. Speaker. I know you'll be troubled to know that. Of the foursome – I think they were grade 8 students – I was the worst on the team.

In any event, they almost went under, literally. They did go under and then almost went under, so when they asked their elected member to come to this Legislature and ask a question on their behalf, he should be able to ask that. That's what this forum is for, not to amend a question so it suits you, which is what's done in this amendment.

Again, to repeat so that we all get this, it's a written question. It's part of the legislative process. The opposition puts forth written questions; the government answers those questions. The government doesn't say: "We don't like your question. If you ask it like this, we'll answer it." In other words, we'll answer part of it, the part that suits us. That is why we're in the pickle that we're in here today, and that is why we're in the pickle that we're in here in Alberta, and that is why Albertans have just about had it, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, notwithstanding the most recent theatrics, there's a reality to this. A written question or a motion for a return, once accepted by the House,

becomes an order of the House. It must be responded to. In order to respond to a question, to make sure that you do it in a way that answers the question, the question has to be specific and certain. In other words, it has to be answerable. Most often when questions are amended, they're amended so that you can actually provide the information in a way that is a legitimate response to the question.

3:40

As we see and hear today, we've had a number of speeches about the people who were harmed by the flood. Everybody cares about the people who were harmed by the flood. Everybody wants to make sure that they get the support that they need and have their claims processed.

But in answer to the question and in response to the hon. member who just spoke, first of all, there is a rule that says that he can't actually ask a question given to him by a constituent, so we have to turn it around. But I understand what the hon. member means. He means we're brought here to represent our constituents. We are brought here to represent our constituents, and we do represent our constituents, but we also have to adhere to the proprieties of the House. The proprieties of the House require that you have to have a question that's answerable. If you pass the question in a specific form and you don't have clear definition as to what it is you're answering, then you can have a dispute break out as to whether or not the minister responsible has appropriately answered the question. In order to ensure that that doesn't happen, you refine the question to something that is clear in terms of the parameters so that you can answer it in an appropriate format. That, with due respect, is all that's being done here, putting in clear, finite time frames or pieces to it so that you know what you're answering.

In this case the amendment would be a first assistance payment rather than the question of: what's the longest they had to wait to receive payment? Receive what payment? Okay. Well, receive the first assistance payment. Now we know what we're talking about. "Receive all payments" I suppose could be another question. The question of: when does it start? You could say from the date of the flood to the time they receive their assistance statements. But the question about when a claim might first arise: when did it first arise? When the first document was filed? There needs to be some certainty to provide a written answer or a motion for a return. That's all that's being intended here. Nobody has intended to deny information that's appropriate but to ensure that any member down in the area that's affected has some clarity around the program.

Programs like this should be looked into. They can be looked into in a number of different ways, and if there's been a problem with the delivery of a program, clearly it's in everybody's interest to determine what those problems are. But this is not a question of debating about whether or not people are concerned about the residents of Medicine Hat and area who were affected by the flood. It's simply a question of how you define a legitimately answerable question.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Government House Leader.

Hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, you've spoken on this already. Hon. member, you can speak once on this, so I'm recognizing the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect, hon. Government House Leader, this goes back to the similar question that we asked the Associate Minister of Seniors. We asked it one

way for mental health. He answered it. We asked it a different way for seniors. He wouldn't.

This question that the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is asking is very clear. Now, what the government wants us to believe is that it's got to be a certain timeline or it's got to be a certain way that the question gets answered and that there's no intention to withhold information. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what this does. There's a process in place that allows people to ask written questions that require a certain amount of research, and the reason we're asking them in a written format and not in the House during question period is because we understand there's a certain amount of research that needs to be done in order to get an appropriate and satisfying answer on behalf of Albertans who are asking that question. When we asked the hon. Associate Minister of Seniors the question on long-term care beds and allocations and that sort of thing, he didn't like the date we picked, so he amended the question to pick a date that was suitable. That's not acceptable. Once again, this question is being amended to once again suit the government's answer that they want to give.

I would almost propose that we should change Written Questions. How about we submit all of our questions to the government, you amend them all, send them back to us, and then we'll resubmit them in written, proper format so that we know exactly the answers we're never going to receive. If we're going to truly talk about democracy – I mean, it's bad enough what happened today in question period, but it's even worse that given when we have the opportunity to ask a fair question under the written question guidelines, that we're allowed to do, this government repeatedly sends it back to us and says: "We don't like the format that you're asking on behalf of Albertans. We'll amend that format. We'll tell you what we think you need to hear, and then we will literally send it back to you, and we'll decide what information Albertans get to hear."

This is a fair question, just like the seniors question was a fair question. Once again this government is deciding what Albertans want to hear and deciding what Albertans need to hear. It's not fair, and it's not right. If they want to change the process, let's go back to Members' Services and do what you need to do to change the Written Questions process. Why don't you just provide us with all the questions? We'll go back to Albertans in our ridings and say: guys, these are the questions that they're willing to let you know. Everybody can take a tally, and we'll bring them back. That seems to be the way that this democracy works.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on the amendment as proposed by the hon. Government House Leader.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on the amendment carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:46 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Allen	Goudreau	Luan
Amery	Hancock	McDonald
Bhardwaj	Hehr	Olesen
Bhullar	Horne	Olson
Brown	Horner	Pastoor
Calahasen	Hughes	Quadri

Cao	Jablonski	Quest
Casey	Jansen	Sarich
Denis	Jeneroux	Scott
Dorward	Johnson, J.	Swann
Drysdale	Johnson, L.	Webber
Fawcett	Kubinec	Woo-Paw
Fraser	Leskiw	Young
Fritz		

Against the motion:

Anglin	Hale	Smith
Barnes	McAllister	Stier
Bikman	Pedersen	Strankman
Donovan	Rowe	Towle
Forsyth	Saskiw	Wilson
Fox		

Totals:	For – 40	Against – 16
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[Motion on amendment carried]

The Deputy Speaker: We will now go back to the debate on Written Question 4 as amended.

I'll call the question.

[Written Question 4 as amended carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to shorten the bells for the remainder of the afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker: A motion has been moved by the Government House Leader that the bells be shortened for the balance of the afternoon. I don't believe that's debatable.

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Deputy Speaker: On Written Question 7 I'll recognize the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

4:00 Staffing Costs for Family Care Clinics

Q7. Mrs. Forsyth asked that the following question be accepted.

What is the projected annual cost to employ health care professionals and other staff who will operate individual family care clinics?

Mrs. Forsyth: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, if I may, Mr. Speaker, we have continually asked this question of the minister. As of today he has yet to answer the question that we were trying to find out from him in regard to the per-patient cost on family care clinics. I can tell you that we have been able to FOIP some of the requests for proposals that the minister has put out, and there are some, quite frankly, alarming numbers in these requests for proposals.

It's interesting. We can do the numbers quite easily on what the cost per patient is for the family care clinics. The minister will probably stand up and say: "Well, it doesn't matter. It's important that we provide good health care for people in this province." I don't think for a minute that anybody is arguing about that. What is important is for us to understand the cost per patient.

I have spent probably the last two weeks, including this weekend, meeting with some very, very entrepreneurial people. That's been doctors, nurses, and all of those people working in primary care networks. Now, I know that the minister is in receipt of a letter that went to him – and I was CCed – on one of the

primary care networks in his riding that has several physicians working under it and about 60,000 patients. They, too, are asking the same question. I had a good meeting with one of the docs from there I think on Friday or Thursday. They think that it's important to get the questions. I guess the question that he posed to me is that he's not quite sure, he's not convinced that the minister really understands how primary care networks work.

I don't think it was any clearer than what was brought out in the Auditor General's report in regard to the direction that this government hasn't taken in regard to finding out what primary care networks do and how well they do them. So we have put this question on the Order Paper so that the minister can talk about the projected annual cost to employ health care professionals and other staff who will operate individual family care clinics. I can tell you that I know the costs because we FOIPed the documentation. I also can tell you how they've laid out the costs not only for their nurse practitioners and their RNs and their dietitians and all of that but exactly how many are going to be needed.

What has been fascinating to me – and the minister may want to explain. I understand that they had a proposal looking for nurse practitioners, put a call out for their family care clinics. Mr. Speaker, have you got any idea how many nurse practitioners applied for that particular position? A hundred? Twenty-five? Any idea? Maybe the minister will answer. I can tell you: two. That's all. Two.

Again, the minister has not yet answered one question in regard to the cost of the family care clinics, so it will be interesting to hear what he has to say about what the cost is. I can tell him right down to the penny what the costs are in regard to setting up the family care clinics. They're from his requests for proposals that have gone out in regard to people bidding on the family care clinics, how they see the family care clinics running. It's something that I think Albertans truly need to know and understand.

I know, again, that the minister will stand up and say: "It's not about whether it's a primary care network. It's not about whether it's a family care clinic. It's about bringing the best service to Albertans." Well, I can tell you this. The money that this government is proposing for family care clinics, the dollars that we have been told, is \$300 per patient versus \$62 per patient. There's a ton of money that could be taken from the cost saving between \$300 and \$62 and put into primary care networks and not only put into those, like the minister has talked about – I think he mentioned a dollar figure today – but the expansion of those same primary care networks.

I will wait. I know my colleagues are waiting to find out what the answer is from the Health minister. It will be interesting to even know if he knows not only the costs for these health care professionals but if he has any idea of the total cost to run these family care clinics.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I can tell him that we know. We got the FOIP documents. We got their requests for proposals. All of the numbers are laid out very clearly, what the costs of these family care clinics are. You start doing the math and the dividing on the per-patient ratio. It will be interesting to see what he has to answer.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
I recognize the hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Horne: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding the fact that we're here to debate a written question, Written Question 7, I won't take the time to point out a number of factual inaccuracies in the hon. member's speech.

Mrs. Forsyth: Please do.

Mr. Horne: No, I won't, Mr. Speaker.

What I will do is I will respond to the question as proposed. While I appreciate the hon. member asking the question, the projected annual cost of staff at individual family care clinics is, in fact, unknown at this time. There's a very simple reason for that. It speaks to the hon. member's lack of understanding of the basic premise of what we're doing in primary health care in Alberta.

The cost of each individual family care clinic will vary from location to location. The FCCs, as are the PCNs for that matter, are intended to respond to identified community health needs as determined by a community health needs assessment. Now, if the hon. member believes that she is in possession of a thoroughly completed health needs assessment for every community in Alberta, then I'd be very interested in seeing that information. But the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that it is impossible to provide standardized costs for family care clinics on a global basis. What we can do and what we will do is that as more FCCs are established, we will provide updates on the clinic costs for each individual family care clinic.

For these reasons, I'd ask my colleagues in the House to reject this question.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
I recognize the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again we're here to ask a question that's important to Albertans. I can appreciate the hon. Health minister's comments that maybe they're not all fully known yet. However, today in question period you stood up and you talked about \$180 million in the budget right now – I could be off slightly in the numbers – and an additional \$75 million going to family care clinics. I can only assume that you must have some projections or some idea of what these family care clinics are going to cost because otherwise you wouldn't be asking Albertans to just roll it out with no idea of what the cost to taxpayers is. First of all, I would find that a little hard to believe, but that's okay if that's the way you want to go.

You have three pilot projects on right now, I believe, one in Edmonton and two in Calgary, where PCNs were replaced by a family care clinic. Surely by now there must be an averaging of costs of those three clinics that the government has already been working with. Those averages of costs – I mean, we talk every day about how the government has projections, can go forward, is going to put this into their budget, infrastructure costs, all of those things, so surely the Minister of Health has those projections and those averagings and has done some background research on what this would cost taxpayers across this province.

I don't believe that the member is asking for an exact cost. I believe the question as it's written is: "What is the projected annual cost to employ health care professionals and other staff who will operate individual family care clinics?" To say that it is unknown at this time – I don't believe that she is asking you for an exact number. She is asking what all Albertans want to know: how do we honestly know if family care clinics are an effective and fiscally responsible way to go if we truly have no idea of what the projected cost going forward is? How do you sell this idea to taxpayers?

What if the projected cost for family care clinics is 10 times more than the current PCN? Is the hon. Minister of Health honestly asking Albertans to believe that he has simply no idea of what the projected costs are and that they'll find out in due time? I would assume that given the budget is not that far away and

you've clearly stated in question period today that you've allotted some monies to family care clinics, you do have an idea of what these projected annual costs will be and that it would only be fair to share that with all Albertans. I would also expect that, quite honestly, the hon. Health minister could alleviate some of this constant questioning if he simply answered the question.

4:10

Again, it doesn't say: specifically what are the costs? Given that we already know that these are not fully implemented yet – and maybe there aren't going to be exactly 140. Maybe there's 137, maybe there's 144, or maybe there's 90. But Albertans don't know this right now. All Albertans know is that you're going to roll out a whole new set of family care clinics. The Health minister is asking everybody in this House and every Albertan to believe that he has no idea what the projections of the costs of family care clinics are. As we head into budget and estimates, it would seem to me that if you've already allotted \$180 million and an additional \$75 million, you clearly do know.

Once again, we're right back to where we were with the seniors' question. We're right back to where we were with the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat on Question 4. They don't want to answer the question, so they stand up and they insult and say that they won't go forward and won't talk about the semantics of the issue. But we need to be fiscally responsible, and how we're spending taxpayer dollars is not semantics. Albertans have a right to know what the projected costs are. If you want buy-in from Albertans and you want buy-in from opposition and even if you don't want buy-in from opposition, surely Albertans have a right to know where this government is spending their taxpayer dollars and have a right to know if spending those taxpayer dollars is done in a fiscally responsible way but, more importantly, if what they're getting in return for spending that money is actually effective. Asking for the projected annual costs to employ these health care professionals and other staff is truly important.

One of the concerns that I'm hearing is – for example, Sylvan Lake is a PCN. If you change it to a family care clinic, that's going to change the business model that they currently have. More importantly, what I'm hearing from the regional hospital that's near to my riding is that we may have a health care shortage in our hospitals because those same nurses may decide that they like the work hours or the environment of a family care clinic, which is valid – they're allowed to work wherever they'd like – but then what do we do with employing the people at the hospital? What wages are we offering at the family care clinic? If you're looking for more nurses, you're going to have to be competitive.

If we don't even know what the projected costs are that this government is talking about, how do we know how we're going to hire, how we're going to staff these facilities, where those people are going to come from, and how much it's going to cost taxpayers. Fundamentally, taxpayers have a right to know what these family care clinics are going to cost them and whether they're getting the best bang for their buck.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this question one has to take even a broader perspective of why the Health minister can't answer this question. It appears that he is just completely abdicating his responsibility as Health minister and saying:

oh, this is up to Alberta Health Services; I have no say in this at all. If you can't even have projected numbers on a key, key, key issue like this, it's a demonstration that there's just cluelessness on the other side.

We have a chartered accountant with the government. Do you not have budgeted numbers? Do you not have a budget? If you look at the question, it refers specifically to projected annual costs. We're not asking for the exact cost that will occur. It's a projected amount. It's a budgeted amount.

It seems to me that this is a broader basis of why the health care system under this Health minister has been deteriorating. Why we're spending more per capita yet getting the worst results is because the Health minister can't even budget on one of his core, core promises that he made during the election. It's outstanding.

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

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to stand and rise and, I guess, question what the point of submitting a written question is because what we've seen from this government to this time is that we present a question during Oral Question Period, the minister indignantly stands up and suggests: that is not a question I can answer in Oral Question Period; please submit it in written question form, and we'll get an answer for you. In the book *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* it suggests that "the purpose of a written question is to seek and receive a precise, detailed answer." There are also some guidelines as to what these questions should and should not be. Similar to how an earlier ruling today by the Speaker suggested questions that would be ruled out of order, there are also rules and regulations suggesting what a written question should do.

Not one of these written questions that we've seen either amended or rejected by this government has violated one of these guidelines in this book, yet we have the minister standing up and not wanting to give the precise, detailed information that the written question is inherently designed to get. In our job as the Official Opposition it would be nice if there was a recognition from the government side that that information needs to be forthcoming for us to have a dialogue about these issues, to actually have a debate. I'm sorry that you don't feel that that's a necessary part of your role as the government, but this book and precedent suggests that it is. So I would simply question the government's stance on these written questions, and I would hope that, moving forward, we see a little bit of a different response from the opposite side of this floor.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I recognize the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this question is a fair question and one that needs to be answered, and I want to resort to Scripture to support this contention. In Luke chapter 14 of the New Testament, verse 28, we begin:

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

I submit to you that that's an apt Scripture to apply to this, and we can learn great things from the wisdom literature of the ages such as the Bible, that advises us on the dangers of starting something when we don't really know what it's going to cost. Asking what it's going to cost is a fair question, and I think it's a question that Albertans want an answer to. So I submit that this question ought to be answered.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that Written Question 7 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:17 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anglin	Fox	Smith
Barnes	Hale	Stier
Bikman	McAllister	Strankman
Bilous	Pedersen	Swann
Donovan	Rowe	Towle
Forsyth	Saskiw	Wilson

Against the motion:

Allen	Fawcett	Leskiw
Amery	Fraser	Luan
Bhardwaj	Fritz	McDonald
Bhullar	Hancock	Olesen
Brown	Horne	Olson
Calahasen	Hughes	Quadri
Cao	Jablonski	Quest
Casey	Jansen	Sarich
Dallas	Jeneroux	Scott
Denis	Johnson, J.	VanderBurg
Dorward	Johnson, L.	Woo-Paw
Drysdale	Kubinec	Young

Totals:	For – 18	Against – 36
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[Written Question 7 lost]

4:30 Building/Leasing Costs for Family Care Clinics

Q8. Mrs. Forsyth asked that the following question be accepted.

What is the forecast for annual expenditures for the next four fiscal years for building or leasing family care clinics?

Mrs. Forsyth: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure this is going to be another lengthy debate. Now, to me, that's a pretty simple question. I'm sure the Minister of Infrastructure is going to get up and speak to this because his responsibility is for infrastructure and the planning of infrastructure and, obviously, the infrastructure dollars. I am quite looking forward to him either getting up and speaking in regard to this motion or, again, the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, this is quite a simple question. What we need to find out is how many family care clinics they're building or, for that matter, how many family care clinics that they're leasing. Now, we know that they've got three on the go, pilot projects, so I'm sure that the minister can answer that question quite easily on

what the cost of the infrastructure for the family care clinics in his three pilot projects are or if they're leased.

What is more interesting to me is the proposal of about 137 more family care clinics. Again, he's spoken into the record about the money that they're going to have for the primary care networks and the money that they have for the family care clinics. I can tell you as a businessperson that if I'm looking at expanding my business and wondering if I'm going to be making a profit, there is no question that I will know what my infrastructure costs are going to be, whether I'm buying that building or, quite frankly, leasing that building. The other thing that I think is important is the operating costs that are going to be contained in either buying that building or leasing that building and maintaining that building.

This government talks about being fiscally conservative. They talk about their plan, how they have an infrastructure plan and how they have this plan in place on the needs of Albertans. I am looking forward to hearing from the Minister of Infrastructure and, quite frankly, the Minister of Health to find out, first of all, what the current costs are for the three family care clinics that are out there that are pilot projects. Then, as you can tell, I put in here "for the next four fiscal years." If they're looking at building in the next four years 137 more family care clinics, then they have to have some numbers in their head. If they don't, Albertans need to know that. They truly need to know that this government – the best laid plans of mice and men. Well, the mice have gone, and we're not sure where the men are, and they have no plans. Period. That's not good government. Good government is basing the needs on Albertans.

We can see, quite frankly, where we are right now with the government, where we are with the deficit. I think on that side we're only getting half the picture. We don't seem to get the full picture on the other side of our infrastructure debt. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Infrastructure owe Albertans, they owe the medical community the costs to have these family care clinics up and running.

Now, in the last question I talked about the documents that the minister doesn't seem to know that we have. He said: well, I don't know where they got their documents. Well, it's his darn documents that we FOIPed, so it shows that this minister surely isn't really too sure about what's happening in his department, which, to me, isn't a good sign of a good minister.

We can see what's happening with the AMA, the negotiations with the AMA. They're all over Twitter in regard to what's happening with the negotiations. I'm getting e-mails constantly, and my phone is ringing constantly in regard to trying to get an update on exactly – the dollars that they seem to want to take from the AMA negotiations are exactly the dollars that are going to be used for the family care clinics. Now, this minister will deny that. He can't deny that quite rightfully because what he doesn't understand is that people have caught on to him. The medical community especially has caught on to him.

I said in this Legislature before that I can't keep up with the calls that I'm getting from people in the medical community. Quite frankly, I always say that if I'm ever in an accident, somebody is going to think I'm a hypochondriac because I've got about 65 doctors in my BlackBerry that I constantly talk to back and forth, and I don't know them, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, I don't know how they vote, and I haven't asked them.

The fine doctor I talked to on Thursday night that happened to send an e-mail to the minister asking him some pointed questions on the cost of family care clinics and explaining what he does as a primary care physician and explaining to the minister that he's got 60,000 patients within his constituency, I've never met. I didn't

ask him how he voted, and I don't care how he voted. I mean, he lives in Edmonton; I live in Calgary. But I'll tell you that he was a breath of fresh air. He had indicated, as I said earlier, that he's not exactly sure if the minister really understands how well primary care networks work, what they do. He walked me through several different examples of people that they're serving in the minister's riding.

We talked about how one of the biggest expenses to the health dollars is dealing with chronic illness, whether it's diabetes or any of those chronic illnesses. He explained to me and he shared with me how they deal with chronic illnesses in the minister's riding, especially if the fellow is a diabetic. You know, he gets treated under the family physician, and then after that he enters the primary care network, and he deals with a nurse. He doesn't get paid for that. The nurse takes care of him. The only time the nurse calls him is if there's something going on with the patient's diabetes and he thinks that he needs to be brought in, maybe change his meds or find out if it's a dietary problem or whatever it is.

You know what? The Health minister continually talks about how Albertans don't care whether they access a primary care network or whether they access a family care clinic. I'm not disputing that. I think that the family care clinic that's up in Slave Lake is probably working and serving the needs of the people up in Slave Lake. I'm sure the family care clinic that's in northeast Edmonton right now is doing a fine job of meeting the needs of those people. But when government money is involved and government money is being used to run these clinics, then the people of Alberta, the Official Opposition, and the other opposition members have a right to know what the cost is because it's important when you're talking about budgets.

Now, the minister knows and he can stand up easily and tell you exactly the dollars primary care networks are getting in this province and that they got a raise – he's talked about that in the Legislature – of \$12 per patient. He will tell you: it is \$62 per patient under the primary care networks, and we've done this, and we've done that, and we've done this, and we've done that. You ask him the same question on the family care clinics, his lips close and he doesn't have an answer. That is something that is disturbing not only to me as the Health critic with the Official Opposition of the Wildrose, but it's disturbing to the medical clinic and it's disturbing to the people in Alberta that are particularly paying close attention to the budget.

I'm going to sit down because it's 20 to 5 and we've got several more written questions. I would like the minister to talk on the record about the forecast for annual expenditures for the next four years for building or leasing family care clinics. Both these ministers of Infrastructure and Health and, in fact, the government . . . [Mrs. Forsyth's speaking time expired]

4:40

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Minister of Health, do you care to respond?

Mr. Horne: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Well, it's interesting but perhaps not surprising that, in my view, much of what the hon. member had to say had really little, if anything, to do with the written question that she has posed. You know, what's very interesting is that the hon. member has raised some questions about the projected cost for family care clinics – and those are certainly fair questions to be asking – but what we have not heard is any detailed questions about financial accountability for primary care networks or for other models.

In the last round the hon. member referenced the Auditor General's report. As you may know, Mr. Speaker, one of the very specific issues that was raised in that report was around the question of monitoring and measurement, including costs of primary care networks. As the hon. member knows, while we can speak to the funding that's provided to family care clinics, which is on a per capita basis – and the hon. member is correct; we raised that amount last year from \$50 to \$62 – while we can talk about what that amounts to globally in the health system, which is about \$181 million per year, we are unable to provide the standardized costs that the hon. member is seeking.

The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is the very same reason. It is impossible to answer this hon. member's question in the way that she has posed it. That is because every primary care network is different. They all employ different types of staff working together on a team. Some work in small physician clinics. Others work in larger group practices in the catchment areas that they serve. They offer many different programs, and many of them are extremely innovative and have been noted nationally. But they are different. They are not consistent across the province, and that is one of the issues as well that was raised in the Auditor General's report.

The same is true, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to projecting costs for family care clinics. As I said in the response to the last written question debate that we had, family care clinics are going to be developed in response to community proposals that are based on community health needs assessments. In some cases this is going to make use of existing facilities, physician offices, or other facilities, infrastructure that currently exists in the community. That would certainly be our first preference as a government, as a government that is concerned with being cost-efficient, that is concerned with getting the most value from our physical infrastructure resources.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we would turn first to what opportunities might be available in local communities to host family care clinics. In response to some proposals there may in fact be situations where facilities do not exist in communities or where there is not sufficient space within those facilities to house the family care clinic operation. In those cases we could end up looking at responses to proposals that ask for physical infrastructure.

The hon. member's question – if she's interested in taking responsibility for the question that she did pose as a written question to this House – was for the projected future costs over the next four years in their totality. Mr. Speaker, we don't have that information. We don't have that information for a very good reason. We're not imposing a cookie-cutter, standardized approach across Alberta. We are transforming primary health care to something that is community driven, that responds to local community needs, be it in the areas of addictions and mental health services or easier access to home care or specialist linkages. We fully expect the needs of the community to be different as we look at different proposals.

The other thing of course, Mr. Speaker, is that whatever information the hon. member has or thinks she has – and if it's publicly available information, I congratulate her on accessing that information – what I can tell you is that we are working actively with physicians and with other health professionals in planning all of this, whether we're talking about primary care networks or family care clinics. I've talked on many occasions about our primary health care advisory committee, our primary health care strategy working group that includes representatives from the Alberta Medical Association, from the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, from psychologists, from a whole

range of health disciplines. It is these people whose expertise I will choose to rely upon as Minister of Health in making decisions about projected costs for the future.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in listening to the last portion of the debate from the hon. member, it would appear that the only thing that's really concrete and clear and perhaps easy to project for me is that she has listened, in my view, to nothing that has been said about family care clinics in the last year, that she has listened to nothing in terms of developments in health care policy to improve access to primary health care, yet she persists in these questions. I'd be very pleased, as I said earlier, as family care clinic proposals are finalized and family care clinics are implemented one by one, to certainly share fully with this House the cost associated with each.

But, Mr. Speaker, our first concern – and we would hope it would be the concern of members opposite – would be that we are able to meet the primary health care needs of all of our citizens regardless of where they live. We will continue to provide the flexibility and the opportunities for input on the part of our health professionals and other stakeholders in this work. We make no apologies for that.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Are there others? I'll recognize the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate the Minister of Health's answers. One of the points that you brought up in answering this question was that the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek didn't have a costing, what our primary care networks were costing us. I would think that it's imperative for the Health minister to provide that to Albertans, not for the opposition to provide that to Albertans. I mean, clearly, I think, Albertans would very much like to see what the PCNs are costing Albertans versus the family care clinics, which I think is exactly what these questions are attempting to do.

The Health minister has come up and said that we should be asking that question, which is clearly what we're asking, and then he chastises the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for doing just that. If he wants to actually show what the comparisons are, family care clinics to PCNs, he's in the position to do so. We're not in that position, hence the question that's coming forward.

If the Health minister really wants to talk about who's not listening, clearly, it's the Health minister. That has been identified by the Alberta Medical Association. The Alberta Medical Association has come out clearly and said that they've been left out of the negotiations on family care clinics. They even have said that they're not sure exactly what the plan is or what this means for primary care networks. They've stated emphatically that primary care networks work and, if given time, can actually save the province money going forward.

The Health minister just wants to chastise the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for doing her job. She submitted a written question. So far he's told us that he doesn't know what the projected annual cost to employ health professionals will be. Now he's seriously telling Albertans that he has no idea what the annual expenditures for the next fiscal year are. I can appreciate that he's saying that they just increased from \$50 to \$62 per year, which, he's saying, is about \$181 million a year under the PCN model.

Does the Health minister honestly want Albertans to believe that they're not looking at leases right now, that they're seriously not even remotely scavenging the province and looking at what they would be willing to pay for real estate or at what the going rate is for leases in the major centres where they plan to put these

family care clinics? All along the Health minister has had us believe that there's a plan for family care clinics. All along the Premier has said that she's got a number of 140. Surely the Premier and the Health minister have a plan for where these 140 family care clinics are going to go, and surely they have an idea of what the average rents are going to be. Or is it better to rent versus purchase? Surely the Health minister and the Minister of Infrastructure have done their homework and are prepared to come forward with that plan. I can't imagine that going forward they're saying to Albertans: we will make that decision the minute we roll out all 140 family care clinics.

What limits the cost of family care clinics? Nobody is disputing that family care clinics will be individual to the communities they serve. No one is disputing that. That also could mean that a family care clinic in Calgary-Shaw might cost \$10 million and a family care clinic in Elnora might cost \$750,000. How does the Health minister expect Albertans to believe that he has no plan on a per cost basis of how the infrastructure of this is going to go? Nobody in business, nobody in government sets out their budget allocations that way. That would literally be unfathomable.

The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board has said all along that he has a plan, that we'll see it at budget time. He has said that they know exactly that they will be on budget. How can they know they're going to be on budget if they don't even know what the cost of the family care clinic infrastructure or of employing the people in these family care clinics is going to be? How can you hit your budget? You can't honestly expect that you can hit the budget number, whatever that might be. I don't know what that number is, but you can't tell Albertans that we will hit the budget number when we don't even know what the costs are going to be.

4:50

The Minister of Finance has emphatically stated that this government will be on budget, that they will only borrow for schools, hospitals, those sorts of things. He's never once mentioned that he's going to borrow for family care clinics. Do the Minister of Health and the Minister of Infrastructure actually expect Albertans to believe that they have no projections of what infrastructure is going to cost, that they've done no relative study of what leasing versus purchasing does? That's basic business. I own a small business. You can't tell me that I forecast for the year.

Now, I understand, things happen. Maybe we need 137 clinics. Maybe we need 145. Maybe the employment contracts for nurses in Calgary are slightly higher than employment contracts for those in Innisfail if that's where the family care clinic is going to go. Surely they have an idea in their head of what those forecasts are.

The other part of that is: are the Minister of Health and the Minister of Infrastructure also asking Albertans to believe that they have no maximum? You've set no maximum in your forecast, absolutely none? You have no annual projected cost that you will not go above? If you can't give the actual forecasting on a per patient basis or on a per clinic basis, surely you have sat down and said that the cost of these family care clinics will not exceed X. There's no way you couldn't have done that.

Now, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Infrastructure easily could have amended this question to say: "Excuse me, hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, because this is such an individualized situation, I don't have the exact numbers you're looking for on a four-year go-forward. I will amend the question to tell you that this is the maximum budget that we will not exceed. This is what we've built into the forecasting for this year based on my talks with the Minister of Finance. This is the max

we will not exceed, and as it rolls out, we will tell you exactly how that money is going to be allocated.”

The Minister of Health would have us believe, standing here today, that he’s done absolutely none of that. He has no max; he has no minimum. He’s not researched a single lease; he’s not researched a single purchase. But we have three pilot projects in two major centres that have lease costs, that have real estate costs maybe. We don’t know what those are. He could easily have amended the question to say: well, we could release these numbers for you and show you exactly what those are. But he’s not willing to do that either.

Now, going to the Minister of Infrastructure, it’s interesting because the Minister of Infrastructure stands up in this House every day and says: we have a list of infrastructure priorities on a website. Has anybody gone to that website? Family care clinics are just listed: no cost, no priority, not where they’re located. How can the Minister of Infrastructure sit there and honestly believe and ask Albertans to believe that they have no idea what these things are going cost, where the priority is, and then stand here in this House every day when he’s asked a question and say: “Just go to our website. Everything is prioritized on our website.” It’s impossible. There’s no number assigned to it and no dollar value. How do you prioritize anything if there’s not a dollar value associated with it and a list of where they go in priority? So, yeah. I mean, it’s sitting on the website. Family care clinics. Fantastic. That tells Albertans tons.

These two members, honestly, could have easily provided the costs and the values associated with (a) the pilot project or even provided a maximum and a minimum budget that they’re willing to work with to go forward into 2013. They’re telling Albertans: “We’ve done no homework. We’re so neglectful in our duties. We’re not going to provide you with any information, and you just have to accept that.” Easily, you could have provided information. You’re just choosing not to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (reversion)

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly good friends of mine. Mike Shaikh, Alberta Senator-elect, is a long-time provincial Progressive Conservative and a Calgarian for nearly 40 years. Mike Shaikh is a successful businessman and a tireless volunteer and philanthropist. Mike has sat on dozens of nonprofit and business boards and currently chairs the Calgary Police Commission. A champion of higher education and community, he has received the Premier Klein leader service award, the University of Calgary distinguished alumni MAX award, and many more. Mike is joined today by a gentleman who is well known to all of us, Mr. Ken Faulkner. They are seated in the public gallery. I’d ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Written Questions

Building/Leasing Costs for Family Care Clinics (continued)

The Deputy Speaker: I’ll recognize the next speaker. Are there other speakers on this question? The Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mr. McAllister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It looks like I’m running out of time, which is probably going to please some in here. [interjections] I asked for that, and once in a while it’s good to receive it, so thank you.

Mr. Dorward: You should have gone to a minute, and we would have had time.

Mr. McAllister: Oh, is Statler at it again?

The Deputy Speaker: You have the floor, hon. member.

Mr. McAllister: The point I want to raise on this, Mr. Speaker, comes down to something the Minister of Health said in his defence talking to the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I believe he was suggesting that she hadn’t listened to anything that he had said as she gave her thoughts on how this is working and what Albertans are expecting in terms of finances, and I recognize that she would probably say the same to him: I don’t think you were listening to anything that we say when it comes to these clinics and what Albertans are expecting in terms of information. There is a lot of detail here, and I understand that from both sides. But it does seem logical to suggest that some of these details be made public so that we have an idea of where we are going forward as we plan for the province.

In making one more point, the president of the AMA just issued a new letter to doctors stating: “Batten down the hatches and prepare [for] a storm.” To the Minister of Health: who is it that isn’t listening?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others?
Seeing none, I’ll call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that Written Question 8 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:58 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Barnes	Hehr	Stier
Bikman	McAllister	Strankman
Bilous	Pedersen	Swann
Forsyth	Rowe	Towle
Hale	Saskiw	Wilson

Against the motion:

Allen	Fritz	McDonald
Amery	Goudreau	Olesen
Bhardwaj	Hancock	Olson
Bhullar	Horne	Pastoor
Brown	Hughes	Quadri
Calahasen	Jablonski	Quest
Cao	Jansen	Sarich
Casey	Jeneroux	Scott

Dallas	Johnson, J.	Starke
Denis	Johnson, L.	VanderBurg
Dorward	Kubinec	Woo-Paw
Drysdale	Leskiw	Young
Fawcett	Luan	
Totals:	For – 15	Against – 38

[Written Question 8 lost]

5:10 Motions Other than Government Motions

The Deputy Speaker: There are 13 minutes remaining. I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Public Funding of Private Schools

504. Mr. Hehr moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to implement a policy to eliminate public funding to private schools.

[Debate adjourned November 26]

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm standing today to speak to Motion 504. I'd like to start off by saying that the intent of this motion I support completely, and that is to ensure that our public education system remains just that, publicly funded and publicly delivered. What I do want to mention is that there are some private schools within this province that fulfill very specific and special needs. There are schools that serve populations that require additional support or students that require many different supports in order to function.

I'll note that the school that I taught at for six years, Inner City high school, is actually a private school with a very interesting history. That school in particular tried to come under the public education model for a number of years in the '90s, and it didn't work. The reason it didn't work was because the current funding model that is in place did not allocate or give the school enough dollars to be able to provide all of the services that those students require. You've got at the moment a school system that is trying to do a one size fits all within our public.

Now, in my opinion, what the school would like and what I would like to see is that schools like Inner City high school fit under the umbrella of our public school system so that we don't have the need for a private grouping of schools, some that absolutely require public dollars. Those schools like Inner City high school, because of the needs they serve, should come under the public school envelope. There are other private schools, I will say, that receive public dollars that, in my opinion, shouldn't be getting those public dollars, and if they intend to operate, they should do so completely on private dollars.

An example with Inner City high school is that in a classroom of a size, let's say, of 20 to 25 students, you'll have 15 to 18 students, probably around 90 per cent, that have severe special needs, whether we're talking about behavioural disorders to other types of needs. For that reason, the dollars that fit under the public model would not apply to this school because there simply would not be the supports that these students require.

So I'm speaking in favour of this motion that the government implement a policy to end public funding to private schools, and with that, I would urge the government to come up with a way to include schools like Inner City high school. There are other schools, I've been informed, like Muslim schools that get their start as a private school, but their intention would be to join with our public system as well. Let's move to a publicly funded model

of education but one that truly does reflect the diversity and needs of all students in this province. That's where I will leave my support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I'd look to the mover to close if there are no other speakers. Hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, you have a few minutes. Please proceed.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly support the public school system. As I've said numerous times on the floor of this House, all 13 of our children were educated through that system. But I believe in choice. I believe that, properly done, there's room for both under the umbrella of education. I certainly think that parents and students ought to have some choices, and I don't think that that means that one is going to suffer at the expense of the other unless we're mismanaging, and I can certainly understand a case being made for that. I believe that there ought to be room in this tent for both.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand in support of this motion. I think it's something that many Albertans have written to us about: a public system that's under siege from the point of view of classroom sizes, from the point of view of supports for special-needs kids, infrastructure deficits. We have a lot to do to strengthen and create a level playing field for our young people, especially those who are in difficult circumstances. We're not going to get there if we don't start investing our public dollars in public education.

I haven't heard very many people at all across the province say that the private system needs support. Clearly, our first priority is government. I think it's an important issue. If the government feels that they can stand up to the public in terms of their position on these millions and millions of dollars going to private institutions, then they should put it to a referendum.

I think the evidence is clear. Albertans want a strong, sustainable, publicly funded education system, and I think it's time that we moved in that direction to support the majority of Albertans, who are saying so.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others? We've got a couple of minutes left.

Seeing none, I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo to close debate.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to everyone in this honourable House who took part in the debate. In my view, I believe this motion put forward is a good one and one that I would urge all members to support.

I look at the goals of the Education Act, which says that our students are to come together to learn in a modern society, tolerant of all views and opinions, and to foster a strong democracy. That's, essentially, the beauty of the public education system. Regardless of whether you're wealthy or whether you're poor, whether you're of one religion or another religion, whether you've just come from a different country or have been here a hundred years, you are entitled to go to the public education system. To me, having our children go to learn to care, share, play, and learn together is what we should be trying to foster, and that is done through funding a public education system.

What I said earlier and I'll say again is that, in my view, private schools tend to divide children on the basis of wealth and religion. We can look at that. That's very clear. Eighty per cent of private schools in this province are currently of one religious denomination or another. There is another cohort to that, elite private schools, that charge upwards of \$20,000 to \$25,000 for their children to attend. Why would we be propping up a system that divides communities, doesn't bring them together? In my view, it doesn't make sense. If people believe that they want to have a private school, by all means, they should get a private school, but the public dollars to foster that do not have to follow them.

I believe there is one caveat to this, and that would be until such time as the public system is able to accommodate all children with disabilities. I understand that there is a need out there. Currently the public system is not functioning well in that regard. That being said, with a forward-looking government, one that understands that all kids need an opportunity to learn, I believe, too, that this can be rectified in time.

5:20

It's my view that the public system can be that system where everyone comes together and learns in a caring, sharing environment, and I stand by that proposition, sir. I believe that it's in our society's best interest to continue to encourage our families through our support of the public education system to have their kids attend. There's no need for us to fracture society by our public dollars going to support someone's private choice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 504 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:21 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Bilous	Hehr	Swann
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Against the motion:

Allen	Fritz	Pedersen
Amery	Goudreau	Quadri
Barnes	Hale	Quest
Bhardwaj	Hancock	Rodney
Bhullar	Hughes	Rowe
Bikman	Jansen	Sarich
Brown	Jeneroux	Saskiw
Calahasen	Johnson, J.	Scott
Cao	Johnson, L.	Starke
Casey	Kubinec	Stier
Dallas	Leskiw	Strankman
Denis	Luan	Towle
Dorward	McDonald	VanderBurg
Drysdale	Olesen	Wilson
Fawcett	Olson	Woo-Paw
Fraser	Pastoor	Young

Totals:	For – 3	Against – 48
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[Motion Other than Government Motion 504 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: I'll recognize the hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd request the unanimous consent of the House to revert to private members' business, Bill 201.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park has moved for unanimous consent that the House consider going to private members' business to deal with Bill 201.

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Deputy Speaker: The standing orders provide that we can only consider one motion at this time. If there's no other business, then the House would stand adjourned until 7:30 tonight.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:34 p.m.]

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