



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Issue 39

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

First Session

Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Speaker
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont (PC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Jablonski, Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)
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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),
Liberal Opposition House Leader
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, Christine, Calgary-Currie (PC)
Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Acadia (PC),
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Drysdale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-Calder (ND),
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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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Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)
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Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)
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Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL),
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Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)
Kubinec, Maureen, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (PC)
Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
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Lukaszuk, Hon. Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC)
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Official Opposition Deputy Whip
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Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Quest, Dave, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (PC)
Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),
Premier
Rodney, Hon. Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),
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Smith, Danielle, Highwood (W),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Starke, Hon. Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
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Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W),
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VanderBurg, Hon. George, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (PC)
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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		Liz Sim, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

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Chair: Mr. Amery
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Bhardwaj	Olesen
Cao	Pastoor
Donovan	Quadri
Dorward	Rogers
Eggen	Rowe
Hehr	Sarich
Luan	Strankman
McDonald	Xiao

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Khan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Jablonski

Anderson
Casey
Dorward
Eggen
Kubinec
Sandhu
Sherman

Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

Chair: Mr. Allen
Deputy Chair: Mr. Luan

Blakeman	Notley
Dorward	Saskiw
Fenske	Wilson
Johnson, L.	Young
McDonald	

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Mr. Quest
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Brown	Jeneroux
Cusanelli	Leskiw
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Deputy Chair: Mr. Rogers

Casey	Mason
Forsyth	McDonald
Fraser	Quest
Kennedy-Glans	Sherman
	Smith

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Xiao
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Barnes	Jablonski
Bhardwaj	Leskiw
Brown	Notley
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DeLong	Rowe
Fox	Strankman
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Kennedy-Glans	Saskiw
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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Anderson
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Allen	Hehr
Amery	Jeneroux
Anglin	Khan
Bilous	Pastoor
Donovan	Quadri
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Hale	Stier

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Ms Kennedy-Glans
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Allen	Hale
Barnes	Johnson, L.
Bikman	Khan
Bilous	Kubinec
Blakeman	Lemke
Calahasen	Sandhu
Casey	Stier
Fenske	Webber

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: I knew this was going to be a bad hair day. [laughter]

Prayers

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

Please be seated.

Hon. members, it is with great pleasure that I share with you this information. Today is the 24th election anniversary of one of our colleagues, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake. [applause]

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my honour to rise today on behalf of the Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek, to introduce 56 of the brightest students from Velma E. Baker elementary school in the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Creek. Joining them today are their teachers, Ms Lynn Peacock and Ms Marilyn Manning, and also four parent volunteers, Mrs. Rosalea Petruk, Mrs. Verna Milligan, Mrs. Kelly Nicolson, and Mr. Gary Biddell. At this time I'd ask all of the students and guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It is truly a pleasure to stand today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of individuals joining us today from the Trinity Christian school in my riding of Calgary-Shaw. We have 39 grade 6 students along with 23 parents here today, including their teachers, Dawnyshia Dykshoorn and Cheryl Barnard. The principal of the school, Mr. Stan Hielema, is also here. I would ask all of them to please rise and I'd ask fellow members to provide them with the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations.

Mr. Dallas: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Today it's my great pleasure to introduce through you but not to you a member of the Red Deer-North constituency and a good friend of mine, Bob Jablonski. Bob has been a volunteer pilot and trainer with the Civil Air Search and Rescue. He's been a volunteer fireman with the Nordegg fire rescue as well as one of our area's finest entrepreneurs. Bob has owned a number of family businesses, the latest being The Coverall Shop. Bob resides in Red Deer, where he is a loving father, a grandfather to four granddaughters and one grandson, and for the past 41 years partner to the hon. Member for Red Deer-North. Bob is seated in the Speaker's gallery today, and I'd

ask him to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is my great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the careers in transition program. With us today – and I believe they're all sitting in the public gallery – we have Tanis Harder, who is the instructor. Now, the rest of them are all students that are very hard working, looking for their GED. We have Mike Lee, Justine Jensen, Chris Gallinger, Tami Reid, Chris Boyle, Tania Lewis, Renee White, Margaret Gordon, and Patricia Willis. They're all standing, so if you would please join me in welcoming them to the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre.

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

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 13 members of the Advisory Council on Alberta-Ukraine Relations, ACAUR. Over 10 years ago the Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek, our current Speaker, started ACAUR, to which I was appointed way back then. I would like to thank the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations for his continued support of this council.

Madam Speaker, I'd ask the council members to rise and stay standing as I list their names. Daria Luciwi is past president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council. Kathryn Kozak Wiebe, former mayor of Bonnyville, is active in the rural Ukrainian community. Michael Sulyma is the head of Sulyma Productions, an arts touring and production company. Vitaliy Milentyev is a member of the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce and president of Global Wealth Builders. Yarema Shulakewych works at the Canadian International Development Agency projects in Ukraine and has represented the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Kiev. Emil Yereniuk is president of the Ukrainian Self-Reliance Association and vice-president of the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of Canada. Marilyn Mucha is a member emeritus of the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers Advisory Foundation. Jaroslaw Szewczuk has experience advocating for political rights and freedoms for Ukraine and promoting Canadian values to Ukrainians. He is also president of the League of Ukrainian Canadians in Edmonton.

Bill Lebedovich is a chartered psychologist and teacher at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta business faculties who has worked in the oil and gas industry. Natalia Toroshenko is a third-term town councillor for the town of Vegreville. Bill Shostak is president of Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, Edmonton branch. Michael Hantzsch is vice-president of the oil sands and heavy oil business unit of the Pembina Pipeline Corporation and is involved in the Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Association of Calgary. Bohdan Romaniuk, lawyer, economist, business executive, is involved in the Ukrainian Canadian Professional & Business Association of Calgary. Barbara Hlus is our newly elected president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council. Also with her is Stefanie Jones from IIR, assigned to the Europe file. Thanks to Stefanie for her help and guidance over the many years. IIR is blessed to have you onboard.

I would ask everyone to give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: The Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Weadick: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to rise today and introduce someone that's an important part of our community here in Alberta. As you know, the home-building industry is extremely important to our community and to all of us. Today I'm very pleased to have the CHBA Alberta president, Dave Hooze, here. He's in the Legislature with his son and their class from Calgary. Dave is the president and general manager of Stepper Custom Homes. I'd like to tell you that he was also a very strong advocate for the new-home warranty program and for mandatory home warranty for all of the homes in Alberta. I'd like to ask Dave to rise so we can give him the warm reception of our House.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Mr. Daylin Breen, who recently received the Queen's jubilee medal for his work building a strong, active community environment while establishing an active and effective school parent council at Johnny Bright school. Through his initiative with his parent council Daylin has spearheaded an annual walk-to-school day and implemented a school travel plan, both of which the Edmonton public school board is now looking at as models for other schools. Daylin continues to create a strong community within Edmonton-South West while still working full-time and raising two remarkable kids, Rowan and Maya. I'd ask that Mr. Daylin Breen please rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

Mr. Dorward: Madam Speaker, on July 10, 1971, I met a young woman at a movie theatre who would greatly improve and bless my life. She is here today, my wife, Janice Dorward. Accompanying Janice is our daughter from Salmon Arm, Jennifer Henrie, and five of our 13 grandchildren: Ryan, Nadya, Christian, Bethany, and Joshua. I invite them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Youth Akali Dal Mansa party president, Mr. Gurpreet Singh Banawali from Punjab, India. He has been visiting this great province of Alberta for the past week and has expressed to me how much he has enjoyed his visit so far. Today during the visit various issues were discussed, the biggest one being: will India have access to Alberta oil? I have assured him that the Alberta government is working to improve market access. He has been travelling with many friends, visiting both Edmonton and Calgary, and today they are here to watch a live question period.

They are all seated in the members' gallery. Joining Mr. Banawali are many of his friends and mine. I'd ask them to please rise when I mention their names: Gurpreet Banawali, Manpreet Sidhu, Amandeep Dhanju, Rajesh Choudhary, Prab Gill from Calgary, Inderjit Mullanpur of the *Desh Videsh Times*, Parminder Grewal, Balraj Brar, Raj Wander, Navtej Singh, and, of course, my good friend Vattandeep Grewal from the *Ajit* newspaper. I'd ask the members to please give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today is a very special occasion as it is the first time in the Assembly that we've had a woman in the Speaker's chair, and it's wonderful. My friend, I want you to know how special it is, too, that Bob has joined you for this very defining moment in your career. We're just going to give you one more real round of applause. [applause]

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for that. I would just add that 41 years is not enough. [laughter]

The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. A tough act to follow.

It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly my friend Ross Ford, reeve of the county of Warner, former mayor of Coumts, and successful farmer. Ross is a vocal, articulate advocate for our area, especially most recently about the importance of volunteer ambulance service. Ross, please rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly, which I hope will be enthusiastic enough to persuade you to run again this October.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure today to rise and introduce a dear friend, Prab Gill, who's here from Calgary. The Member for Edmonton-Manning already mentioned his name because he likes to take credit for all great things that we know especially come from Calgary. Prab is a dear friend, a great community volunteer, and somebody whose relationship and friendship I cherish very much. I'd ask all members to give him the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my extreme pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a gentleman named Chris Nielsen. Chris is not only a hard worker with United Food and Commercial Workers 401 but was a very integral part of my campaign team in the last election. Chris volunteered and did everything from helping going door to door to delivering flyers to putting up signs. What's interesting is that Chris is now in the process of seeking the nomination for the Alberta NDP in the riding of Edmonton-Decore. I would now ask Chris to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

Edmonton Remand Centre

Mr. Saskiw: Yesterday, with great fanfare, the PC government opened up a brand new facility. It's being billed as state of the art, the most technically advanced of its kind in the entire country. It meets high environmental standards, allows for the efficient use of natural light, and is landscaped meticulously to match its agricultural style. But that's not all, Madam Speaker. Its residents will have access to an exercise room, a fresh, clean-air area as well as educational and recreational programs. They'll have regular bathing privileges, warm meals every day, and appropriate mental and physical health care right on-site.

Wouldn't it be wonderful, Madam Speaker, if I was talking about a long-term care centre or seniors' lodge? The men and women who built this province surely deserve no less. But I'm not. The place I'm talking about is the Edmonton Remand Centre,

a jail. The residents I'm talking about are inmates. While seniors in long-term care are bathed twice a week if they're lucky and get served disgusting mush for supper, Alberta taxpayers are footing the \$580 million bill for top-notch care for those behind bars.

I suppose we should expect no less from this Justice minister, a former Saskatchewan Liberal staffer. He's already stopped monitoring sex offenders, stopped prosecuting vandals, and stopped cracking down on drug dens. Why would anyone be surprised that he's rolling out the red carpet for inmates?

Madam Speaker, this isn't justice. Justice would be for vulnerable seniors receiving, at the very least, the same level of comfort and care that this minister offers inmates. [interjections] The fact is that there is no justice under this Justice minister. While a so-called progressive, soft-on-crime agenda continues to give criminals the edge, hard-working Albertans, the victims of these very criminals, are left wondering: what on earth is this Justice minister doing? [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, the noise level is getting a little loud even for a grandmother.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and congratulations for being in the chair today. I'm glad that I'm here to participate on the day that we have the first woman Speaker in the chair.

Bitumen Upgrading

Mr. Mason: Madam Speaker – I had to change that, Madam Speaker – as we all know, since the time of Peter Lougheed the Alberta government has promised Albertans that it would develop the oil industry in the interest of all Albertans, but today Albertans know that our government is firmly in the pockets of the oil industry, and they can't be trusted to do what's best for Albertans. I say this because I know, just as Peter Lougheed did, that there's a difference between the best interest of oil companies and the best interest of Albertans.

When it comes to the oil sands, nothing displays this fact more resoundingly than the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. For years this PC government has promised Albertans they would do their best to promote upgrading of our great promise. That means thousands of well-paying jobs, increased government revenues, and spinoff industries that would help diversify and strengthen the economy.

The economics are clear, Madam Speaker. According to the government's own internal documents the Alberta economy retains 35 per cent of the value of bitumen when it is exported unprocessed, it retains 70 per cent of the value when it is upgraded to synthetic crude, and it retains almost one hundred per cent if it is refined to a higher grade product like gasoline, diesel, or jet fuel.

1:50

The last time the government made a firm promise on bitumen upgrading, Premier Stelmach promised to upgrade 70 per cent. If we followed that commitment, Madam Speaker, we would need four new upgraders, which would mean \$40 billion in capital investment and 60,000 years of employment during construction. Eleven thousand of these jobs would be highly skilled positions, including engineering jobs, and these four upgraders would create 6,000 good, permanent jobs for Albertans.

But, Madam Speaker, we're headed in the wrong direction. Today we upgrade only 58 per cent, and the ERCB projects that by 2017 that figure will drop to 47 per cent. Many of the oil companies working in Alberta already own refineries which can

process the bitumen. In Texas, obviously, it's in their best interest to support a pipeline instead of a refinery here, but it's not in the best interest of Albertans today or in the future.

Madam Speaker, building the Keystone XL pipeline and shipping raw bitumen to the Gulf Coast will . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Oral Question Period

National Carbon Tax

Ms Smith: There is still a problem that we need to clear up. Let's review. The Premier goes to Ottawa and muses in an interview that Alberta's carbon tax is such a great idea that the federal government should have its own carbon tax. She's pressed about it, and her office issues a clarification that actually clears up nothing. Then in question period I asked about this national carbon tax strategy, and the Premier deflected and said that it was absurd to raise this. But I'll tell you what's absurd, Madam Speaker. It's the Premier saying one thing in Ontario and then saying another thing when she's back here. Why does she do this?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, saying an absurd thing twice doesn't make it any less absurd. Let me explain that to the Leader of the Official Opposition. The only parties in this House that are talking about new taxes or additional taxes are the three parties across the aisle. However, I can tell you that we are very proud of the carbon program that we have, the made-in-Alberta program, that has proven itself to be very beneficial and could actually be an example for other provinces and other jurisdictions throughout the world.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let's be clear. The Wildrose has promised no new taxes.

Let's also be clear, though, that we in the Official Opposition agree that there should be action to reduce pollutants and greenhouse gases, but we also insist that a national carbon tax is not the way to go. Even Alberta's \$15-a-tonne levy has done nothing measurable to improve things. So when, Madam Speaker, are we actually going to have a workable, effective plan to reduce overall emissions?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on your being in the chair.

You know, Madam Speaker, it's really funny for that party to be asking about climate change and when we would have something measurable when those are actually climate change deniers. But I want to tell you about what we have measurable. Thirty-two million tonnes of greenhouse gases have been reduced under our climate change strategy. Over \$300 million in green technology and green energy projects have been funded for 49 projects.

Madam Speaker, other people look at our climate change policy, the Premier shares that policy, and if other jurisdictions want to look at ours . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I would like to note that there is a point of order by the hon. Member for Airdrie.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the environment minister knows that emissions in the oil sands have actually gone

up and not down, contrary to what she said. The proof that Alberta's environment record is unconvincing are the recent reports of hesitation by a large German science group to proceed with a five-year study of oil sands upgrading processes. How can the Premier expect to open new overseas markets for Alberta bitumen if she has trouble convincing scientists to help us study the matter?

Mrs. McQueen: I want to let this hon. member know and the House know that 26 per cent to 29 per cent of intensity emissions have been reduced by the oil sands operators. That's something we should be very proud of, the new technology that industry has put in. I find it amusing that that party over there and that particular leader doesn't support the changes that industry is making.

With regard to Helmholtz and the funding that we provide the University of Alberta, \$25 million over five years, 80 per cent of that funding will continue to Helmholtz, and projects will continue with Helmholtz, and they will continue to use those.

The Acting Speaker: Second main question. The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have always supported reducing pollutants and greenhouse gases, contrary to what the environment minister has said.

Donations to Political Parties

Ms Smith: There are so many clouds over this government due to ethical lapses: health expenses, illegal donations, queue-jumping. It's bad. Yet this government seems oblivious to its problems. For example, yesterday we learned that the Finance minister re-appointed the owner of the Edmonton Oilers to the board of AIMCo, the Alberta Investment Management Corporation. All the while the Chief Electoral Officer has an ongoing, judge-led probe of his donations to the PC Party. Doesn't the Finance minister think an appointment like this should wait until after the investigation is over?

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. leader.

Mr. Horner: Mr. — Madam Speaker, my apologies. Because you are the first, old habits die hard.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Katz is a natural choice for reappointment to the board. This is not a new appointment to the board; this is a reappointment along with a number of other directors. AIMCo is a Crown corporation that makes its day-to-day investment decisions independent of government, and that's a good thing because last year it achieved a 7.9 per cent gross rate of return on the \$7 billion it manages for Albertans.

Ms Smith: I think most people would have preferred for the Finance minister to wait until the air was cleared.

Speaking of the Chief Electoral Officer, his term expires shortly, and he's not going to seek reappointment. We wonder if his successor will be appointed soon so that the investigations into illegal donations to the PC Party won't be interrupted. Or will this office be left vacant for a while to just slow things down?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, we were cutting the Leader of the Opposition slack for a while because she was a rookie, but by now she should know that this Legislature appoints a legislative committee which will have participation from all the parties, and that committee will be picking a new Chief Electoral Officer in due course.

Ms Smith: Madam Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer notified the Official Opposition that I would be interviewed to provide additional information into the probe about potentially illegal donations, but I have yet to be contacted. I am just curious. Who will be handling this matter in the interim until a new Chief Electoral Officer is appointed?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, another lesson for a member who should know this by now: the operations of the Chief Electoral Officer are independent of government. The Chief Electoral Officer only reports to this Assembly as a whole. I imagine there is a progression from one electoral officer to a new one, and I'm sure she will get her phone call in due course either from the existing one or the future one.

Ms Smith: That's right, Madam Speaker, because the Premier has never intervened to tell a committee what to do.

Provincial Fiscal Deficit

Ms Smith: Today, on the first day of spring, perhaps we can look forward to a new attitude from this Premier and her back-in-debt government. We've been asking her Finance minister to give us some realistic numbers on debt repayment, yet he says that he doesn't really need to give us a detailed savings plan to cover off that \$17 billion in debt. "We're building Alberta." That is what they say, but what about the people they're supposedly building for, like students? Teens in a recent survey were asked about government finances and expressed concerns . . .

The Acting Speaker: Hon. member, I assume it's the Minister of Finance that that was directed to.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, the hon. member has been chatting about and asking in estimates about the debt and the debt repayment, and I appreciate that. There is concern around the debt repayment schedules and those sorts of things. As I've said, in due course as we actually take out those loans, we will put the amortization schedules and the interest rates on there, just as the town of Okotoks in the hon. member's riding does in their financial statements. Frankly, they actually separate it out into operating and their capital, and they have a considerable amount of debt on their books. I'm sure she's not advocating that they should pay . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Ms Smith: As I've told the Finance minister, he'd be needing to put aside \$850 million a year to pay off that debt. He's not doing that.

The survey of more than 4,400 high school students conducted by the youth organization Civix found that 58 per cent of Alberta students had major concerns about government debt, yet here in Alberta \$17 billion in debt is coming in the next three years, and nothing realistic is being set aside to pay it back. Why not?

Mr. Horner: Well, Madam Speaker, we're not borrowing \$17 billion all in one day and then amortizing it out over 85 years. The hon. member has tried to convince Albertans that that's what we're doing, which is absolutely hogwash. The actual reality is that the \$17 billion she speaks of is the culmination of this year's three-year business plan plus borrowings from before, when we actually put \$26 billion worth of capital into the provincial asset base that we call home. That's schools. That's roads. That's hospitals. That's all the things that Albertans need. Those are

assets that are on our books just like they are in the municipalities. She should take a lesson.

2:00

The Acting Speaker: Your final supplemental, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Eight billion by the end of this year, \$12 billion by the end of next year, \$17 billion by the end of the year after that: regardless, we are still waiting for a realistic debt repayment plan, and we don't have it. The government's approach is a bit like taking out a \$30,000 car loan for a car that's worth \$6,000 and telling the dealer: "Just trust me. I'll put a little money aside later if things improve, and I'm pretty sure I'll have the money available when it comes time to pay it back someday." Doesn't the Finance minister think it's wrong to saddle future generations with all this debt?

Mr. Horner: You know, Madam Speaker, when my grandson drives around Edmonton on the Anthony Henday and realizes that every year he's making a payment on that Anthony Henday, I think he's going to be pretty pleased that this government had the vision to build that infrastructure today and not saddle him with an even higher cost tomorrow.

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

Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research

Ms Blakeman: Thanks. So, Madam Speaker, more confirmation that the Redford government's poor record of action on environmental protection is hurting the economy. It's all over the news now that the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research has pulled out because of German citizens' mistrust in Alberta's action on climate change and their rejection of involvement with dirty oil. To the Minister of Environment: is it really cheaper to pay for Washington trips, ad campaigns, ministerial rhetoric and number spinning, and strategy committee stipends than to just implement the actions which reduce . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. I would remind hon. members that it's inappropriate to use proper names of members in the House.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's important for our government and our Premier and our ministers to go and talk about the important work that Alberta is doing, and the main reason we have to do that is that we've got federal leaders of the NDP going out and talking anti the work that we're doing here. Our job is to promote the oil sands in our area here, to have market access, and to do what Albertans want, for us to get the markets open. That's exactly what this government is doing.

Ms Blakeman: The strategy is to blame the NDP?

Well, given that the Helmholtz partners with the U of A on all sorts of other scientific research but it is Alberta's environmental record that has caused them to pull out, does the minister not see that the Alberta record can't be all that great if citizens in Germany, a very environmentally conscious country, won't allow their scientists to continue with this project?

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said in a previous question, the Helmholtz funding that we give: \$25 million over five years to the University of Alberta to work with Helmholtz. We're proud of the work with Helmholtz. Eighty per cent of the work they will continue to do.

We have many groups that we partner with. Helmholtz is one of them. There are studies like the Jacobs study and the Penspen report for the U.K., independent studies that say in their studies independently that there are no differences with regard to oil sands oil in a basket of crudes such that they should be unfairly discriminated against.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. Back to the Minister of Environment. Does this government really believe in muzzling citizens or in calling them un-Albertan if they challenge the government's poor environmental record? It's a bit thin-skinned, don't you think?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very proud to stand up here today under the leadership of our Premier, and I as Environment minister and our colleagues have opened the door to all voices to come and talk to us, whether it be about environment or SRD issues. I invite NGOs. I invite First Nations. We invite everybody. All Albertans have a voice in this government. This Premier has made sure, and we have as a ministry, that everybody's voice counts in this province.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. leader of the ND opposition.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's clear this government doesn't believe in free speech if it involves criticizing them.

Bitumen Upgrading

Mr. Mason: Madam Speaker, given the huge benefit that Keystone will bring to the United States, I'd be surprised if it were not approved by President Obama. As Peter Lougheed pointed out, it will create thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment in Texas. To the Energy minister: if Keystone is approved by the U.S. president, what steps will the Alberta government take to increase the amount of bitumen upgraded here in Alberta?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Madam Speaker, the government of Alberta has already taken great steps to actually ensure that bitumen is upgraded in this province, including the North West upgrader, which will be coming on stream within about three or four years. We had to take special steps to ensure that that happened. It was a deliberate act of political will by the government of Alberta to make that happen.

Mr. Mason: Every single project currently under consideration for oil sands development is for the export of bitumen, not to be upgraded in Alberta. The percentage of bitumen that is upgraded in this province is continuously going to decline because of this government's inaction.

Nancy Pelosi, in the Democratic Party in the United States, has said that by upgrading Alberta bitumen in Texas, it will not be used for domestic U.S. consumption but will be re-exported by the United States. Can the Energy minister explain why this govern-

ment is allowing the Americans to upgrade our bitumen, then resell it and make all . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Hughes: Madam Speaker, we have many ways to get our product to market, and that includes working hard to get access to the west coast, east coast, south through the United States of America, and perhaps north. We will seek all possible ways to get our product to market, including through adding value to it right here in Alberta. I would say that adding value anywhere in Canada is also good for Alberta and also good for Canada.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Mason: Excuse me. Three.

The Acting Speaker: Sorry, hon. member. Carry on.

Mr. Mason: Thank you. I know it feels like 12, but it's only two.
Madam Speaker, a U.S. State Department and Energy Department report to President Obama clearly states that investment and job creation will shift to Alberta if Keystone is not approved, but Alberta does need pipelines if it is to export upgraded and refined products. To the Minister of Energy: if Keystone is indeed built, will the government take steps to ensure that it carries upgraded synthetic crude oil and not unupgraded bitumen?

Mr. Hughes: Madam Speaker, you know, you can pretend that somehow you don't need to get access to markets in this province, but actually we do. We need to get to all the markets we possibly can. We will continue to monitor the situation and ensure that as much as makes reasonable sense – in an economy where we've got less than 5 per cent unemployment already in this province, it's not like we're struggling for employment in this province. We have tons of opportunity in this province. People continue to move here to work with us, and there's tremendous opportunity for all Albertans.

Alberta Health Services Executive Expenses

Mrs. Forsyth: Madam Speaker, the Health minister continues to mismanage our health care system. The PC government broke their promise with physicians after the election by tearing up their agreement in principle and now are on the warpath against doctors, asking for a \$275 million cut. When a typical family physician takes in \$175,000 after their overhead fees, senior vice-presidents like the VP of people and partners make up to \$155,000. Will the Health minister show some leadership and be asking AHS managers like the VP of linens to show an example?

Mr. Horne: Well, Madam Speaker, I believe that question was answered last week by Alberta Health Services when the board announced a \$35 million initiative to reduce executive expenditures and salaries across Alberta Health Services. This is exactly the kind of leadership that we're looking for, it's exactly the kind of leadership that agencies, boards, and commissions that work under this government are delivering, and it's exactly the kind of advice the hon. member should listen to.

2:10

Mrs. Forsyth: Patients before bureaucracy.

Given that the Deputy Minister of Health makes \$364,000 and given that the junior vice-presidents make up to \$220,000, does the Health minister believe that these bureaucrats have a higher value to patients on the operating table than our doctors do?

Mr. Horne: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't know what figures the hon. member is quoting from. The deputy minister figure certainly doesn't sound correct to us.

Putting that aside, this province spends more on health care on an age-adjusted basis than any other jurisdiction in the country. This province provides physician compensation that is 14 per cent above the national average. It is absolutely true that there are ranges and disparities within physician compensation depending upon which specialty we're talking about, and that's exactly one of the issues we're working on with the AMA.

Mrs. Forsyth: Executive salaries and bonuses, Madam Speaker.

Given that this government recently gave themselves an 8 per cent pay raise and gave their own deputy minister a pay hike in June, will the Health minister commit to cutting these salaries before asking our front-line health care workers to take a hit?

Mr. Horne: Madam Speaker, this government supports a health system that is second to none across the country. The compensation that we provide both to physicians and other providers of services is comparable to any other of the best paying jurisdictions in the country. I don't know what the hon. member is trying to do here in terms of an analogy or a comparison. It doesn't add up to me, it's not an apples-to-apples comparison, and it contributes nothing of value to a discussion about how to improve health care in this province.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Regional Collaboration Program

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Across the front page of my weekly newspaper and at the AAMD and C spring conference this week the Minister of Municipal Affairs talked about the government eliminating MSI operating funds and moving the money into regional collaboration grants. Some municipalities rely on this funding to run their libraries and other initiatives. To the minister: can you explain the reason for this decision?

Mr. Griffiths: Well, I can confirm that we had discussed moving the MSI operating funding, which was \$50 million, over to the regional collaboration program, Mr. – Madam Speaker. Congratulations, by the way.

During this budget every minister and indeed all of our colleagues were challenged in trying to find transformative ways to do things, find ways to encourage people to think differently, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]. Madam Speaker. You're right; it is a hard habit to break.

Moving funding over there will help ensure that municipalities find creative ways to ensure their long-term prosperity.

Ms Fenske: Madam Speaker, to the same minister: can you confirm, then, that this funding, which was previously ongoing under the MSI program, will now be one-time project funding?

Some Hon. Members: Madam.

Mr. Griffiths: Madam Speaker, our regional collaboration program was focused on one-time initiatives that municipalities would approach to bring them together to work on something. We know that that might not necessarily apply when we're trying to get transformative things done now. We are working very hard. We're going to consider transforming the program itself to make sure that municipalities always have the opportunity to find as

creative ideas as they can to ensure their long-term prosperity going forward, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Madam Speaker. That's what this change in initiative is about. I almost got it.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the minister: that's good news, actually. With this and other changes to grant funding how much less money will municipalities receive from the government next year?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

Mr. Griffiths: Madam Speaker, an exceptional question. I know that some people have considered that perhaps there is a lot less funding going to municipalities. Everyone from every walk of life who is affected by the budget feels like they're being affected, but I can assure all members of this House and all municipalities that MSI funding stays the same at \$896 million. We've added extra money to the regional collaboration program, which is going to be transformative. Of course, last year the funding to municipalities was just over \$2 billion, and now it's just slightly under. It's a very small change. Municipalities are continuing to be supported by this government.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

Mr. Anderson: Madam Speaker, there is a lot of concern about the South Saskatchewan regional plan, especially how a legislated Calgary metropolitan plan as part of the regional plan will rob communities like Airdrie and Rocky View of their autonomy to grow in the way they feel is best for their citizens, turning them into cookie-cutter, stack 'em and pack 'em growth nodes, as the CRP calls them. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will you commit that you will not legislatively compel any community to join the CRP nor force them to build to the CRP's minimum density requirement of eight units per acre?

Mr. Griffiths: Madam Speaker, we've undertaken mediation right now to get all the partners at the table to start to discuss a solution. I've said many times at the AAMD and C and the AUMA and publicly that forcing people to work together does not get good relationships, but allowing them to not talk to each other does not get good relationships either. It's imperative for the success of this province going forward that these municipalities work together to make sure we have smart building so that we don't have environmental conflicts and agricultural conflicts and industrial conflicts. For the sake of my kids and the next generation it has to be done smartly.

Mr. Anderson: Agreed. Agreed. Just don't force them into it, please.

Given that many southern Alberta communities feel that blocking access to water for new residents and businesses is being used as a tool to pressure rural communities into entering the CRP against their wishes and given that every community in Alberta should have an unequivocal right to access the water they need without essentially having a gun to their head, will the minister of environment commit to providing access-to-water licences for these communities without forcing them to join the CRP?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. minister of environment.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very glad for the question. Right now we've just completed consultation with regard to the RAC's advice on the SSRP. We're in the midst

of consultation on water discussions, and I invite the hon. members of the whole House. I thank my hon. members on this side of the floor for attending many of the water discussions. We've had many good conversations about that. We're hearing from everybody with regard to the need to share water, water management, waste water, healthy lakes, hydraulic fracturing, water use. It's an important discussion, and we encourage all Albertans to come out and have a good conversation before we make any policy changes.

Mr. Anderson: Remember, water is a right, Minister, not a bargaining chip.

Given that under the land-use framework landowners are theoretically going to be compensated for loss of property value if their land is devalued by the South Saskatchewan regional plan and given that the massive scope of such a plan will obviously impact the land values of thousands of southern Albertans, will the Finance minister table to this House an estimate of how much the South Saskatchewan regional plan will cost taxpayers to implement before that plan actually goes into effect?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. minister of environment.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the hon. member knows and as Albertans know, the process for land-use planning is that, first, a regional advisory council gives advice. That regional advisory council's draft plan goes out into consultation. We've just taken that back. We're looking for feedback from Albertans with regard to that. Then, once we get that feedback, we will this fall take a draft plan out to Albertans on what we've heard from them. There will be more consultation on that. We'll get that feedback before any regional plan on the South Saskatchewan is approved. Lots of time for consultation. Lots of time for input. This government wants good consultation and input from all Albertans on this plan.

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations. We know that the University of Lethbridge is highly regarded for its world-class research. However, I do know first-hand that in spite of this their facilities could use some upgrading. All of my questions are to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education. Can you explain how the current level of funding to postsecondary institutions around the province will ensure that universities can still make the same remarkable strides in research and concurrently make the necessary upgrades that they require?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, let me be clear. Without any doubt the budgetary constraints that have been placed on universities will require a great deal of hard work and co-operation and collaboration between all schools and the government of Alberta. We will be engaging in a dialogue and making sure that any and all cost-saving decisions that will be made will always be made with students in mind and to minimize the impact on students.

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

2:20

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Speaking of students, we know that students are becoming increasingly more interested

in the decisions that impact their academic experience. What are the plans for student involvement in decision-making going forward with universities?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, I am glad that students are – and I would argue they always have been – now becoming even more interested in decisions relevant to postsecondary education. As a matter of fact, I have made it public already that I will be engaging elected student bodies, students' unions in the decision-making process both at the university and school levels and also within the ministry of advanced education. I look at students as not only beneficiaries of the programs but also cofunders of the programs, and they should have every right to be intrinsic to the decision-making process.

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

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you. What is our plan to ensure that post-secondary students continue to receive the high level of education that Alberta is known for and our citizens deserve?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, first of all, we should thank all of the 26 schools in Alberta for the quality of programming that they deliver. In many cases they're second to none in the world in comparative analysis. However, we will be looking at all the schools from the perspective of Campus Alberta. I know there is plenty of room for improvement relative to collaboration, relative to credit transfers, relative to mobility of programs from one school to another. So I think there's a lot of room for innovation, and we will not be leaving any stones unturned.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Labour Negotiations with Teachers

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It looks like my congratulations to the minister in reaching a deal with the teachers may have been premature. Yesterday Edmonton public and Holy Spirit in Lethbridge rejected the agreement. Reading between the lines, some boards don't have a disagreement with the contract; what they have a disagreement with is this government's budget. To the minister of education. Edmonton public stated that this board will face a \$5 million to \$18 million shortfall, this despite a growing ELL cohort and bursting classrooms. Will the minister agree that the school boards, by rejecting the agreement, are simply throwing up their hands, saying that they cannot operate under the current funding levels?

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, this is a great debate for the budget estimates that are coming up in an hour. We had a whole three hours to talk about this last night, so I'm sure we'll get into it in great detail.

I am excited about where we are with the ATA negotiations, however. We did get ratification from our first ATA local, Palliser, a couple of nights ago, so that was great news, and as of this morning we learned that there were three school divisions that have also ratified, or accepted, the deal. So we'll pay close attention as the rest of the ATA locals and the rest of the school boards have a close look at this.

Mr. Hehr: Given that Alberta schools are already short some 650 teachers from three years ago and they'll be losing an additional 400 from the cutting of the AISI project, can the minister explain

how this can be happening in a province that in the same period had an increase of 5 per cent in student enrolment?

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, we've had a lot of discussion about the Education budget and what we're trying to do with it. Obviously, there are some pressures there, and they're going to impact teachers. They're going to impact support staff. They're going to impact all aspects of the business. What we've been focused on is trying to make sure that it doesn't impact teachers in the classrooms. The AISI teachers, other things that we've had to trim back, other things that we've had to cut: we're looking at this with a lens of trying to put kids first, the classroom first, and protect the classroom and mitigate any impacts to the classroom. So that's where the money is staying.

Mr. Hehr: Given that I understand the minister's desire to reach an agreement with the teachers and the difficulty of the tripartite process, can the minister comment on Holy Spirit school board's rationale for rejecting the contract? In their view, they were left out of the process.

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I can't comment on that. I haven't spoken with Holy Spirit, and I'm not sure what their rationale is or what their concerns are. I'm sure we'll get those in due course.

Needless to say, as we've been working for the last two and a half years with the ASBA, not each of the 62 school boards has been at these meetings or in those negotiations. It's just logistically impossible. So the ASBA has been representing those entities over the last two and a half years, and everyone knows what's happened in the last two weeks.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This PC government's tax cuts to corporations and wealthy Albertans mean that students, teachers, and school boards are forced to pick up the tab. The minister proposed an education deal, now in jeopardy, that includes no wage increases for three years and no regard for cost of living. He thinks that teachers can take a significant wage cut and school boards now can absorb increased costs even though their budgets have also been cut. Maybe he should think again. Why does this government expect boards and teachers to accept this no-win deal?

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, this is a win deal. It's a win deal for kids. It brings stability. There's no question there are pressures on the school boards. We've never denied that. As a matter of fact, one thing I would point out is that it's one of the very few ministries that actually had their budget increased. Obviously, there are some pressures coming along with that, but we've been able to mitigate those with a great tentative agreement with the ATA. I give the ATA a lot of credit for taking a three-year freeze, recognizing the situation that we're in, so that we can protect the classroom and do the right thing for kids.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Madam Speaker, considering this government promised teachers and local boards that they would support schools with predictable funding increases for three years and given that this minister cut school boards out of the process and ignored their warning that said very explicitly that this would not allow school boards to sustain the services that they currently offer to students, then can the minister please explain why teachers and boards are asked to pay for a deal that will not even protect class sizes and the quality of education in the province?

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is overlooking the areas of the budget that were actually increased. Those are the class size initiatives, that's the inclusion piece, and those are pieces the school boards and teachers and parents on the ground asked us to invest in so that we could protect the classroom and the size of classes as best we could through this challenging time.

Madam Speaker, it's Albertans that pay for this deal. This deal is good for kids. It is good for education. The ATA has recognized that. I applaud them for the work that they're doing. The ASBA has been great to work with. But we've got to get this out to the locals and get this thing across the finish line.

The Acting Speaker: Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that school boards, parents, students, and teachers have been disappointed by broken promise heaped upon broken promise from this PC government, is it really such a big surprise that school boards are not trusting your latest offer?

Mr. J. Johnson: Madam Speaker, it's actually a very good question because there are some fuzzy areas, some grey areas within the agreement that we need to flesh out. We need to make sure that there's some certainty. We've given the ATA a comfort letter – and the ASBA may be asking for one as well – and that may be around certainty on the funding in year 4, to make sure that we're going to deliver on that. I've told them that this government is quite prepared to give them those assurances if that's what it takes to get a deal across the finish line.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mount Royal University Nurse Assessment Centre

Mr. McAllister: Madam Speaker, thank you. This back-in-debt, broken-promise budget has given us yet another reason why we can't trust the current government. Mount Royal University has been forced to cancel a program and close two centres that trained foreign nurses and expedited the process of getting these desperately needed health care workers to the front lines. The president of the university is already on record as saying that they had to do it because the government wouldn't commit to the program. To the minister of advanced education: is reducing the amount of nurses in Alberta what you had in mind when you said that you were interested in streamlining postsecondary?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, your first day in the chair, so you may not have noticed a trend although I know you were listening carefully in your seat. The first three questions from the Leader of the Opposition: why did you not balance the budget, why didn't you cut any deeper, and why are you going in debt? All remaining questions from every single member of the wild alliance are: "Why did you cut this program? Keep spending more. Do more. Spend more money."

Madam Speaker, tough decisions had to be made. Government made tough decisions. Schools will be co-operating and collaborating. You can't suck and blow at the same time.

2:30

The Acting Speaker: Hon. Member for Airdrie. A point of order called.

Hon. Member for Little Bow, did you have a point of order as well?

Mr. Donovan: No. I was just helping my colleague from Airdrie.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mr. McAllister: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I should have known better. Maybe we'll try somebody else.

Given that the Health Professions Act requires the college of registered nurses to provide a process to assess foreign training and credentials and given that the Minister of Health has said right here in this Chamber that he doesn't know of any Health minister that isn't struggling with the issue of how to hire and train nurses, I ask the Minister of Health: why would you kibosh a legislatively required program that serves Albertans?

Mr. Horne: Well, Madam Speaker, first of all, the program is not required under legislation. The program is part of a broader initiative to assist foreign-trained nurses to achieve the required credentials to practise in Alberta. The hon. member is correct in that Mount Royal University at present is not continuing to offer this particular program, but it is solely because we were between budget years and we have yet to confirm the final details of the budget for this program going forward. We're certainly interested in Mount Royal University continuing to offer the program, and we'll work with them in that regard.

Mr. McAllister: Madam Speaker, that is potentially good news, and I do appreciate you answering the question. What a novel concept. The Deputy Premier might learn from you.

Given that this previous budget decided to cut the number of nursing positions in this province and has placed the health care workers in a bind and given that more than a quarter of Alberta's nurses are over the age of 55, to the Minister of Health again. I know you say that you'll work with the president of Mount Royal University. Would you pick up the phone and commit to working with him to commit to this program so that we can get more nurses . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Horne: Well, Madam Speaker, as we discussed yesterday in answer to a similar question, the strategy around ensuring an adequate nursing workforce for Alberta includes credentialing foreign-trained nurses. It also includes a very deliberate and focused attempt to employ as many Alberta nursing graduates as we possibly can, to employ them, wherever possible, in full-time positions. We continue to work on both fronts. That's what responsible governments do, and that's what the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education and I are working on together.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Trucking Regulations

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Recently I met with Loblaw Companies Limited, what we know as Superstore in Alberta, and they're facing some transportation challenges. To the minister of advanced education. Truckers in Alberta are class 1 P and D tradesmen in comparison to being skilled workers in Saskatchewan. This allows trucking firms to bring truckers to Saskatchewan under temporary foreign worker policy. Does Alberta plan a similar program to address a lack of qualified truckers in Alberta?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Madam Speaker, we'd like to do that if we could. Let me perhaps share with you some of the barriers. Currently we

have a cap that is imposed on the province by the federal government relative to the provincial nominee program, and the limited cap that we have, we have distributed among all industries. Nurses, waitresses, line cooks, and truck drivers fall within that cap. If we were to allow more truckers, that means other professions would be suffering by that equal amount.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Transportation: given that Loblaw's main distribution centre is in Regina, some freights moving between the two provinces witness the lack of consistency regarding weight restrictions. What is the minister doing to develop standardized regulations in order to ensure efficient movement between Alberta and Saskatchewan?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Madam Speaker, welcome.

I would like the hon. member to know that I also met with the good folks at Loblaw's and that weight limits are in place to protect the roadway and the roadbeds. We worked through the New West Partnership to agreement. We're harmonizing transportation regulations across western Canada. Frankly, the other provinces look to Alberta as a leader here, and we're pleased to work with them because they're great partners. Areas of harmonization include weight and dimension enforcement consistency and safety initiatives.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you hon. minister.

The Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again to the Minister of Transportation. Now, Saskatchewan is the only province in the country that allows the use of triple trucks, a pilot program to increase efficiency when transporting goods. Are there any plans to adopt this practice in Alberta?

Mr. McIver: Well, Madam Speaker, I understand the need of industry to maximize their profits and to be efficient, but we have other responsibilities. We need to protect the infrastructure that Albertans have paid for over the years. Now, we heard in the House a few days ago the opposition saying that the infrastructure has no value whatsoever, but Albertans don't believe that. They believe that the infrastructure that they depend on is very important, and we're working very hard to protect it. While I know that industry wants to put heavier and heavier loads on, we're striking the balance between supporting industry and protecting that very valuable infrastructure.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Education Property Taxes

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Albertans just don't trust this government, and I think it's with good reason. This government said that it wouldn't raise taxes. Let's add that to the list of broken promises. There have been over a hundred communities facing property tax increases in 2013, and these Alberta communities are facing an increase from 1 to 89 per cent. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will you just admit you're raising taxes and downloading the cost of this back-in-debt budget to rural communities?

Mr. Griffiths: Madam Speaker, we have not changed the rate whatsoever on the education portion of property taxes. We've eliminated the mitigation formula because some municipalities paid less than what they were required to while other municipalities made up the difference. It was just patently unfair, and we wanted to make sure that there was fairness from one end of the province to the other. We know that some people's property taxes have gone up, but primarily it's been caused from one end of the province to the other because their property values have gone up, which is good news because we're increasing the value of those homes and the equity that Albertans have. That's why they continue to move here. It's our prosperity that brings them.

Mr. Donovan: Madam Speaker, given that this government has already issued one blow to the community of Carmangay by closing Little Bow continuing care centre, does this government care to explain how this village is supposed to deal with job losses and an increase of 33 per cent to their education tax rate?

Mr. Griffiths: Well, Madam Speaker, given the fact that there are 349 municipalities in the province of Alberta and that I wasn't aware that this particular question about this particular community was coming up, I can't answer exactly to what the circumstances are there. But as I've said before, we've eliminated the mitigation formula to make sure every municipality pays fair taxes, and property values have gone up. People continue to move to this province because of our prosperity. That's what brings them – it's the wealth of this province – and Albertans know that it's valuable to be here.

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

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Carmangay wasn't exactly blowing off brand new houses in the last year.

I'm wondering if this minister would give himself an A plus rating for increasing education taxes 89 per cent in the village of Nobleford, ultimately breaking their promise of not raising taxes to my constituents.

Mr. Griffiths: Madam Speaker, the community that the member refers to has had their education portion of property taxes subsidized by other municipalities and other homeowners for a long time. We eliminated the mitigation formula to make sure that regardless of the value of the home, where it was located, and its assessed value, it was fair and equitable to all Albertans. That's a principle we can be proud of.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Obstetric Services in Mineral Springs Hospital

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On March 25 obstetric services will cease at the Banff Mineral Springs hospital. The decision to end this long-standing community service was made by AHS following discussions with Covenant Health, Banff Mineral Springs hospital, and Canmore general hospital. A Banff physician who has an obstetrical practice in Banff was not invited to participate in the decision-making process, nor were concerned citizens of Banff. A lack of support for this decision is evidenced by a letter of opposition signed by 1,300. Can the Minister of Health explain what steps . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Health, please.

2:40

Mr. Horne: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I beg to differ with the hon. member. Doctors in the community were in fact invited to participate, and they provided input into the decision. There was an engagement session in 2011 for health planning in the Bow Valley. Subsequent to that, more than 80 members of the public, health professionals as well as large numbers of physicians participated in the engagement exercise. The decision to consolidate services at Canmore was based on extensive community discussion on how best to deliver services in that area.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. If it is true, as we have been told, that cost is not a factor and if it can be determined that safety is not a concern going forward, shouldn't the government support obstetrical services remaining in Banff?

Mr. Horne: Well, Madam Speaker, the hon. member is correct in that this is, in fact, about safety. It's not about cutting costs. Obstetrics is a specialty at Canmore general hospital. Last year more than five times as many babies were born in Canmore as in Banff. Consolidating services there will build on that centre's strengths while delivering babies safely into the future. It's the right choice for both mothers and infants. Moving obstetrics to Canmore gives medical staff more opportunities to maintain that high level of quality.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Has the government considered whether health costs might in fact increase if the current 90 per cent bed occupancy rates at Canmore force obstetrical patients to be transported by ambulance to Calgary hospitals?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. An excellent question. AHS advises that Canmore is capable of managing increased obstetrical capacity, with three dedicated labour and delivery spaces there in the hospital. They also have contingencies to accommodate additional patients in active labour if required. The planning for surge capacity will allow area residents to have their child in Canmore safely. There will be more room for obstetrical patients in Canmore when the plastic and vascular surgery program there moves to Banff.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

In 30 seconds I will call the next of our members' statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Consideration of Main Estimates

Mr. Quest: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. For the last week and a half we've listened to the opposition complain about this year's estimates schedule. In somewhat typical fashion the opposition says that the sky is falling, cries wolf, that democracy

as we know it is dead, et cetera, et cetera. They act as though they're somehow victims of the estimates schedule and that the government has limited their ability to participate. The facts, of course, are different and speak for themselves.

Budget 2013 represents our commitment to being prudent and responsible in building for the future and not pursuing an extreme ideological agenda stuck in the past. Budget 2013 will continue to be our focus this session. I'm proud to tell Albertans that this spring session provides more opportunity, not less, to examine the fiscal plan to ensure that Albertans get value for their tax dollars. This year we have 10 days and 70 hours dedicated to review estimates for 18 ministries. This is significantly more than last year, when we spent nine days and 63 hours on estimates for 21 departments. Last year's estimates consideration started five days after the budget. This year there were 11 full days to prepare before the estimates commenced.

In previous years opposition also complained that all ministries, large or small, were in committee for only three hours. This year we'll spend six hours on seven of the larger ministries. Last year estimates occurred over a period of 28 days. This year estimates will be reviewed over a longer period, 49 days. [interjections]

In past years opposition has complained about time to prepare, to understand the estimates, and that their resources were stretched. [interjections] Well, Madam Speaker, we've cleared the deck so that members have only the fiscal agenda to deal with . . .

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, this is a member's statement.

Mr. Quest: . . . no other committee work, no unrelated legislation to review. Total focus and attention on the budget.

Madam Speaker, Albertans expect our government to focus on Budget 2013, to build Alberta, to live within our means, to open new markets for Alberta's resources, and we're doing just that. Albertans can be assured that democracy lives and that Albertans are well served by their government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I would remind hon. members that we have a long-standing tradition to honour each member as they give their member's statement.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

International Day of Happiness

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to take this moment to recognize today, March 20, 2013, as the International Day of Happiness as declared by the United Nations last year. This day was founded on the principles of "the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world."

Living in our marvellous, awe-inspiring province, we have many things to be happy about and much that contributes to our well-being. Madam Speaker, we have some of the most majestic lakes and rivers in the world. We have striking mountains, that millions of people from around the world flock to visit. Our province is known as a land of opportunity and prosperity, and our citizens continue to build a modern and inclusive Alberta. The nurturing communities that make up our province allow Albertans from all walks of life to reach their full potential.

Madam Speaker, in Chinese two particular characters together will form a ligature which signifies double happiness, in Mandarin *shuāngxǐ*. I want to wish everyone in our great province double happiness. I want to wish everyone happiness and prosperity in their families, marriages, careers, and, ultimately, in their lives as Albertans. I urge Albertans to take this day to heart and to go out

of their way to make a positive impact on the people around them, not only today but in the future as well. Even the smallest gesture of kindness can make a world of difference in someone's life.

Madam Speaker, I would like to end my statement by wishing all of my colleagues in this House as well as the people of Alberta a very happy day.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

2014 Alberta Winter Games

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Between February 6 and 9, 2014, the towns of Banff and Canmore will be hosting the Alberta Winter Games. This is a great example of communities working together to achieve common goals. The 2014 Alberta Winter Games are about community integration. They bring together the communities of Banff and Canmore in a celebration of and for young athletes and artists of our province. Over 2,500 volunteers will support the games and encourage each participant to Reach Your Peak in Banff and Canmore while at the same time providing a legacy of community pride and development.

Madam Speaker, 2,400 athletes from all over the province, representing eight regions, will be participating in the games. As well as enjoying the friendly competition, the athletes and their families will encounter the arts in the Bow Valley as part of their daily experience at the games through our cultural programs. Twenty-two sports will be held in both towns at several venues. While the valley is known for its beautiful mountain setting, these athletes and their families will discover some of the best sporting facilities in our province.

Madam Speaker, the 2014 Alberta Winter Games will also be good for local business. The games will have a positive economic impact on the Bow Valley leading up to and during the games, which translates to approximately \$2.5 million being spent at the hotels, shops, and restaurants in our two communities. Most of the 2,400 athletes will have family members that will want to come to the Bow Valley to watch their children and spend time in the valley. This will result in an estimated 10,000 spectators to the games.

The 2014 Alberta Winter Games are a perfect opportunity to welcome the athletes and their families to one of the most beautiful places in Alberta. I would encourage everyone to mark these dates in your calendar and plan on attending.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Wildrose Official Opposition believes in responsible environmental stewardship, local decision-making, and protecting the property rights of landowners. In contrast, this government is rolling on with forced regionalization with the South Saskatchewan regional plan. Southern residents are worried about what this plan will look like, and they still don't know exactly when they will see the draft plan or how it will differ from the advice offered by the advisory council.

Like its sibling the lower Athabasca regional plan, the plan for the south will negatively impact landowners, recreationists as well as municipal councils, who will see their decision-making powers undermined by cabinet. One key difference between the lower Athabasca plan and the South Saskatchewan plan is that the south

has far more ranching and farmland. This southern-central plan will affect far more hard-working farming and ranching families than its northern cousin.

2:50

Let me assure this House that southern Albertans are waiting on pins and needles to see what the proposed damage will mean for them in the forthcoming draft. In 2011 the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties released a report on the impacts of forced regionalization which stated that this "has a history of creating as many problems as it solves." The AAMD and C report defines forced regionalization as "any form of regionalization that is not voluntary" and where "explicit or implicit threat of imposed regionalization exists." This government's regional plans are certainly not voluntary and are being imposed on municipalities and their residents. The AAMD and C document further states that municipalities have a right to be concerned when the powers granted under the Municipal Government Act are undermined.

In contrast, the AAMD and C recommends co-operative regionalization defined as voluntary participation of municipalities. Co-operative regionalization recognizes a political autonomy of municipalities and their right to remain independent. Madam Speaker, the South Saskatchewan regional plan does the exact opposite.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of tablings from constituents today.

Some Hon. Members: Madam.

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. Boy, we need to have you up there some more so that we get more used to it.

The first two letters, one from Ali Damani and the second from Al Hodgins, are identical, and they are asking the Minister of Health to consult with pharmacy experts and consider alternative policy options that are available to achieve cost savings for the government.

The second set of letters, one from Thomas Nguyen and the other from Michael Li, are again identical letters making the point that this pharmacy plan would increase deductibles for seniors and let big business off the hook by reducing the portion they pay for patient services.

I have two more letters, from Donald Schopfloch and Alexis Lockwood, both with concerns about postsecondary cuts. The letters are identical, and they ask that the funding reduction decision be overturned and that the mandate letters not be sent.

Finally, a letter from Lyndon Hodgins, who is also a constituent, making many of the same points as the pharmacy industry and asking for our help, that there should have been more consultation with people and that it's very expensive to become a pharmacist and also would be very hard to recoup the money now.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased. This is the first time I get to get up to speak to congratulate you on your time

in that chair, and I commit to you to refer to future Speakers as Madam Speaker frequently.

I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a letter from Ms Jacquie Hansen, president of the Alberta School Boards Association, to the Education minister dated March 3, 2013, in which she outlines the concerns that the ASBA had with the minister's February offer, wherein they state that the offer did not include funding to allow school boards to sustain the services that are currently offered to Alberta students.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other thing to note today was that we had a Premier, an opposition leader, and a Speaker who were all females, which was excellent to see.

I'm tabling five copies of the list I talked about earlier in my question, the list right from Municipal Affairs, of the over 100 communities where their taxes have gone up. I just want to table the copies for that.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and it is good to see you in the chair.

I've been making a lot of comments in question period with regard to some quotes that I've been using. I'll be tabling them as time goes on. The first one is from the Consulting Engineers of Alberta. They have provided us with a letter which reads, in part:

We have reviewed the budget and have concluded that borrowing money to fund needed infrastructure is a positive decision. Infrastructure is just too important and vital to our economic well-being to let it suffer.

They go on in the letter to talk about the cost of deferring infrastructure. Madam Speaker, it's a good read.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to table some information that I've also shared with the Minister of Transportation and the Health minister. One is regarding pharmacies from Matthew Bennett, a pharmacy manager and pharmacist in Cardston-Taber-Warner, expressing concern about the Alberta government's plan with regard to pharmacy being "an irresponsible path to savings."

Then from a farmer who farms west of Cardston in the Glenwood-Hill Spring area who is concerned about a road that is banned and the effect it's having on him being able to deliver his grain and also being able to proceed in an appropriate way with spring seeding. He said that his neighbours and he were promised a long time ago that this road would never be banned and that this year it was supposed to be a year-round road. He's got some concerns about that, especially in light of the extra 6 cents he's paying for fuel.

I have the requisite number of copies, and I would like to table them.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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. Hughes, the Minister of Energy, response to Written Question 21, asked for by Mr. Hehr on March 11, 2013: "As of June 1, 2012, what was the value of unpaid oil and gas royalties that were in dispute?"

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

I believe it's time for us to go to our points of order. I understand that there were three points of order, all from the hon. Member for Airdrie. Can we deal with the first one, hon. member?

Mr. Anderson: We'll deal with the first one. We'll deal with them all separately, one at a time, because they're clear in some ways.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

Mr. Anderson: The standing order reference is 23(h), (i), and (j). The first one, Madam Speaker, is obvious because the precedent was set yesterday by the Speaker who was there in the chair. The hon. Minister of Environment and SRD called this party over here and members of this party climate change deniers. This is, of course, categorically false. As we discussed yesterday very clearly, this party, this leader accept that man-made climate change is very real and something that needs to be addressed, and we join with the government and other opposition parties in stating very clearly and unequivocally that we need to address it very quickly. Obviously, we all look forward to all the different research and so forth that's being done on how best to address it and how best to analyze it and how fast it's happening and so forth, but we are with the government on that issue.

It really creates disruption in this House, as the Speaker, I thought, clearly made mention of the last time we were here, when something is said to the contrary of that. He specifically said that this matter was settled last time and that the members opposite were not, in my view, to use that sort of language. I know there are a lot of members here today that perhaps did not hear that – let's put it that way – yesterday, but now they have. I would ask that in the future they do not reference us in that way because it casts aspersions and it casts motives that aren't there. That is not in line with our standing orders, and it has been ruled on by the Speaker previously.

3:00

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The member opposite is a little sensitive today, rising on three points of order.

I think that, you know, the truth is an absolute defence. I appreciate the comments from the member, but on April 16, 2012, in a CBC news article the Leader of the Opposition said, "We have always said the science isn't settled." It's nice for the member to get up and say that we all believe in climate change now, but the fact of the matter is that there have been comments to the contrary.

As far as looking at Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j), I don't see that any of the requirements have been reached in any of those subtitles under section 23. Again, I think they're a little sensitive on the other side. I don't see any point of order to be called at this point.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Airdrie was correct when he said that we had dealt with a similar point of order just recently – I think with the same member yesterday – and that can be found in *Hansard*, pages 1661-62, from March 19, 2013. The member clarified his party's position yesterday, as he has just done here today, and it would be parliamentary for members and ministers to take into account statements and explanations made in this Assembly. This may be a situation where there are two different interpretations of an event. I would refer members to paragraph 494 of *Beauchesne*, sixth edition.

I find that there is no point of order. Thank you.

The second point of order. The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Point of Order Inflammatory Language

Mr. Anderson: All right. The second point of order is under the same citation, Madam Speaker. If it happens again in this House, I think that we will need to bring a motion for a contempt of parliament. It continues to happen. The Speaker has repeatedly – repeatedly – over and over and over again, asked for that side to quit doing it, and they keep doing it. That is a contempt of parliament. That is, of course, in this case the Deputy Premier's mispronouncing our name, calling us, I believe – what was it this time? – the wild-eyed alliance or the wild alliance. It differs. We are the Wildrose caucus. This government should know that because in three years we'll likely be the government. What this government should do is start learning to pronounce that name properly.

Now, I will say, though, that if we were to do this, if we were to call the other side – whatever – the regressive Conservatives or something like that, we would be held out of order and rightly so. That is not the name of their caucus.

The Speaker has repeatedly, over and over and over again – I think this is probably the fifth time – told them to refrain from doing that, and they are, frankly, flouting what the Speaker's rulings have been. They're just completely ignoring them and pretending that the Speaker's rulings don't exist.

Madam Speaker, I think that clearly there is a point of order here. It's very cut and dried because of past rulings. I do think that it's bordering on contempt of parliament, and it's time to get that straightened out and have respect and decorum in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, again, a little sensitivity over there, but I appreciate that. We will withdraw the remarks from the Deputy Premier.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

Mr. Anderson: All right. Third and final. Again, the same citation, particularly:

23(h) makes allegations against another Member;

(i) imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member.

I'm referring to the Minister of Transportation. At no time ever in this House has any party, certainly not this party, this leader, or any member over here, said that infrastructure has no value. Find the quote. Where's the quote where we said that infrastructure has no value? It's a ridiculous assertion. Again, you're putting words that we've never said in the mouth of our party. They're just randomly putting things out there.

Again, if we're going to have debate, we can absolutely, you know, have different opinions about what different words mean and so forth. But when you say that a leader was in this House stating that infrastructure has no value, that's laughable. I mean, we all know that that's not the case.

Madam Speaker, I just hope that when we're quoting each other, we can actually quote the record. We can have questions and interpretations about what is quoted, but to completely misquote – not misquote; just make up a quote – at some point you've got to say that that's not right, and it should not be proper practice in this Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to just comment on the hon. member from the Wildrose Alliance Party. [interjections] That's the way it is on the electoral website. You guys should check it out.

The comments I think are reflective of the discussion that we've had in this House over and over and over again about the fact that the members opposite don't think that we should be putting that valuation of those assets on our balance sheet to net assets. That would indicate that they don't believe there's any value in those assets. I don't think that that is saying that they said that Albertans don't value them intrinsically, just that they just don't put a value on them. A little bit of a different thing. I recognize that the hon. member is a bit sensitive today. Late night last night. I know. I was there with you.

I don't see a point of order because we're not imputing any motives, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. I think it was clarified why that statement was made. It was a different interpretation, however, a point of clarification. I think that we ought to close this matter. Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would suggest that we adjourn for the purpose of estimates.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) the legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon and this evening for consideration of the main estimates. Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Education in committee room A in the afternoon, and Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for Transportation in committee room A in the evening.

The House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:07 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

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