



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday, April 8, 2013

Issue 41

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

First Session

Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Speaker
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Anglin, Joe, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W),
 Official Opposition Whip
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)
Bhullar, Hon. Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)
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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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Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
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Donovan, Ian, Little Bow (W)
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Drysdale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
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 New Democrat Opposition Whip
Fawcett, Hon. Kyle, Calgary-Klein (PC)
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Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W)
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Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)
Goudreau, Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (PC)
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Hale, Jason W., Strathmore-Brooks (W)
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),
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Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-St. Albert (PC)
Hughes, Hon. Ken, Calgary-West (PC)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)
Johnson, Hon. Jeff, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (PC)
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Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)
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 Premier
Rodney, Hon. Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
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Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W),
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Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)
Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC),
 Government Whip

Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 61

Wildrose: 17

Alberta Liberal: 5

New Democrat: 4

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| Jonathan Denis | Minister of Justice and Solicitor General |
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| Doug Horner | President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance |
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| Jeff Johnson | Minister of Education |
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| Ric McIver | Minister of Transportation |
| Diana McQueen | Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development |
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STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Amery
Deputy Chair: Mr. Fox

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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

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| Anderson |
| Casey |
| Dorward |
| Eggen |
| Kubinec |
| Sandhu |
| Sherman |

Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

Chair: Mr. Allen
Deputy Chair: Mr. Luan

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

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Mr. Quest
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Forsyth

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| Brown | Jeneroux |
| Cusanelli | Leskiw |
| DeLong | Notley |
| Fraser | Pedersen |
| Fritz | Swann |
| Goudreau | Towle |
| Jablonski | Wilson |
| Jansen | Young |

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Cao
Deputy Chair: Mr. McDonald

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| Bikman | Leskiw |
| Blakeman | Quadri |
| Brown | Rogers |
| DeLong | Wilson |
| Eggen | |

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Zwozdesky
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rogers

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| Casey | Mason |
| Forsyth | McDonald |
| Fraser | Quest |
| Kennedy-Glans | Sherman |
| | Smith |

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Xiao
Deputy Chair: Ms L. Johnson

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| Barnes | Jablonski |
| Bhardwaj | Leskiw |
| Brown | Notley |
| Cusanelli | Olesen |
| DeLong | Rowe |
| Fox | Strankman |
| Fritz | Swann |
| Goudreau | Webber |

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Olesen
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lemke

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| Calahasen | McAllister |
| Cao | Notley |
| Casey | Pedersen |
| Hehr | Rogers |
| Jansen | Sandhu |
| Kennedy-Glans | Saskiw |
| Kubinec | Towle |
| Luan | Young |

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Anderson
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dorward

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| Allen | Hehr |
| Amery | Jeneroux |
| Anglin | Khan |
| Bilous | Pastoor |
| Donovan | Quadri |
| Fenske | Quest |
| Goudreau | Sarich |
| Hale | Stier |

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Ms Kennedy-Glans
Deputy Chair: Mr. Anglin

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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.

Monday, April 8, 2013

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. Dear Lord, help us to understand the needs of our citizens and to prioritize our duties in order to address those needs. Help us to fulfill the requests of our constituents and of all Albertans, who are counting on us to deliver. Amen.

Please be seated.

Hon. members, as many of you know, it is our custom to pay tribute on our first day back to those members and former members of this Assembly who have passed away since we last met. Our gratitude also extends to their families, to the families who, like our families, know what sacrifice is, who sacrifice precious time away from their loved ones so that the duties of office are fulfilled to the highest degrees possible, yet so often our families go unrecognized in this regard.

Mr. Ralph P. Klein, OC, AOE
November 1, 1942, to March 29, 2013

The Speaker: Today we want to pause to honour former Premier the hon. Ralph Klein, who served the people of Alberta through this Assembly for over 17 years, from March 20, 1989, to January 15, 2007. He represented the constituency of Calgary-Elbow for his entire service as a member of this Assembly.

His public service actually began in 1980, when he was first elected to Calgary city council as mayor. His positive attitude and determination ensured the Calgary Olympics were lauded as a great athletic, social, cultural, and economic success. He was the first former mayor to serve as Premier of Alberta.

Prior to becoming Premier, Mr. Klein served as minister of the environment for just under three years. On December 14, 1992, he was sworn in as Alberta's 12th Premier. It was during his premiership that we celebrated the centennial of this great province and, in fact, the centennial of this Legislative Assembly of Alberta. He resigned as Premier on December 14, 2006.

Throughout his tenure, the third-longest of all Alberta Premiers, Mr. Klein retained his connection with everyday Albertans, people whom he lovingly referred to as Martha and Henry, and we all know exactly what he meant. Mr. Klein received many, many accolades, awards, recognitions, honours, and other tributes for his accomplishments over the years, including being named an officer of the Order of Canada last year, but it was his remarkable ability to plainly talk to everyone from those Marthas and Henrys right up to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and it is for that that he will likely be most often remembered.

Please note, hon. members, that I have invited members of Premier Klein's family to join us today, our traditional first day of remembrance for members who have passed. Unfortunately, they responded that they just simply were not able to join us today, so I would ask that we respect their privacy at this particular time of their bereavement, noting that it is very likely that one or more of them may be able to join us next week. I think they all deserve a rest given the enormous amount of public attention and media attention that they have had over the past several days.

I would now ask you all to rise and in a moment of silent prayer and reflection please remember our former Premier in whatever way you may have known him.

Grant unto him eternal rest, dear Lord. Grant perpetual light, and may it shine upon him forever.

Hon. members, thank you for your silent tribute.

Now, M. Lorieau, s'il vous plaît, our national anthem. May I ask all of you to join in in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

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

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

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly 25 bright young future leaders from John Barnett school in my constituency, Edmonton-Manning. With the students are three parents, Miss Amanda Donald – she's a good friend of mine – Miss Tara Brooks, and Mr. Will Davies. Also with the students is their teacher, Mr. Glenn Newby. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask all the guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the 28 members of St. Angela elementary school along with teachers Meghan Weis and parent helper Christine Siegel. I'm very happy to have them here. I think they're here all week, in fact, at the School at the Legislature, so they're going to compare theory to practice today when they watch us in question period. If they could please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier and Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education.

1:40

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So many wonderful things to say about this young man. Unfortunately, I won't be able to get through all of it. With us today we have a remarkable young Albertan by the name of David Wilson. David's story is a testament to the resiliency of a child overcoming obstacles that most kids never have to deal with. Through all that he has gained the knowledge and employability award, the work experience award, the employee of the year award from a local grocery store, and recently the 2013 Great Kids award, and he will be competing with a black belt in tae kwon do right away. With him is his father, Scott Wilson, who is the best advocate that any child could possibly have. I would ask them both to rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. J. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to members of this

Assembly my family. In five years in this House I've never had the opportunity to have my wife and three kids come in, and today is a very special day for me. I would ask them to stand and remain standing while I introduce you. There's my 13-year-old son, Jamieson – he's the middle one in the red – my 11-year-old son, Jakub; my seven-year-old daughter, Georgia, who will be eight this week; and my lovely wife of 17 years, Kim.

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

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed an honour and a privilege for me to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly nine guests here in celebration of CapitalCare's 50-year anniversary and legacy of caring and compassion for Alberta's frail, elderly, and disabled people. My guests are seated in the members' gallery, and they represent the dedicated leadership, management, and staff as well as residents from two of the 11 CapitalCare centres.

I would ask each guest seated to please rise or otherwise signify as I mention their name: Ms Iris Neumann, chief executive officer, CapitalCare; Mrs. Betty Kolewaski, administrator, CapitalCare Dickinsfield; Mr. and Mrs. Clinton and Susan Cook, a young married couple celebrating almost nine years of marriage and who also reside at CapitalCare Dickinsfield; Mrs. Adrien Mortensen, nursing attendant, CapitalCare Dickinsfield, celebrating 35 years of employment with CapitalCare; Mr. Thorsten Duebel, administrator, CapitalCare Kipnes Centre for Veterans; Mr. John Elock, a centenarian and proud veteran of the Second World War and current resident of Kipnes Centre – thank you, John, for your sacrifice and service – Mrs. Penny Eliuk, therapy assistant at CapitalCare Dickinsfield and driver of the CapitalCare resident bus today; and, finally, Mrs. Penny Reynolds, administrator of CapitalCare Norwood.

I would kindly ask that the Assembly honour my guests with our traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I had the pleasure of attending the seventh Alberta consumer champion awards ceremony. These awards recognize outstanding people, groups, and businesses that go the extra mile to educate consumers about their rights and to ensure Alberta's marketplace is fair for everybody. Now I would like to introduce this year's consumer champions.

I'll ask you to stand as I announce your names. The recipients in the nonprofit category are Janice Harrington, a good friend of mine, representing the Certified General Accountants Association of Alberta, for their financial literacy program for high school students; John Pinsent, representing the Chartered Accountants Education Foundation of Alberta, for their online money management resources for young consumers – my wife is a chartered accountant; I will ask her to take this course herself – my friend and former constituent Gerry Baxter of the Calgary Residential Rental Association, for their landlord and tenant education course; Sandra Crozier-McKee of the Better Business Bureau, serving southern Alberta and east Kootenays, for their consumer education efforts; and Diane Rhyason of the Centre for Public Legal Education of Alberta, for educating young consumers on their legal rights in the marketplace. This year's media recipients are Julie Matthews from Global News Edmonton for a report on marriage scams and Laura Lowe from CTV Edmonton for a report on a scam with wills. In the youth category we had Carin Li and Eunbit Cho, who won second place for their combined essay and poster on Internet shopping. I would ask all

of these fine individuals to rise and ask all of my colleagues in the Alberta Legislature to give them the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, your first of two introductions.

Mr. Jeneroux: Great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a team of four outstanding individuals who participated in the 5 Days for the Homeless campaign at MacEwan University from March 10 to 15 here in Edmonton, which were some very cold days. In addition to raising awareness for poverty and homelessness in our city through this campaign, these individuals also raised \$15,000 for Youth Empowerment & Support Services, otherwise known as YESS. The good news keeps coming. In addition, one of the participants, Cameron McCoy, was just elected president of the students' association at MacEwan University. Seated in the members' gallery today are Cameron McCoy, Cina Gross, Elisha Sharma, and Pierce Brindza. I ask that these individuals rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to introduce to you and through you two amazing young Edmonton-South West constituents, Eunbit Cho and Carin Li, and her father, Tim Li. Eunbit and Carin were recipients of a consumer champion award today, as mentioned by the Minister of Service Alberta, and I had the luxury of spending a lunch hour with them. They're very smart girls. I ask all members to please extend a warm welcome to these two wonderful constituents.

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a couple of constituents of Calgary-Acadia, Jen Sutek and her son Nathan as well as Barb Pickering. Jen and Barb are both on the Inside Out Action Research Team, which assists women dealing with homelessness, poverty, and incarceration. Jen has been with the Inside Out Action Research Team since the beginning. She started as a group member, became a peer researcher and ultimately a project co-ordinator. Since then, she's presented over 80 presentations. She's been invited to Ottawa twice, once to London, Ontario, and will be presenting at the Canadian Criminal Justice Association conference in Vancouver in October of this year. Barb joined the group in 2011 as a then master's student at the U of C and is currently a doctoral student in counselling psychology, again at the U of C. Both of these women have been instrumental in this project, and I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services and Government House Leader.

Mr. Ralph P. Klein, OC, AOE
November 1, 1942, to March 29, 2013

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Premier is representing us in Washington today and has asked me to rise and speak on her behalf, on behalf of the government of Alberta, our caucus, and personally as someone who has had the great privilege to serve under former Premier Ralph Klein. As our current Premier

said last week, Premier Klein was an Alberta icon, a visionary leader, someone who devoted his life to Alberta. Premier Klein was Alberta's great communicator. His wit, charm, and charisma made him one of the brightest lights on Canada's political scene. He understood politics, but more than that, he understood Albertans, and he had a connection with Albertans.

As a newly elected MLA in 1997 I had the great privilege of being asked by Premier Klein to join his cabinet as minister of federal and intergovernmental affairs, as it was then called. It was then when I began to truly understand the gifts that he brought, the leadership he provided, the loyalty he engendered, the respect and love that he earned.

Much of the public commentary in the days after Premier Klein's passing has focused on the strong fiscal agenda and record, and while that is no doubt a big part of what he will be remembered for and while I certainly agree that the strength and courage he provided showed real leadership for our whole country, Albertans like his close friend Rod Love have more accurately displayed the breadth of Premier Klein's legacy as a journalist, mayor of Calgary, environment minister, and Premier of our beloved province. The Klein Revolution was much more than just a fiscal one, as important as that is.

1:50

As a rookie minister of federal and intergovernmental affairs in 1997 I quickly learned how intelligent he was, how smart he was, how quick to understand the breadth of the situation but also to understand the strategy needed to achieve results. I would read all of my briefings, background materials, and supporting materials – you know what I mean, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about the agenda book, the backup book, and then the documents that back up the backup – and then I would get maybe 15 minutes to brief the Premier going into a federal-provincial-territorial meeting. He didn't need more time than that. His approach at these meetings displayed his effectiveness and his understanding of the agenda.

Premier Klein was never impolite at the table, but he was also not a fan of long discussions without purpose or result. The Premier would step away from the table, perhaps go for a smoke, and leave me wondering whether I should be stepping in or saying something or participating in the agenda, but it wasn't necessary. He was always there when it mattered. When we were on a topic on which Alberta could make a difference or which made a difference to Alberta, he would engage, and then he would knock it out of the park.

Premier Klein had an unerring ability to know where he could add value, make a difference, achieve a result, and he took full advantage of those opportunities. Pick your best spot, play your cards to win, don't invest in losing hands, wait for the window or create the window where you can actually achieve a result, and then do it. That was Premier Klein at the federal and provincial tables, quickly understanding the keys to the issues and translating it into what it meant for Alberta and into language which promoted understanding.

Those same strengths were always at play at the cabinet table, Mr. Speaker. He did not like long meetings. "Bring your issue with a solution. Have the discussions with others before you come. Let's make the decision and get it done." Premier Klein was always more concerned with the effect on Albertans than whether a decision would get us re-elected. The Ralph Klein I knew and loved strived to do the right things for the right reasons. His first question was always: is that what Albertans want us to do?

I recall the Calgary courthouse being one of those decisions. Finances had always been a barrier to bringing together the various court facilities and creating a truly appropriate justice

centre in Calgary. Various committees had in fact been working on the project for over 20 years. There is very little politically attractive in building a new courthouse. They are expensive, and it isn't something that's high on anyone's priority list aside from those who use it.

We were well along in the process when I engaged in a discussion with a member of Premier Klein's staff who met with me to inform me that the project was too grand, too expensive, and was being shelved yet again. On one of the few occasions on which I did this, I asked for a direct meeting with the Premier on the topic. When we met, I stated my case, telling him that it wasn't sexy, that there was no political win in it but that we should do it. He looked at me, and he asked one question: "Is it needed, David? Is it the right thing to do?" I replied, "Yes." He said: "Okay, David. Let's do it." The meeting was over. He wanted ministers to do their job, convince their colleagues, and at the end of the day the question was not "Will this get us elected?" but, rather, "Is this needed?" He always trusted you to give him the straight goods, and you could trust him to return the favour.

Premier Klein changed the way government was done. He coined the phrase "dome disease" because he knew that to govern appropriately, you had to respect the role of the Legislature, but it was most important to get out and listen to the people. He started early and set the stage when he brought forward a new environment act as environment minister. It was a very extensively consulted act. He produced a what-we-heard document after significant consultations involving Albertans. It was open, it was public, and it was the precursor to how everything needed to be done in government. No legislation or policy change was to be brought forward until there was a clear identification as to who wanted it and why, who was going to be affected and how, why we needed more legislation, and, most importantly, whether the people had been consulted, particularly the people who are going to be affected.

Government members played a larger role through changes Premier Klein brought to the legislative processes. Instituting standing policy committees and mandating that almost everything had to pass through them meant government members had a significant role in providing input to, shaping, and ultimately approving policy and legislation before it came to the Legislature. Everything, including significant fiscal and budget discussions and business plans, went through standing policy committees. In no other parliamentary democracy that I'm aware of does government caucus have that kind of input into government direction. In most parliamentary democracies government gives caucus the legislation, the direction, the budget, and caucus supports it.

Premier Klein built on Premier Lougheed's concept of caucus and extended caucus to really embed significant value in the role of a government MLA. Government MLAs were to listen to their constituents and all Albertans and represent those voices clearly in caucus, yes, but also in government committees, in committees that helped to shape the policy in the future. The 20-year strategic plan, Learning Alberta, Water for Life, the land-use strategy, and many others have a direct line back to Ralph Klein and his vision of Alberta seen through the eyes of Albertans themselves, not telling Albertans what they need or want but working with Albertans to define our preferred future.

He Listens, He Cares is not just an election slogan. It was Premier Klein. Premier Klein was often incorrectly portrayed as an individual who cared only about the finances. He cared about people. He wanted children to have a good start, and he exhibited that in so many ways. For me, this was epitomized on the opening day of the Legislature. I believe it was in 1998, and I believe that the bill was the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution

Act, Bill 1, introduced by Premier Klein. He began his comments by saying:

Bill 1 demonstrates our commitment to protecting the well-being of our children and youth. It recognizes the seriousness of the issue of children involved in prostitution and takes steps to address it. . . . All government departments must work together along with other levels of government, nongovernment organizations, law enforcement agencies, and communities to make the matter of children involved in prostitution a priority and stop the abuse of our children.

As we were leaving the House through the main doors and heading down the stairs towards the traditional receiving line, Colleen Klein greeted me and gave me a big hug, smiled, and whispered: David, we're finally on the agenda. Colleen played a huge part in Premier Klein's premiership. She kept a focus on children and how they were harmed by prostitution, sexual violence, drugs, and abuse. I believe that from private comments such as the one I just related Colleen and Premier Klein were truly centred on what was important for Alberta's future, that children needed the best start possible, protection from harm, and the opportunity to succeed.

That was further reflected in Bill 1 in 2003, the Premier's Council on Alberta's Promise Act, which enshrined in law the government's commitment to children and youth. In his introduction Premier Klein said:

The bill enshrines a promise made on behalf of all Albertans to the province's children. It's a promise to be partners with our neighbours, heroes to our children, and champions of their future.

Ralph was not a balance-the-budget-at-all-costs, fiscal-agenda-driven Premier. He was a Premier who knew that the fiscal agenda was important so that government could do what was really important: working with the community to create the opportunity for Albertans, the Alberta advantage, to have the quality of life they wanted for their children and grandchildren to succeed.

I've had the privilege to work with each of our Progressive Conservative leaders and Premiers during successive governments. I've served in a political volunteer capacity with Premiers Lougheed and Getty; as a member of the PC Party executive, youth president, and party president; and with Premiers Klein, Stelmach, and now our current Premier in elected capacities. Each leader brings strength for their times. Each leader faces challenges for their era and reinvents the party and the government to meet those challenges and revisit the vision and direction for the future of our province. Each has talents, gifts, strengths, and weaknesses that they bring to the challenge. Each is a role model and a mentor, an inspiration to their team. Each earned and deserves, in their own right, respect.

Ralph Klein is a leader whom I grew to respect, value, and, yes, love as he faced very difficult choices with a very real concept of his own personal values and the values of Albertans. He taught me about knowing what you need to do but listening for better ideas. He taught us about humility and knowing when to say that you're sorry, to change direction, that we can't always be right all the time. He lived his life his way and expected that others should live their lives their way but that everyone had the right to live in freedom and with dignity and respect. He taught me about leadership, and he left Alberta in better shape than he found it. Really, that's what this is all about, that we can continue to aspire, to dream, and to fulfill those dreams in the best place in the world to live and to work and to raise our families.

I agree with Shirley McClellan. I never called him Ralph; he was Premier to me. He earned the name and the respect. On behalf of the Premier of Alberta, the government of Alberta, all of my

colleagues in our caucus, and on my own behalf I want to say: goodbye, Mr. Premier.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

2:00

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for your heartfelt and genuine words about your former colleague. What more can be said about Premier Ralph Klein that hasn't already been spoken? In the 10 days since his death we have heard from his colleagues, both provincial and federal. We've heard from MLAs, from Premiers, from Prime Ministers, both past and present. The outpouring of love and support for Ralph has been at once heartwarming and heartbreaking, heartwarming to know the tremendous impact he had on life in Alberta and heartbreaking knowing that we have lost a once-in-a-lifetime leader.

Ralph led Alberta through one of the most tumultuous political eras, as many of his former caucus colleagues in this Legislature today will attest to. After inheriting record debt and deficits, Ralph repeatedly faced down his critics with courage and conviction on his way to erasing Alberta's debt load and forging our reputation as world leaders in fiscal responsibility. But that will form only part of his legacy. The other part, the human part, is unlikely to ever be equalled.

Ralph Klein transcended politics. He transcended this place filled with spinners and counterspinners, opponents, and journalists and found his way into our hearts. He had that increasingly rare ability to cut through the noise and to speak to us with sincerity and with blunt honesty, and we believed him. We recognized in him not only a purpose to achieve but a person to trust. That's what made him such a remarkable leader.

I want to finish with two rules that all of us in this House would do well to remember in the wake of Ralph's passing. Rule 1: if you say it, do it. If you commit to it, see it through. Lead it. Rule 2: if you mess up, fess up. You might just be forgiven. After all, we're all only human. Simple as these rules are, it's getting harder and harder to find a leader who lives them out. Ralph did. That's how he achieved so much and earned the respect of so many. As Alberta's current elected representatives, to honour Ralph's legacy, we must understand this.

The convictions Premier Ralph Klein stood on as Premier are as relevant today as they were then. He understood that real conservative leadership is doing what is right even when it's hard, standing up to critics and special interests and not backing down even when they get in your face. Mostly, he understood that principles don't have an expiry date. He fought for what is right because it is right. Nothing more, nothing less. So let us honour Ralph by remembering that and, in doing so, bring back to the people of this province some semblance of that Ralph Klein leadership that we will all sorely miss.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I see signals from the two other opposition parties wishing to add their comments. I will ask one question only. Does anyone object to other speakers, one from each of the two other opposition parties, joining in on this tribute?

Hearing none, the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the minister's moving tribute to the late Premier Klein, I'm pleased to reply on behalf of the Alberta Liberal opposition. First of all, we extend our best wishes and deepest, heartfelt condolences to the Klein family.

A lot has been said about Premier Klein's legacy. He was forceful, passionate, and witty. He had the ability to connect with Albertans from all walks of life. When you talked to Ralph, you felt as though you knew him for years even if you'd only met him minutes ago. Although he was affectionately known as King Ralph, he was a fellow you could have a beer with and a good sit-down chit-chat. My better half, Sharon, knew Premier Klein. That's how she felt about him.

Premier Klein was the big-city mayor of Calgary, where he helped build city hall, the LRT, and the Saddledome and helped bring the Olympics to this province to put us on the international map. He understood the importance of building communities and infrastructure for cities. Many people think that it was Premier Klein's fiscal conservatism that allowed for one of the most memorable photo ops in our Legislature's history when he stamped a paid-in-full sticker on our province's debt. However, I'll remind the House that in the '90s this was not just achieved by drastic spending cuts. Premier Klein actually understood the value of progressive income tax, and he put an 8 per cent surtax on the wealthy to get them to pay their fair share.

Even if you didn't agree with his politics, you respected the man for his toughness, enthusiasm, and determination to build Alberta. He loved this province and could connect with the Marthas and Henrys, the average, everyday Albertans, like nobody else. He wasn't perfect – none of us are – but he had this quality which is rare for a government leader, the courage to admit mistakes and learn from them and change course. This is something we can all admire.

Finally, I'd like to extend my condolences to his father, Phil, who is a friend of mine. We were lucky to have had Premier Klein amongst us. We thank him and his family for sharing him with us.

May God bless him and God bless his family and God bless Alberta. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The leader of the New Democratic opposition.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Premier Klein spent his life working for the province of Alberta. The far-reaching political changes brought by Premier Klein transformed the political climate and the state of this province. The impact of the Klein era can still be felt to this day.

Premier Klein dedicated his life to public service and spent decades working in both municipal and provincial politics. His passion made him a tough competitor to have across the floor, and I personally enjoyed question period with Ralph very, very much. If you could get him going, you had no idea what was going to come out of his mouth. It could be right, it could be wrong, but it was always entertaining. He was really hard to stay mad at, I found, and he was a strong communicator. His folksy charm allowed him to connect with Albertans on a very personal level. Mayor Klein undoubtedly made major contributions to the city of Calgary and as Premier to the province of Alberta throughout his lifetime. Today we recognize his dedication and hard work.

On behalf of Alberta's New Democrats I extend my sympathies to his wife, Colleen, to his family, and to his many friends, all of whom, I know, will continue to feel their loss deeply. Across the aisle, my colleagues in the Progressive Conservatives, to those of you that worked with him and knew him well, my sincere condolences. Our thoughts are very much with you today.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition for her first main set of questions.

Carbon Tax

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the government is already raising taxes through a variety of adjustments that they either bury or deny or they call something else, this despite the Premier's promise not to raise taxes. When her minister of environment muses about a huge increase in the current carbon tax, it's no wonder the energy industry is getting nervous. The minister insists it's a collaborative process as she reviews climate change policy, but we know from past experience that collaboration isn't always collaboration. Let's cut to the chase. Is the minister going to raise the \$15-a-tonne tax to \$40?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Premier have been very clear. In the province of Alberta we have established a protocol that is the envy not only of the country but, in many cases, the world. The Premier and the minister are working collaboratively with industry and with the Prime Minister, who actually, incidentally, at the funeral of our late Premier Ralph Klein indicated that Alberta is driving Canada's economy. We will not make any decisions that will not be collaborative with both the federal government and the industry and that will not be conducive to building this economy and Canada's economy.

2:10

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, a big increase in the job-killing carbon tax will have a direct effect on Alberta's economy. Now, we agree that curbs on emissions are necessary, but tossing out numbers like the minister did recently has a direct effect on investment, hiring, and business viability. Now, giving the Premier some ammunition for her Washington sales trip is one thing, but why do so much damage by floating trial balloons?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and our colleagues are doing their utmost best on behalf of all Albertans to ensure that we have access to markets for our products. Part of that conversation is ensuring that we have the social licence to operate, working closely with industry and the government of Canada, and to ensure that we actually have some place to send our production when we produce it in this province.

Ms Smith: It's beginning to sound like the answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

The recent back-in-debt budget relies on a fictional future in Alberta to achieve projected revenue levels, yet with such industry uncertainty and with the job losses we've already seen, can we expect that the Minister of Finance is going to rely on other sneaky tax increases to meet his future revenue projections?

Mr. Horner: Well, Mr. Speaker, the revenue projections that we have in the plan have been arrived at by using industry's numbers. They've been arrived at by using the market analysts that the hon. member across the way is actually talking about that we're not talking to. Well, in fact, those are the numbers that we're using. I would hazard a guess – I've been waiting for the question of when I lowballed the numbers because currently we would be a little bit under those numbers.

The Speaker: Hon. leader, second main set of questions.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see they're having trouble answering this question, so I'm going to try it again. Now, we are supportive of the Keystone XL pipeline, and we're glad that the Premier is encouraging the Americans to approve the project, but we are not supportive of a shocking, disruptive, and unilateral approach to changing the structure of the current carbon tax regime in Alberta. The government has been musing about raising the \$15-a-tonne charge for carbon to a job-killing \$40. It's a transparent attempt to try to convince oil sands opponents that Alberta is green, but its actual effect is to create uncertainty. Why doesn't the government see that?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the only person that's talking about shocking disruption to the industry is the member across the aisle. If the member across the aisle would not engage in public discourse questioning the science of today, our Premier wouldn't have to be in Washington, DC, right now trying to convince them that the product needs to be delivered there. I would strongly suggest that the member focus on facts and look at the statements made by the Premier and the minister and not muse about increasing taxes because on this side we're not doing that.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the most recent job numbers show a decline in the number of jobs in Alberta, more than 11,000 lost jobs in March alone. The contraction suggests that the economy is not creating these jobs because of uncertainty about the future. Will the Deputy Premier create some certainty and commit that he will not be increasing the \$15 tax to \$40?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the member should know – and if she doesn't, she now will – that the majority of the job losses occurred in the hospitality industry, and that is a natural reaction to what happens when you have a slowdown in economic development. That is why our Premier is in Washington right now. That is why we're working with the Premier of New Brunswick. That is why we're working with the Premier of Quebec. That is why we're working with the Premier and government of British Columbia to get this product to the coast and not to perpetuate the fearmongering both on science and now some new taxes that I know not of.

Ms Smith: I'm sure the Deputy Premier knows the Voyageur project isn't in the hospitality field.

Business craves stability, certainty, consistency, but with this government they get the opposite. A few years ago it was the oil royalty mess, a few weeks ago the return to debt and deficit financing, and now the spectre of another broken promise with a threatened tax increase on the energy sector. Why are they trying to destroy the Alberta advantage?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, I think this government is very much of the view that it actually would be impossible to destroy the Alberta advantage, that we have in this province. We have exceptional strengths. The greatest certainty that we could create for industry in this province is to ensure that we have access to tidewater so that we can sell our products, and that is what this government is absolutely dedicated to.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Compensation for Pharmacy Services

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, on to another group that's not enjoying the Alberta advantage today. The Minister of Health claims to be

making drugs cheaper for Albertans, but the reality of his generic drug plan is this: drug shortages, price increases, and pharmacy closures. You'll hear more about that in a few minutes. As a result of the government's decision to pay less for generics, prices are actually going up for patients. Dozens of medications will not be covered by Alberta Health, which means patients will pay out of pocket, and other options either aren't in existence or are more expensive. Why didn't the Minister of Health trust pharmacists, who warned him about this disastrous policy change?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the hon. member is getting her information, but in fact the price of generic drugs in Alberta is going down. On May 1 Alberta will pay the lowest price for generic drugs in the country at 18 per cent. That price not only benefits government-sponsored drug programs; it benefits private employers who provide drug benefit plans, that help support jobs in this province, something we're interested in. Also, it helps support those who pay out of pocket.

Mr. Speaker, these discussions are not new. They've been going on for a number of years. We have supported and will continue to support . . .

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Ms Smith: For the Health minister's benefit: getting it from the summary of changes to the drug benefit list.

Let me give you a few details, Mr. Speaker. The government spent \$400,000 on an ad campaign that claims lower drug prices are good for Alberta. Now, we agree, but that's not what's happening. For example, take keterolac, a commonly prescribed painkiller, one of the generics that will no longer be covered by Alberta Health: the other version is discontinued, and the brand name is 50 per cent more expensive. The bottom line is that patients will pay more out of pocket. How is that good medicine for patients?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I can assure this House that Albertans need have no concern about the supply of drugs in this province today or after the price changes on May 1. The fact is that we receive drug price quotations monthly from manufacturers both here in Canada and around the world. We have the opportunity because of the policy environment in this province to set a price and to choose from multiple providers of the same drug, in some cases brand name providers as well, to supply that drug for our province. This is sound policy. It's rooted in practice that we see across the country in provinces such as B.C., Ontario. It delivers on our commitment to lower . . .

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, here is another one out of a long list of affected medicines, and you'll be hearing about them all week. Triamcinolone, used to treat a variety of conditions, including arthritis, lupus, and asthma, is one of the generics that will no longer be covered by Alberta Health. The version from the other generic drug maker is unavailable. The brand name is more than double the cost. The bottom line is that policy will cost Albertans more money. How is that good medicine for patients?

Mr. Horne: The hon. member is obviously not familiar with the policy and the practices around drug procurement in this province or, in fact, across the country. This price-setting exercise is the most comprehensive of its kind in the country. As I said earlier, it affects government-sponsored programs. It provides a price benefit for private and employer-sponsored programs as well as

for people who pay out of pocket. Mr. Speaker, we have multiple sources in Alberta and across the country and internationally for all of these drugs. Many of them are based on equivalent molecules. We will continue to provide the drugs that Albertans need at the best price that we can get on behalf of our citizens.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the Alberta Liberal opposition.

Oil Price Forecasting

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year's fudge-it budget wildly overestimated oil revenues so that the Premier could promise the world in the election. This year's bankrupt budget took advantage of a freak event in the oil market to underestimate oil revenues and manufacture a crisis as an excuse to break all of those promises. Well, the Premier's bitumen bubble is BS. And by BS I mean bitumen sham because today the gap between the prices of Alberta and Texas oil is 23 per cent, smaller than the seven-year average. Some bubble. To the Premier: why did you misinform Albertans by trying to pass off a highly unusual market event . . .

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, while members on this side of the House spent two weeks with constituents, obviously this member spent a lot of time coming up with slogans. Unfortunately, they're meaningless. It is not the Premier or the Minister of Finance himself that comes up with the estimates of what the revenues will be, but frankly the brightest minds in the world and in the financial houses throughout the world estimate what the cost of commodities will be in the future. We average it, as a matter of fact, on the small "c" conservative side, and that's how prices are set. Maybe next time there's a constituency break this gentleman can take some time and learn that.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, that's a slogan Premier Klein would have used had he seen this.

Given that the price of western Canadian select is currently higher than the monthly average for 2012, a year when the term "bitumen bubble" was just a glint in the Premier's eye, to the Premier: why are you attacking vital services such as post-secondary education, K to 12, health care, and seniors' care? Does it have something to do with a leadership review, or do you just want to punish regular Albertans: students, teachers, doctors, nurses, and seniors? Why, Premier?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I just rose in a previous set of questions and said that I was surprised I hadn't got the question about us lowballing the numbers. Well, now I've got it. It just goes to prove that there is a wide variety of pundits who believe they know where the oil price is going to go. We actually use the experts in the industry. We use private industry forecasts. While this hon. member may think that the glut in the North American market, which everyone in the industry sees, is a freak accident, as I think he called it, this is something that the North American industry understands. Unfortunately, the hon. member does not.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, this same Finance minister told CBC listeners that Alberta, quote, wouldn't get back to the differential of January 2012 at any point in the next three years. Unquote. But, lo and behold, the spread today is actually significantly lower. Significantly lower. To the Premier: was this intellectually and morally bankrupt budget based on profoundly faulty assumptions, or was it based on truth-challenging assertions instead?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should actually take the whole interview so that he can be truthful to this House, which he is not being right now. The context of the question that I answered was: in our budget projections do we get back to the differential of January 2012? The answer is that in our projection we do not. That was the question that was asked. That's the answer, and it's truthful, not like the question that was just asked.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the New Democratic opposition.

Carbon Tax (continued)

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Deputy Premier. Our Premier is off on another one of her panhandling expeditions to Washington, hoping to convince Americans that Alberta's government has been environmentally responsible with the oil sands. And there's more misleading greenwash advertising, too, \$77,000 worth. Will the Deputy Premier tell the Assembly what he won't say to the Americans, which is that after years of denial this government was forced to admit that its water monitoring system was useless and that the promised new world-class system is still not in place two and a half years after it was announced?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, if the leaders of the ND Party both nationally and provincially wouldn't spew information like this out, if the leader of the Liberal Party wouldn't be talking about the magic of the bubble and not believing in the oil bubble, if the Leader of the Official Opposition wasn't going on S.S. *Minnow* cruises with a whole bunch of other climate change deniers, our Premier wouldn't have to be in Washington right now trying to convince the American public of the fact that export of our petroleum is important not only to Canada but to the United States as well.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Airdrie, you rose on a point of order during that last answer, and it's been noted.

The leader of the New Democrats.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I hope the Deputy Premier enjoyed his corn flakes this morning.

Will the Deputy Premier tell the Assembly what he won't tell the Americans, that Alberta's so-called price on carbon is actually based on the percentage of carbon in emissions, and will he tell them that Alberta has failed to reach its carbon emissions targets by a mile?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, we will be telling Americans whatever is true. We will be telling Americans whatever is supported by science. As a matter of fact, we are inviting Americans over here. Very recently we had the governor of Colorado find out for himself. But we won't be telling Americans to kill the Canadian economy. We won't be telling Americans to kill the Alberta economy because of some ideology that they may have that is not supported by Canadians both federally or here, provincially, at home.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, we know that the Deputy Premier has some creative uses for breakfast cereal, but he shouldn't be so creative with the truth. Why won't he admit that the environment minister's recent proposal is just a further attempt to trick the U.S. administration and that this

government is already distancing itself from its recent proposal and trying to pin responsibility for it on the federal government?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, if this member won't show respect for Albertans and Canadians and for the engine of our economy, he should at least show some respect to our neighbours to the south and acknowledge the fact that they have the capability of looking at the facts, of deciphering the facts and making righteous conclusions on what is good for the United States. When they make that decision, I'm sure it will be a good decision for both the United States and Canada, for Alberta, that is driving the Canadian economy partially through our petroleum industry.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Support for Postsecondary Education

Mr. McAllister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to have you back in the big chair.

Mr. Speaker, Edmonton's mayor, Stephen Mandel, quite rightly standing up for all Edmontonians and the advanced education industry in general, pointed out that the minister of advanced education should choose his words more carefully. Last week the minister of advanced education said, and I quote – I'm sorry, but it is a quote – that somebody had pissed in the mayor of Edmonton's corn flakes. Now, I'm wondering if today the advanced education minister would like to publicly apologize to the mayor and the rest of Albertans as he made these comments publicly.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

The Speaker: Hon. members, just because you heard something or read something that contained an ill-chosen word, perhaps, or maybe a well-chosen word in terms of the deliverer does not mean that it bears repeating in this Assembly when we have so many wonderful young students here with us and so many others at home listening. Let's be very, very careful about this, please.

Hon. Deputy Premier, I'll allow you to comment if you wish.

Support for Postsecondary Education (continued)

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I have to say that Mayor Mandel is not only a colleague as a politician on the Edmonton political stage, but he actually is a very dear friend of mine and of my family. So I don't think he needs them to be inbetweeners. There are other members that need inbetweeners between them and their mayors.

However, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I am happy that Mayor Mandel is so passionate about advanced education. As a matter of fact, I called him the same day. I asked him to call me or meet with me to discuss matters in more detail. I continue to wait for his phone call, but I'm sure we will have a good discussion shortly.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McAllister: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I assure you I was uncomfortable with that also. I wonder, Deputy Premier, if the mayor is as good a friend as the federal immigration minister is.

Given that many postsecondary institutions and leaders are rightly telling the advanced education minister that they are not interested in this government's vision of centralization, that takes

autonomy away from postsecondary institutions, why does the minister of advanced education think that he knows how to run a postsecondary institution better than those currently doing it?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't. That is why I listened to what they have been asking the provincial government to do. For the last 10 years all of the leaders of advanced institutions have been asking this province to put in place Campus Alberta. They have been asking this government to assign roles and responsibilities for each institution within Campus Alberta, and they have been asking this province to provide them with mandate letters. We have done all of that, and now we will be working in collaboration in implementing those letters.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McAllister: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Given that we had professors hold a press conference today saying that they're prepared and getting ready to leave Alberta because of the hand they've been dealt from this province, I just want to ask the minister: plain and simple, what is so wrong with postsecondary institutions in Alberta and the people in charge of operating them that you need to redefine what they do and, in the process, take a giant hatchet to their sector?

2:30

Mr. Lukaszuk: This is coming, Mr. Speaker, from the Wildrose, that wants us to cut even deeper and calls this budget not a balanced budget. How incredible is that? But you know what? They will not be leaving the province of Alberta. Even after this budget, this moderate change compared to what they would have done, Alberta's postsecondary education is still the highest funded postsecondary education system in Canada, and we will continue to grow it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Market Access for Energy Resources

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard several times and again last week that a CIBC report was released that said that the oil pipeline constraints are costing our Canadian economy over \$50 billion over the next three years. My question is to the Minister of Energy. I'd like to know, Mr. Minister: what is the Alberta government going to do to address this?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is clearly not just an Alberta challenge. It's a problem, a challenge for all Canadians. What we're doing together with the Premier and other colleagues is that we're working right across this country. Of course, the Premier is in Washington this very week to meet with leaders to help ensure that there is an open market for all of the production that we can create in this province of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Fenske: Thank you. To the same minister. The government once again is spending advertising money in the United States. Do you really think that that's going to help access?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, it's really important to get through to all of the leaders in the United States who might have input into this important decision by the President. We're all optimistic that

the President will make the right decision that will serve both American interests and Canadian interests at the same time. So we're very much looking forward to that outcome. We're prepared to invest however it takes, wherever it takes to get the right outcome for the citizens of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. The Premier is taking another trip to Washington. What does she think she will accomplish this time that she didn't on her previous trips?

The Speaker: Hon. minister, we're not here to entertain what people might think. We're here to discuss policy and fact. If you can craft an answer that deals with the policy side of it, please proceed.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's clear this government has a policy of taking direct action to engage citizens, to engage leadership elsewhere. Meanwhile on the other side here we see the NDP is denying industry, the Liberals are denying bubbles, and the Wildrose denies science. Or maybe they deny science deniers. I'm not sure what it is today. [interjections] Well, you've got all of the options.

The Speaker: A point of order has been noted at 2:33.

Carbon Tax (continued)

Mr. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, in 2007 this government passed legislation in an attempt to address greenhouse gas emissions. We could have passed legislation that actually achieved measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, but that's not what we got. This government chose instead the cap and tax route, and now we learn that the cap and tax fund has been quietly collecting more than \$50 million over and above what is necessary to fund our greenhouse gas emissions programs. Why does this government think that a cap and hoard strategy will improve our air quality?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that this member – it's not clear, actually, where this member is coming from, to tell you the truth. I would say that what we have done is that we have allocated very directly the resources that have been raised. They haven't gone into general revenues. They've been directed towards long-term technology solutions that will get to the outcome of reducing greenhouse gases and the greenhouse gas footprint in a very responsible way in this province.

Mr. Anglin: Given that the \$15-a-tonne carbon tax brings in about \$70 million a year and given that the fund only spends \$20 million a year, how does the minister think that hoarding money in a fund will actually improve Alberta's air quality?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, more than 32 million tonnes of greenhouse gases have been reduced from business as usual. There are very specific measures that have been undertaken. More than \$181 million has been invested and committed to more than 49 projects that are clean energy projects. That's exactly how we'll get to the outcome we need to get to.

Mr. Anglin: Given that we now know that the minister of environment is musing about raising the carbon tax to \$40 a tonne from its current level of \$15 a tonne, my question is this: is this new extra \$25-a-tonne carbon tax just going to increase the

balance of this slush fund, or will this money be a straight up-and-down tax grab for general revenues to subsidize this government's addiction to its overspending?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, you can speculate all you want about what might happen in the future. What I can tell you are the facts. The facts are that there are several alternatives that are being reviewed. The facts are that industry, the federal government, and the government of Alberta are working very closely. We want to ensure that we work very closely to get the right outcome for Albertans, to ensure that we have access to markets, that we get our products to tidewater, that we get world-price revenues for the products from this province.

Campground Improvements

Ms Pastoor: Mr. Speaker, summer is coming, and Albertans will be anxious to take part in outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, and hiking across this province. These activities are traditions which have been enjoyed by generations and must be preserved for the future generations of this province. My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and it is his first question in this House. Some provincial campgrounds across our province have become inaccessible due to the current size of fifth wheels, trailers, and tent trailers. This being the case, what is being done to address this?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. We're very proud in Alberta that we have some 41,000 campsites across the province to choose from, and I can assure you that those campsites range from the rustic to the sophisticated. Those campsites are being constantly improved upon, including a \$17 billion capital and operational improvement fund this year that is going to improve the diversity and also enhance the quality of those sites. So we're looking forward to that and to being able to enjoy those sites this summer.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. To the same minister, although I think he's pretty much answered my question: how many new campgrounds will we be getting for that money, or will it really just be for enlarging the existing campgrounds?

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, I've just been informed by the Treasury Board minister that I've augmented the budget by some thousand times. While I can assure you that I'm a passionate advocate for my portfolio, not even my persuasive abilities would do that much. With \$17 million, however, we intend to continue to make the kinds of improvements like we've made at Pigeon Lake provincial park and Hilliard's Bay provincial park and Lesser Slave Lake. We're very proud of those, and we encourage Albertans, regardless of the size of RV or tent or trailer they have, to get out and camp in Alberta this summer.

Ms Pastoor: Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. Given recent cutbacks to wardens and conservation officers how does the government plan to address the problems of random camping and unruly behaviour within our recreation areas?

Mr. Denis: Well, Mr. Speaker, summer absolutely is coming. Last summer we went throughout Livingstone-Macleod, to Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Crowsnest Pass, Pincher Creek, and Brocket, and in

all of these cases we talked to many different conservation officers. I'm very pleased to advise that this year we're recruiting 90 seasonal park rangers and an additional seven full-time rangers, bringing the total conservation officers on a full-time basis to 74 throughout this province.

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

Market Access for Energy Resources (continued)

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to talk about some connected issues: the government's duty to act in the best interests of current and future Albertans to protect the environment and the economy as well as government's backward movement on Alberta's targets on greenhouse gas emission and our part of the federal commitment to reduce the level to below 2005 emission levels by the year 2020. I guess the question goes to the money man. To the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board: what is behind the government's insistence on PR-begging trips over any action that would be transformational for the operation of oil sands . . .

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horner: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the question is probably better to the Energy minister because what this is all about is market access. As we have seen over the last 10, 12 months especially, market access is crippling our economy and the federal economy, Canada's economy, because we cannot get to tidewater to get what is the appropriate price for our products. Everything this government does right now is focused on making sure that we're doing the right things for Albertans. Part of that is making sure we have market access for our products, and we will do what it takes.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much. Back to the same minister: given that the coal-burning power plants are the single largest emitters of greenhouse gas, why has the government done absolutely nothing to encourage transformation of this sector to a less carbon-intensive fuel? As a matter of fact, what it has done is extend the worst polluters for up to an additional 10 years. How is that helping our economy?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me take that. You know, there have been a couple of questions today which seem to be based on a completely false assumption. The carbon levy in this province has never been about raising money for general revenues. The carbon levy has historically always been about using it to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint. In fact, the question with respect to coal: there were adjustments made last year, again, in close consultation with the industry and with the government of Canada to ensure that we got to the right outcome for the long-term health of Albertans and Canadians.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Then to the Energy minister: given that Siemens has just announced that they're opening a head office in Calgary – so we're hardly chasing them away – why is the government so obstinate about increasing the carbon levy to something that would be transformational? You could start anywhere. I would take 50 bucks and then phase it in at \$10 a year. But it's got to be transformational, or we are not going to get

anything happening, and we'll be sitting here 10 years from now with the same questions.

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, the transformation that we're creating in this province is the transformation of good, long-term economic fundamentals with a balance for environmental responsibility. Because of that, we will be successful in achieving market access for our products because we will continue to be the responsible provider of energy for America and for the rest of the world.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by Medicine Hat.

Support for Postsecondary Education (continued)

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Edmonton's mayor joined the chorus of opposition to this government's short-sighted attack on the province's flagship university and, through that, on the capital city. Now we have undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, staff, faculty, administrators, presidents of universities, the board of governors at the U of A, and now a mayor all opposing the PC cuts to postsecondary education. To the minister. Not a single stakeholder supports you. You clearly listened to no one. Why won't you reverse your regressive cuts to our postsecondary education system?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the member will have plenty of opportunity in a few days to talk to the estimates that we will be presenting for this particular ministry. You should know that we have actually increased funding for students. We have frozen tuition increases, and some additional announcements will be coming forward. However, we have made some difficult choices like every other minister on this front bench had to make in response to a suddenly changed fiscal situation for the province of Alberta. The fact is that we are working with the presidents and chairs of all institutions, as a matter of fact, in a very collaborative spirit. They will have to make some difficult decisions, but we will minimize . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister's mandate letters, conveniently released at the very beginning of our break, have been met with a unified chorus of condemnation and given that these new mandates will erode academic independence, our international reputation, and overall educational quality, will the minister admit he doesn't understand postsecondary education, he's not equipped to lead this sector, and that it's time to tear up his mandate letters and start over?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong again. As a matter of fact, there are chairs and presidents of postsecondary institutions that have already responded in writing very positively towards the letters.

She should also know that the content of those letters is not drafted by me but actually is a collaboration of suggestions from Campus Alberta dialogues that took place over the last number of years. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, they're not very prescriptive. Right now each postsecondary institution has the opportunity to modify their letter, to find their perfect spot within Campus Alberta, and we will be negotiating that back and forth until we find a situation where every single school is satisfied with their letter.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that in her leadership run

the Premier said that, quote, when times are tough, that is when you should invest in postsecondary education, end quote, and given that real leadership does indeed mean investing in education and, coincidentally, keeping your promises, will the Deputy Premier admit that his cuts to advanced education mean that his government understands neither leadership nor the concept of keeping your promises?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, what this government will do is make sure that we find as much collaboration as possible without in any way affecting the academic independence of all of our 26 schools. We will make sure that we have a strong Campus Alberta, we will make sure that we provide the best services possible to our students, we will make sure that we will increase the voice of students in the decision-making process, we will make sure that we will not increase students' tuition until we can look them straight in the eyes and say that we are running an efficient process, and we will make sure that postsecondary education will be the driver of our economic growth in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat, followed by Calgary-Fort.

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order has been raised by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood at 2:47. Noted.

Compensation for Pharmacy Services

(continued)

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again this PC government has failed Albertans with their incredibly misguided and mismanaged approach to health care. As a direct result of cuts a vital community pharmacy in Medicine Hat is closing its doors. This is just one more black mark on the record of this Health minister, who's proven time and time again that he is incapable of competently doing his job. To the Minister of Health: how can you honestly tell Albertans that pharmacies closing their doors improves their quality of care?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the reduction in generic prices hasn't even occurred yet, I'm at a loss to explain the hon. member's contention that the policies of this government are forcing the closure of that business.

The fact is – and the hon. member should know this – that this government has poured over \$95 million over the last few years into financial support for pharmacists across the province, particularly in rural and remote areas, as generic prices have been gradually reduced. He should also know and appreciate that pharmacists across this province are supporting the evolution of a pharmacy services framework that pays them for their services.

Mr. Pedersen: Given that pharmacists across Alberta are actually saying that they cannot operate under this government's new framework and are going so far as to protest on the steps of this Legislature, will the minister end his campaign of misinformation and be honest with Albertans about the damage these changes will cause?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, what would be honest is an acknowledgement of the fact that this government has done more than any other in the country to support pharmacists to become full partners in a health care team that's delivering quality services

to Albertans. It's amazing to us how at one moment the opposition can claim to be holding the domain on the interests of taxpayers in the province at a time when we're lowering generic drug prices to the best in the country and at the same time oppose the same move based on information that isn't even accurate.

Mr. Pedersen: Given that pharmacies are closing their doors and Albertans are suffering because of this minister's mismanagement, will he agree right now to cancel his drastic funding cuts and actually consult with Alberta's pharmacists before making any more heavy-handed moves?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as we used to say to another party, I guess we'll have to wait to figure out if it's a saving day or a spending day, but I will tell you this: this government has consulted more with pharmacists than any other government in the country that I'm aware of in the development of a model that they have asked for to allow them to provide the services that they're trained to provide, to pay them to provide those services, and in the transition to support them in their businesses. We've done that, and we'll continue to do that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by Livingstone-Macleod.

Community Safety

Mr. Cao: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Community safety is very important for the quality of life of Albertans. Our constituents were very happy when they heard the Minister of Justice in his news release from last year say: "It's important that we provide them with the support they need to help put an end to gang activity." But now they are very worried about the fact that the safer communities and neighbourhoods, or SCAN, program has been terminated in the provincial budget. My question is to the hon. minister. Can the minister explain to my constituent your talk about community safety and your walk in the budget?

2:50

Mr. Denis: Well, Mr. Speaker, as a long-time parliamentarian in this House I'm sure that this member recalls that these grants were limited on a three-year basis. They were designed to break down silos in the various ministries, and they have succeeded. We will continue to honour the grants that are in their existing place, but as a result of budgetary reductions we have had to eliminate the grants on a go-forward basis.

I would also point this member to the civil forfeiture fund, which seizes assets from the proceeds of crime and gives them to organizations such as those people. Perhaps your constituent may want to apply for a civil forfeiture grant for his or her organization.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the same hon. minister. Given that some community safety projects or pilot projects are going to be terminated, can the effective SCAN program be continued? If not, how can you help the safety of vulnerable neighbourhoods where my constituents live?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, even though the budget of Justice and Solicitor General has received an 8 per cent reduction – and we will be talking about that over the next couple of days – I'm very proud that we have not cut one police officer, we've increased the number of judges by two, and we have not cut one Crown prosecutor. In addition, the new police officer grant, or NPOG, is

going to be continued for at least one more year. That adds 300 new police officers on the street. That was started by the Premier when she was Justice minister, and that includes 123 police officers in your hometown of Calgary.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same hon. minister: given that community safety is related to some of the public consultation that you have launched on grow ops, why don't you just control or register the purchases of equipment and fertilizer that are also used in grow ops, similar to the controls on pawn shops and spray paint canisters?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's actually the first time I've heard an idea like that, and I would welcome the member to become part of our consultation. You can go to Grow Op Free Alberta on the Justice department's website at alberta.ca and provide your information until the end of May. This is why we have a consultation. We want to listen to the views of Albertans and not just simply put in legislation.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, followed by Calgary-Hawkwood.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents in southern Alberta are concerned over the government's centralized regional planning under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. Municipalities, land-owners, and business owners continue to be in limbo as they prepare to see the final draft of the South Saskatchewan regional plan, and now almost 9,000 Albertans have signed a petition against the plan. With this massive concern resonating among Albertans across southern Alberta, will the minister commit to revisit with the advisory council before they make their first draft on this imposed plan to ensure these voices are heard?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take that question on behalf of my colleague the Minister of ESRD. In fact, this comes after a couple of years of consultations. The regional advisory committee consultations and consultations throughout the south have taken place. I would encourage the hon. member and all Albertans to approach this matter in good faith and see how we can create the best possible land-use structure that we can imagine in southern Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you. We didn't hear whether he's going to meet with the regional advisory council again.

Anyway, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: given that the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties is warning against the dangers of forced regionalization on local communities, why does the province insist on forcing municipalities to accept the province's plan instead of working for the best interest of their communities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. I am fully aware that the AAMD and C has indicated that they don't believe forced co-operation means success, but neither does allowing municipalities to not talk to each other

encourage any sort of agreement or managing proper planning. I'm simply encouraging that all municipalities come together within the region and come up with a sound plan that ensures strong growth, that ensures agriculture is still viable, that we protect the environment, that we build buildings where they're supposed to be, that we put industry where it's supposed to be, not just for the sake of us but for the sake of the next generation.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we'll try it again, then. To the Finance minister: given that the province spent \$21 million or more in compensation under the lower Athabasca regional plan, what budget does the minister have in mind for compensating the businesses and landowners whose lands will be impacted by the South Saskatchewan regional plan?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, you know, this kind of highly speculative, provocative allegation is not really helpful to helping people understand what's really going on here. I would encourage the hon. member to participate in the process, engage in the process in a constructive way and in a way that is well informed.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood, followed by Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Grandparent Access to Grandchildren

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently there is an unfortunate situation that exists in our province, where many children have difficulty accessing or being visited by their grandparents because of parental conflict. However, research has shown that having grandparent support is crucial to healthy child development. To the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. The province of Manitoba has recently established the grand relations strategy, which successfully addresses problems and has gained some international recognition. Will you consider adopting such a program in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this question from this hon. member. I think any one of us has had a strong relationship with our grandparents in our younger years, as I did with my grandfather, and I think it's very important. He references the grand relations strategy in Manitoba. Alberta grandparents may access assistance through family justice services, which offers to assist family law litigants in a resolution prior to court involvement. Of course, court is available, but that is only the last strategy because it can become very expensive, especially with all of the legal fees involved.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: will you consider establishing a unified family court system which gives proper consideration for grandparent access?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that there was a unified family court task force in about 2004, two or three Legislatures ago. This isn't something that we are looking at right now. I am aware that other jurisdictions have these types of court systems. We have looked at other jurisdictions to weigh the pros and cons and determined this wasn't the best way to proceed after we looked at that task force. This decision was made with input from

the courts and all Albertans. I believe it was the former Member for Calgary-Lougheed who handled that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last question is to the same minister. Will you amend the Alberta Family Law Act, section 35(3), which makes it difficult if not impossible for grandparents to access grandchildren?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Most grandparents will never need to go to court to have contact with their grandchildren, and we want to maintain that status quo. But for those who unfortunately do, Alberta's Family Law Act balances the best interests of the children and the best interests of parents and grandparents in a reasonable manner.

Grandparents are important to me. I think they're important to everyone else here. I look forward to discussing these issues with this member. I look forward to talking to you after the session is done.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, followed by Calgary-Varsity.

Federal Building Renovations

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Infrastructure recently made comments to the *Calgary Herald* that require some explanation. Regarding \$360 million for palatial MLA offices he said: "A lot of people are criticizing it now, but wait until the grand opening. Everybody will be proud of what we have there and it will be a jewel." To the Minister of Infrastructure: given that this government recently gave itself an 8 per cent pay raise and we are facing a 5 and a half billion dollar deficit, doesn't this government think it has done enough to siphon from taxpayers and future generations?

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, aside from all of the points he made that weren't true, I will comment on the federal building. To stop building that project right now, we'll have spent \$330 million and have nothing for it. There's \$20 million left, and the project will be finished. It would be irresponsible with the taxpayers' dollars to stop building that project.

Mr. Barnes: You guys sure like expensive jewellery.

Given that perhaps congratulations are in order for not incurring another massive billion dollar cost overrun like the south campus Calgary hospital, will this minister tell Albertans whether this government has entered into a cost-plus contract with no ceiling to protect taxpayers from those costs rising again beyond this incredible \$75 million it's already over?

3:00

Mr. Drysdale: Well, Mr. Speaker, the project was originally budgeted at \$356 million. When it was put out for tender, at a time when construction companies weren't busy, the bids came in lower, so the estimate was reduced. Once you start a project of that size, rebuilding, and get in there, the engineers found concerns that they had to address, and it dragged the project out longer and cost more. Dragging it out increased the budget.

Mr. Barnes: Sounds like some interesting planning.

Given that this government has said that it has a prioritized infrastructure spending list but has refused to provide it, can the

minister explain, please, how lush MLA and bureaucratic offices are more important on your priority list than schools, hospitals, and roads?

Mr. Drysdale: Well, Mr. Speaker, here we go again misleading the public. There will be 50 MLAs in there, including the opposition. [interjections] There will be spaces for 600 people in that building, so 50 MLAs out of 600. I find it also surprising . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Just about made it, didn't we? Could we please have some restoration of decorum and let the minister answer the question, which you yourselves asked?

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also find it quite surprising that the members opposite last year were complaining about their offices in the Annex, wanting us to spend more money, that they weren't good enough, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members . . . [interjections]. Hon. members, honourable and even some of you who may not feel so honourable today, please. A point of order has been raised by the Member for Airdrie at 3:02 in response to the final answer here, prompted, I'm sure, by some wonderful comments from this side. We'll hear that point of order shortly.

In the meantime it's just past 3 o'clock, and I'll have to recognize the Government House Leader first.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the comments this afternoon relative to the passing of Premier Ralph Klein and the undeniable fact that I do tend to go on too long, I would ask the indulgence of colleagues in the House to waive Standing Order 7(7) and allow us to continue past 3 p.m. to complete the Routine.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 7(7), of course, requires us to give unanimous consent to carry on with the Routine, including Members' Statements. I will ask one question. Does anybody object to us continuing on in order to conclude our Routine for the day?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Members' Statements

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

50th Anniversary of CapitalCare

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rose earlier to introduce and warmly welcome to the Alberta Legislature nine guests from CapitalCare. It is my honour and pleasure to rise again to recognize this remarkable organization for on April 1 they celebrated with pride 50 years of innovative continuing care and service to Alberta's most valued resource, which is people. On April 1, 1963, CapitalCare began operations at Norwood annex, located at the Royal Alexandra hospital, with 72 beds. This section of the hospital was built in 1947 and was known as the south pavilion. It was Alberta's first publicly owned long-term care centre. South pavilion today is known as the CapitalCare CHOICE Norwood, Canada's first stand-alone day centre for the frail elderly living in the community.

Mr. Speaker, since 1963 CapitalCare has evolved to become the largest publicly funded continuing care organization in Canada. This organization administers western Canada's first continuing care research unit, which specializes in assessment, customer care,

and innovative service delivery options to continuing care communities across Canada. A few additional milestone achievements over the years included the establishment of the CapitalCare Foundation in 1989 to fund raise for enhancements beyond government funding and the Kipnes Centre for Veterans in 2005. Also, it should be noted that CapitalCare is a wholly owned subsidiary of Alberta Health Services.

The organization has over 2,700 dedicated allied professionals who provide care and services to more than 1,400 elderly and disabled adults through 11 care centres and day programs around Edmonton and Sherwood Park. An example of a care centre located in my constituency of Edmonton-Decore is CapitalCare Dickinsfield, which has 275 continuing care beds and provides support services to McConnell Place North, adjacent to Dickinsfield, and operates the young adult day support program. *Mr. Speaker, CapitalCare's new motto, Putting People First, truly exemplifies an organization which over the past 50 years has concentrated on cultivating a person-centred social model of care which is responsive to meet the needs of our diverse population.*

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations and sincere appreciation to all those past and present who have contributed to CapitalCare's 50 years of compassionate care and outstanding service to Alberta's frail, elderly, and disabled people, including their families.

*Thank you, Mr. Speaker.**

Mr. Ralph P. Klein, OC, AOE

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, when I lose someone I love and admire, I find comfort and peace in pondering how that person has touched and affected my life for good. Many Albertans have fond personal stories about our friend Ralph Klein, and I'm now different.

After Ralph left politics, he took a position at the law firm BLG in Calgary. I was just a first-year associate at the time, a nobody by the world's standards. Ralph, of course, didn't care about that. He took the time to talk with me and even counselled me on my nomination campaign. He even wrote a very, very kind reference. For me, it was like getting hockey tips from Wayne Gretzky. But that was Ralph. He didn't care who you were or what your position was. He just treated you like a long-time friend regardless.

Over the last week I realized that my emotions at Ralph's passing were not just because of how he treated me personally. It was much more than that. I realized that more than any other person it was Ralph who made me proud to be Albertan. It was under Ralph's leadership that our province went from economic slouch to economic powerhouse. We went from crushing debt to being debt free. We went from a place where our children would leave for opportunities elsewhere to becoming a beacon of prosperity, attracting the best and brightest from all over the world. The Alberta advantage was built under Ralph.

But it wasn't just the substance; it was also the style. He wasn't afraid to be different. He wasn't afraid of saying what needed to be said or to do what needed to be done just because it may not have been politically correct. He gave us courage, he gave us swagger, but he also showed us humility and compassion. He made us feel like our province could do anything, and thanks to him I believe we still can.

Many of us believe that after we leave this life for the next, we will be judged by how we treated others, by what we gave, by how we served our fellow man. If this is true, then Ralph Klein today has become a king. Thank you, Ralph, and please keep watching out for us down here.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Several years ago I visited the Dachau concentration camp. It left a profound impression on me, so it is with great empathy, compassion, and humility that I rise today in commemoration of Yom ha-Shoah, also known as Holocaust Memorial Day. Many of us, including you, Mr. Speaker, attended the memorial ceremony today at the Leg.

Each year, in accordance with the Jewish lunar calendar, the global community recognizes and pays tribute to the brave individuals who needlessly lost their lives in one of the worst atrocities of all time, the Holocaust. Over the course of World War II more than 6 million Jewish men, women, and children unjustifiably lost their lives at the hands of an oppressive Nazi regime.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly impossible for anyone to imagine the unfathomable suffering and pain of those who endured this catastrophe, and unfortunately while the emotional scars of those who lived through this genocide may never heal, we as part of the global community must do our part to learn from the tragedies of the past, never allowing them to occur again. Ensuring this, of course, is easier said than done but is essential for the progression of humanity and a peaceful future. We all have a part to play in making our world a better place to live, assisting those who are indefensibly oppressed and discriminated against.

3:10

In saying this, I would like to quote the words of Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor:

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

Keeping in mind the wise words of Mr. Wiesel, let us strive to be stewards of justice and righteousness within our own communities and globally. Lest we forget, may we always keep in our thoughts and prayers those affected by the Holocaust and other mass genocides.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Baroness Margaret Thatcher

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, we mark the passing of a truly remarkable woman, one who, in her rise to lead one of the world's great nations, helped to champion responsible government. Of course, I'm referring to the former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

Because of her indomitable spirit and strong-willed convictions, she earned the moniker of Iron Lady. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Baroness Thatcher served as an exemplar of effective leadership and political vision because of her ability to remain steadfast in the face of adversity. She applied that leadership in her incomparable work and in lending her voice to democratic values and economic freedom. Her vision for the United Kingdom propelled its people to a fresh success and prosperity.

Baroness Thatcher was no stranger to controversy. Such is the nature of uncommonly talented and determined public individuals. It cannot be denied that those who are privileged to have served her, whether directly in the United Kingdom or indirectly throughout the Commonwealth and across the globe, have much to be thankful for.

*The text in italics exceeded the time limit and was not read in the House.

Baroness Thatcher served the people of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, a remarkable 11 years. That decade saw the United Kingdom's GDP increase by over 23 per cent and also saw a period of international upheaval. Because of Baroness Thatcher's strong-willed leadership and sense of purpose the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, indeed the world were able to weather the storm of the transformational period of international relations. Baroness Thatcher's legacy continues to live in today's age. I have every confidence that the Commonwealth will feel the reverberations of one of the U.K.'s most iconic prime ministers well into the future.

I'll read one of her quotes. "Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's [a day] when you had everything to do and you've done it." Mr. Speaker, Margaret Thatcher had a lot to do in her life, and she got it done.

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

FireSmart Program

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the fall of 2012 the regional tri-council of Slave Lake examined the details of a FireSmart plan from the FireSmart Regional Action Team. The goal of the FireSmart plan is to minimize unwanted and harmful effects of wildfire while also recognizing the important ecological role wildfires play in a healthy landscape.

At present FireSmart's plans and accomplishments include vegetation management, also known as fuel modification, equipment purchases as well as some public education. Municipal councillors have received input from constituents expressing concern that certain recovery programs included in the plan have been underfunded and that the \$20 million allocated to FireSmart could be distributed more effectively with more educational promotion of what is occurring with the clear-cutting of all the trees and where the funds are spent and why. It has been suggested that a fruitful alternative method of fire prevention and control could be to implement education and incentive programs for private landowners.

A recent survey of high-risk properties found that only 1 per cent had taken steps to reduce vulnerability to wildfire. A program of education and incentive could help to inform and encourage landowners to undertake fuel reduction on their property in order to prevent the accidental spread of wildfires. The active engagement of private landowners has potential to maximize the efficiency of allocated funds and to ensure the success of FireSmart in protecting communities from property damage.

I am encouraged, however, Mr. Speaker, to know that the discussion on the role FireSmart will play in protecting communities against wildfires is ongoing, and I am confident that a transparent and effective program can be implemented with full education data to help all constituents deal with any devastation.

Thank you.

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

Child Poverty

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. *My Name is Today*: this famous poem powerfully expresses the urgency and importance of providing critical opportunities now for the province's poor children. Ninety-one thousand children, including First Nations, today and each day lose ground in their physical and mental health, learning and behaviour problems, and failure to

reach their potential as a result of this government's failure to invest in our most valuable resource, our children.

One year ago the Premier promised to end child poverty in five years. It's appropriate, then, to ask: what has happened over this past year? What is the plan? How are we progressing on the now four-year plan? The social policy framework, filled with high-sounding principles, shows no sign that it will be backed up with substantial resources. Yes, people in poverty by definition need more resources: resources for basic needs, for school programs, for nonprofit organizations that provide critical support to our most vulnerable. Many plans have been touted over the years without significant resources or substantial results. Rather, we see every indication of increased burdens of mental illness, learning deficits, and social problems as a result of this mean-spirited short-term financial planning.

Let's talk about the facts proposed in the budget: no increase in supports for independence, in fact a 16 per cent cut in relation to employment supports, a further 18 per cent cut in career development skills, over \$80 million in cuts proposed this year. Public education reductions also mean more disadvantaged children will have less chance of success in achieving essential education, social, and life skills. Child care supports: reduced by 7 per cent. Funding to nongovernment organizations reduced, the very organizations that support and enable families and vulnerable children to find stability and a measure of well-being. No increase in FCSS, which provides preventative supports. Far from moving ahead on issues like lunch programs, children and families are not on a livable income.

It's time for the Premier and the Human Services minister to honour their promises and reverse the cuts and provide support for our most vulnerable.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Hon. members, before we proceed on, I wonder if we could just take a moment and extend our collective congratulations to one of our members, who was first elected on this day back in 2002 and went on to be re-elected in '04, '08, and, I believe, in '12. Of course, I would be referring to the Member for Battle River-Wainwright, the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Congratulations.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview or someone on behalf of.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of 50 submissions from Albertans to the Premier which were received by the office of the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. They call on the Premier to honour her government's promise to Albertans not to evict some of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens from their home in Red Deer's Michener Centre.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. My first is from my friend Mr. Ron Theaker on digital solar heat. His company is avidly working on not only bringing in solar and other mechanisms to reduce our greenhouse gas impacts but also on having viable solutions for the Marthas and Henrys out there in Alberta who want to reduce their emissions as well as provide heating to their houses. He's written a very interesting article. He does need some changes from the government to see that this is

incentivized correctly, but in my view it is worth a read, and I have sent a copy to the minister.

My second tabling is from a pharmacist who owns and operates Beacon Pharmacy in my community, Mr. Richard Rego. He's highly concerned about the changes and the nature and scope and the effect they will have on his practice and his ability to provide service to local constituents of Calgary-Buffalo.

My final tabling is from my good friend Ms Dariel Bateman, who has sent me an e-mail in regard to the recent changes to postsecondary institutions in terms of funding as well as, seemingly, the direction of a move to Campus Alberta. In Ms Bateman's view, one that I support, she says that she believes "very strongly that universities do not exist, as their primary function, to be trade schools, and prepare students to be employable and marketable." It is to get them educated.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

3:20

The Speaker: Thank you.

I have Calgary-Mountain View next, but would you mind if we went to the Leader of the Official Opposition quickly? Then we'll come back to you and then Medicine Hat.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made reference to two documents in my questions today. One is a copy of the ad for the \$400,000 ad campaign that the government is doing on pharmacy.

The second is Summary of Changes to the Alberta Drug Benefit List, effective April 1, 2013. I invite all members to take a look at the drugs that are no longer going to be covered as a result of the Health minister's changes to generic drug plans.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Medicine Hat.

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have several tablings: eight citizens expressing deep concern about the closure of the Michener Centre, with the appropriate number of copies; a number of individuals and pharmacists writing with great consternation about the dramatic and poorly planned changes to pharmacy operations in the province; and the appropriate number of copies of a press release from the Alberta Federation of Labour entitled Redford Reneges on Farm Worker Safety, failing to enact any legislation in relation to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling today. It's a letter which I used to present my questions today to the Minister of Health. It was dated April 4, 2013. A copy was sent to the Minister of Health, so I know he has it. Basically, it's commenting on the fact that pharmacies are struggling with the current framework that has been imposed by government and that the changes that they are imposing on pharmacists against what their traditional work used to be are not augmenting or supplementing their income. I have the requisite copies.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others? In that case, it's my pleasure to table pursuant to section 5(1) of the Property Rights Advocate Act five copies of the Property Rights Advocate office annual report.

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. Campbell, Minister of Aboriginal Relations, pursuant to the Metis Settlements Act the Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal annual report 2012.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I believe we have some points of order to deal with, starting with the hon. Member for Airdrie. Please proceed with your citation and your point of order.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we called four on our side. We can split them into two groups if you want for efficiency's sake.

In the first I would refer to Standing Order 23, in particular (h) and (i), which says that members shall be called to order when they make "allegations against another Member," impute "false or unavowed motives to another Member," or (j) use "abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." This is the third time we've stood on this, and we'll stand continually on your initial ruling on this, which was, after a clarification last time, that the matter had been settled.

It's referring to several references on that side to the Leader of the Official Opposition and perhaps others as being climate change deniers. We have been very clear in this Assembly. We've talked about it many times, and you, of course, did find that the matter had been clarified and settled, but I'm always happy to have the opportunity to clarify once again for the other side so that they know that they have an ally on this and that they know that they don't have to continue to cast false and unavowed motives across the way. This is a good exercise in that regard.

I'll repeat for them and make it very clear that our position is and always has been that our province must take responsible action to reduce our CO₂ emissions. Not only does this make good business sense as our largest customers from around the world are demanding that we do so if we want to continue selling our energy to them, but it is important that we cautiously conserve our resources and planet for ourselves and for future generations.

Although there are billions being spent each year researching, of course, how fast the climate is changing, how much of that change is attributable to mankind, and what we can best do to adapt to that climate change – and that's what the member was referring to in the last election, by the way – there is a general agreement that we should do what we can to reduce our human footprint, whether that be less CO₂ emissions, better water conservation, or better land stewardship. It is also quite settled that CO₂ is a greenhouse gas and that pouring millions of tonnes of it into the atmosphere is likely to have an effect on the climate. Granted, we do not yet fully understand what that affect is or how fast it is affecting us – and, frustratingly, there is a lot of conflicting information in this regard – but that doesn't stop the impetus or end the impetus to act.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is now the third time you've said that this is settled, that this is clarified. We all know that calling somebody a climate change denier is a very disparaging term. It's been made a disparaging term. Of course, it alludes to other things, other things that have been denied in the past despite their being in front of us and makes it sound like we're denying that CO₂ is a greenhouse gas or denying that we should decrease our CO₂ footprint. That has never been said on this side, and I'm glad we've been able to clarify that for the members opposite. I would ask that they refrain from, in the future, standing up and calling us

climate change deniers or anything of the like, and we can start debating policy instead of where our positions are on these things.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is always refreshing to hear the hon. member get up and talk about their new position because during the election, of course, it was clear that the quote from the hon. leader was: “We have always said the science isn’t settled and we need to continue to monitor the debate,” from April 16, 2012. From April 19, 2012: “There is still a debate [in the scientific community]. I will continue to watch the debate in the scientific community.”

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that the public of Alberta will want to know that, in fact, the hon. members opposite are onside with this government in trying to assure the world that there is no jurisdiction in the world that is more conscious of its environment than this jurisdiction. We’d like to have them onside with that. We’re pleased that they’re saying that. We’re concerned that they continue to say, taking the advice of a nationally known conservative, that they should not let their true feelings be known because it might embarrass them.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this reminded me of some previous – there are no other speakers to this point of order, are there? Very good.

We’ve dealt with this before. In fact, it was most recently dealt with by my Deputy Speaker on March 20, I believe, where the same allegation was being made and the same factual accuracy points were described, and it’s all to do with use of the term “climate change deniers.” Let me say this. Let’s put an end to that term in this House. It’s had its mileage, and it’s been used on this side to some effect. It’s been used on this side to their effect, and it’s just time to move on and get on with some choice of new words. So let that stand as a ruling on that point for now, and I won’t take up more of the House’s time.

I believe, hon. Member for Airdrie, that actually addresses both the points of order you had with respect to this matter.

Mr. Anderson: With respect to that matter. I have one more.

The Speaker: Okay. Let me see now. We’re moving on to another point of order now. On my list that would be the hon. Member for Airdrie again, please.

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is again the same citation, 23(h), (i), and (j). There was a very . . .

The Speaker: I’m sorry, hon. member. Just in terms of my own protocol here, I have you down as another point of order with the Minister of Energy, but I believe that’s been addressed just now.

Mr. Anderson: That’s right. That has been addressed.

3:30

The Speaker: In that case, I must go to the next point of order, which factually is the leader of the New Democratic opposition. On his behalf the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to seek some clarification on an issue that the Deputy Premier brought up during an exchange between the leader of the New Democrats and

himself. I’m citing the standing orders, section 23(h) and (i) and (j). The Deputy Premier was making comments, and I realize that perhaps he was using a rhetorical flourish in using sort of groups of three to try to aim at all of the opposition here, but in his rhetorical flourish in regard to ourselves, the New Democrats, he I think said something in regard to denying industry. [interjection] Yes. Perhaps he was slipping up on this other card that he was using about carbon or other denials, that he was using before.

The point is that you cannot do so and make these inferences about our policy in regard to the energy industry without, in fact, using some degree of accuracy. We have always been great defenders of our oil and gas industry. Of course, it is the backbone of our economy, where it employs thousands and thousands of people across this province. But we also have made sure that we are stewards of our industry as well and stewards of nonrenewable resources, Mr. Speaker.

The issue that seems to be capturing the attention of the day in regard to our oil and gas industry now, of course, is the export of bitumen across our borders to other jurisdictions, other countries around the world. We have taken a very firm position that we need to ensure that we are upgrading those resources whenever possible to ensure the maximum value of that raw material, to then export that for sale across our country and, indeed, around the world.

This idea of denying industry: I think it’s almost as though when you are trying to pull the wool over one’s eyes, Mr. Speaker, and, in fact, have a policy where you are denying industry, where you are trying to ship the rawest material possible at the cheapest price to another place for them to make that advantage of industry in the United States or in China or wherever that bitumen happens to be upgraded, if you’re trying to perhaps do that, you complain the most loudly about that very thing towards other people.

You can rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that we are very interested in the health of our oil and gas industry, in developing the maximum return for our oil and gas and, in fact, for processing bitumen here in the province of Alberta so that we can take that value-added material and sell it elsewhere across the country and around the world. So this idea of denying industry is completely fabricated. As I say, sometimes you try to yell the loudest when, in fact, you are the one who is guilty of that very same issue.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think perhaps those last comments actually speak the loudest. It’s rather interesting in this House that if you’re on the opposition side asking a question, it’s all right to rephrase government policy in whatever light you might want to make it so that you can raise your question and try and show the government in a bad light, but if government replies and points out some of the inconsistencies in your own policies, in your own direction, in your own speaking, that somehow is a subject that we should debate under standing orders. Actually, clarification of policy can be done outside the House. If people feel that their policies have been mishandled inside the House in a question, I don’t think that’s really a point of order. It could be called a clarification, but it’s really most appropriately called a waste of the House’s time.

What we really should do is recognize the fact – and on all sides of the House perhaps it would be wonderful from a parliamentary perspective – that if the opposition quits twisting government’s policies to make them sound devilish, then government members in responding might quit having to try and respond to that and trying to rephrase what the opposition’s position is.

The Speaker: I don’t see any other speakers.

Let me just go back quickly on this point. At approximately 2:33 p.m. the hon. Minister of Energy said this: “Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s clear this government has a policy of taking direct action to engage citizens, to engage leadership elsewhere. Meanwhile on the other side here we see the NDP is denying industry.” And he goes on. I don’t know what it is that the minister might have thought the NDP was denying industry, but nonetheless that is what he said.

Now, I should also just remind all members that as Speaker we don’t have the power to control what gets said or how it gets said. We are more often in the reactive mode of having to bring members to order if they’ve said something inappropriate that has violated a rule. In fact, if you go to page 510 of I believe it’s *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* it says:

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

So we have it again as we’ve had on many, many occasions. Sometimes we have heard comments about two versions of the same situation having to be accepted by the House because one member saw it one way, another member saw it another, and I think that is probably the case here again.

But I am going to pay even closer attention to how some of the answers are being answered and how some of the questions are being phrased given what both members have just said, one from the ND and one from the government side, because we’ve got to get a higher level than trying to twist each other’s words to suit our particular fancy for that particular day on that particular issue. Surely to heavens we’ve realized that by now. We’re coming up to our first-year anniversary, so I don’t consider anyone to be a rookie anymore. This particular matter is not between rookies – I realize that – but a number of other matters have been on this same point.

Let us move on and get on with some of the other important business of the House, and please be reminded to choose words much more carefully going forward.

The hon. Member for Airdrie on your point of order.

Point of Order

Allocation of Office Space for Members

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate those words.

Under Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j) I’m referring to a comment that was made by the Infrastructure minister. He said something bizarre. Again, lots of things that are said on the other side I do find bizarre, but I don’t rise on a point of order on all of the ones, just the random insults like climate change denier.

In this case there was something that was a little bit troubling, actually. The member accused that the members on this side of the House, the Official Opposition leader were complaining for more space in the office building that we now have. Now, this is troubling for a couple of reasons, Mr. Speaker, and I think you have reason to be concerned about it because I think it’s very inappropriate. First of all, of course, we went from four to 17 seats, so I would assume that there would be more space made available. After every election there is a negotiation that is made between House leaders but also headed up by the Clerk and yourself – and I thought you did a very fair job of it – hearing the

needs of the different caucuses respective of their new sizes after the election. You make a decision, working back and forth with the caucuses, on what space they should have in the space that’s available. If there are concerns, they’re raised with you and so forth, and it goes back and forth.

Now, those discussions, Mr. Speaker, as far as I was under the impression, are confidential, and very few people – obviously, the House leaders are aware of them and, obviously, some people in the LAO and yourself, and of course you would keep that confidence. Very few people know about those discussions, and they should be confidential discussions.

3:40

So not only was what the member said categorically untrue – well, let’s put it this way. Of course we were asking for more office space going from four to 17 members. I guess that goes without saying. But he gave the impression as if we were asking for more than our fair share or something like that. Not only that; he’s breaching, in my view, the confidentiality of a discussion that took place between our side, yourself, House leaders, and staff members and in a very inappropriate way. I think that should be held out of order. I think it is clearly a violation of the rules.

To answer that member’s question, Mr. Speaker, if he would like us to stay in our current offices in the Annex, we would be more than happy to oblige. More than happy to oblige. Take that back to your leader.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I could make a few comments, and then the minister may add if he wishes to. First of all, let it be perfectly clear that the House leader on this side does not engage in discussions with respect to members’ services issues. That’s not the House leader’s purview on this side, and I have not been involved in negotiations with respect to space or anything else with respect to members’ services or the allocation of space to members. I just want to be clear on that.

We do have House leaders’ discussions on issues with respect to the operation of the House, and some of those we do in confidence because it’s necessary for the operation of the House. I have always expressly said, when someone has tried to draw me into the discussions, that issues around members’ salaries, issues around members’ space allocations or offices are not the purview of the Government House Leader. I want no part of that. I feel badly for you that you have to engage in that.

The thing that’s most important in this is that the point of order comes up in terms of, again, attempts by people to misapprehend what actually happens. We have a federal building that’s being redeveloped. That project has been ongoing for years. It’s not a plush building for MLA offices. In fact, as the hon. minister has said, it’s redeveloping an asset of the province of Alberta for appropriate utilization, an asset which uses up a lot of our financial resources every year to maintain, for no good reason as it’s sitting empty, while we have other buildings that are being used and are deteriorating and need refurbishing and cost money.

So a government at one point in time makes a decision to refurbish a federal building, which is an asset of the province, and as part of its allocation to use it as part of the legislative precincts and to use it for offices, a portion of which will be used for offices for MLAs, and the opposition mischaracterizes that consistently as spending \$350 million for plush MLA offices. Then they have the temerity to raise a point of order on that very subject when somebody suggests that they were looking for more space and that space would be in that office.

Now, I understand that the point of order is on the question about whether or not they were looking for more space or weren't looking for more space. I think the hon. member has indicated that, yes, they were looking for more space, but it was for a good reason because they had more members. Fine. I understand that. But to get into this discussion on the federal building, to try and suggest that something has been done to their rights as a member under a point of order relative to this debate when they have constantly used that building inappropriately – they've spent the savings from cancelling that project many, many times when, in fact, there wouldn't be any savings from cancelling that project but, rather, costs. I mean, the temerity is bedazzling.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Well, I, too, would like to clarify a few things. [interjections] Hon. members, if I could have your attention, please. I want to clarify a couple of points, too. The issue that the Member for Airdrie raised about confidentiality I want to talk about very briefly. I'm surprised, hon. member, actually, that you would even bring that into the House, to be honest. I can assure you that everything that I have done and, to my knowledge, that the previous Speaker has done with respect to the Annex and with respect to anything else has always been of the highest degree of confidentiality possible, and the same with the Clerk and the same with any of our LAO officials. So let's just put that to rest in case anybody has any concerns only because of it being raised.

I realize you weren't raising an attack, hon. Member for Airdrie. However, just the fact that we were brought into the discussion, the Clerk and I, through your comments, I wanted to clarify that point on confidentiality. It will always remain that way. That's the pledge that I took, and that's the pledge that I will live and die by if necessary.

Secondly, I want to comment on the issue of the apportioning of the space or assigning of the space in the Annex. That is totally the purview of the Speaker. It has nothing to do with the government unless we need renovations done, in which case I then have to go and speak with the Minister of Infrastructure or someone in power in government to say that we need certain renovations done; we need certain alterations made; we need certain improvements made.

That is why I personally made not less than 32 trips to go and visit the space there before the renovation started, during the renovations, and even after to make sure that they were completed to the satisfaction of the various caucuses. I thank you, hon. Member for Airdrie, for pointing out your satisfaction with how that process worked. I did the same with the NDP and the Liberals for a total, as I say, with the Wildrose of about 32 separate visits. I have all the notes from those meetings. We tried our best to deliver on a process that was inherited both by this Speaker and by others who are in decision-making roles.

So let's be clear that assigning the space is the purview of the Speaker. The building itself, however, is owned by the government and by the citizens of this province.

To the point of order raised in that context, I have here a copy of what I think may have led to the point of order. The Minister of Infrastructure stood up in response to the second part of the question, and he said: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also find it quite surprising that the members opposite last year were complaining about their offices in the Annex, wanting us to spend more money, that they weren't good enough, Mr. Speaker." In fact, that's true. There were a number of members who complained. It wasn't just opposition members. It was also government members who were complaining. That, I suspect, is one major reason why the major initiative to re-engage the federal building started several years ago.

So we have a massive project that is under way, which is for your benefit, hon. members, so that you will be able to better serve the constituents who sent you here, and similarly for LAO officials and others who will be moving into that space. I only wish it could be accelerated because it would put a stop to the calls that I still continue to receive about inadequacies of the Annex. I can tell you that we have done a great deal in the Speaker's office and in the Clerk's office and with his staff to try and address these issues.

While some clarification is always good, I also don't want to take up too much time making that clarification. Suffice it to say that we've had a chance for the Wildrose member to express his opinions on this and for the Government House Leader to express his, and we are going to move on to other issues.

Were there other points of order?

Okay. So let that clarification stand, and we'll move on.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there was one more point of order.

The Speaker: I was just asking: was there another point of order?

Mr. Eggen: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Okay. Then proceed with that, please, quickly.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you.

The Speaker: I don't know what it is, but go ahead.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Maybe it didn't register.

The last point of order, then. I'll be very brief. In the exchange between the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the Deputy Premier in regard to advanced education the member from the New Democrat caucus said that the various stakeholders, including the university governors and the president and the professors and the students and others, were not agreeing or were speaking out against both the mandate letter and the cuts that were being imposed upon advanced education in general, to which the advanced education minister, the Deputy Premier, replied that, in fact, he had received letters from some institutions in Alberta that were supporting these cuts.

You know, I just would like to ask, then, that the advanced education minister table those letters. Since he was making a public reference to documents, he should be in all fairness giving us access to those documents as well.

3:50

The Speaker: Hon. member, I don't know if you had a citation, but that certainly wouldn't be a point of order. I think what you're asking for is that someone table a document referred to during a speech or debate or discussion or questions or answers. Fair enough. This would not be the place to do that, however. Whoever was listening to that on the government side presumably can respond on behalf of whoever uttered it.

Mr. Hancock: I'd be happy to respond right now, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Please do.

Mr. Hancock: If I was quoting from a document, I would be required to table it, but referring to the fact that one exists does not bring any obligation to table.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

The Speaker: All right. Before we move on to Orders of the Day, I want to draw to your attention something that occurred earlier during question period. I believe it was the hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View who quoted from something that had been said outside this House and brought it into this House. I have sent the hon. member a note, and he graciously accepted it.

I would ask you to please visit *Erskine May*, 24th edition, at page 445. In a nutshell it simply says this: "Expressions are still unparliamentary even when based on a quotation from elsewhere." I did the hon. member a favour. I sent him a copy of that for his own review and edification.

What I want to draw to your attention is this. Hon. members, where does the line stop? Where does the line stop in terms of parliamentary language? If we allow such quotations as what was brought up today to repeat themselves, surely we are bringing disrepute to this House and, in turn, to ourselves and to other members.

Now, again, I'm well aware of how question period works on both sides of the House. Been there; done that. I understand that sometimes members are asked to ask questions that sometimes they may feel uncomfortable with. In fact, I sensed a little bit of that in your question, hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View. I sensed it amongst other members as well. Let me tell you this, hon. members. As individuals who have the right to ask questions during question period, put your own conscience to the test before you accept to ask the question. Ask yourself: would this be a question that you would pose to your child in grade 6? Ask yourself that question, and if you can look in the mirror and honestly say, "Yes, child in grade 6, I'm prepared to use the P-word or the F-word or the S-word or some other word to you," and then you have the courage to bring it into this House, you're a far different human being than am I.

I don't want to ever have to give this speech again, hon. members, because I will cut you off at the knees. Let that admonishment stand. I'm being very sincere about it.

I'm going to give the hon. member, since I gave him the courtesy of the quotation from *Erskine May*, an opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Mr. McAllister: Mr. Speaker, thank you. It is good to have you back even when you are admonishing me, sir, but it's justifiable. I think what we often do in here is that we don't admit when we've erred, and we find a way to steer around it. Clearly, I shouldn't have said that. I think my reasoning, while not justifying it, was to draw light to the fact that it shouldn't be said anywhere by anybody at any time. I still know it was not right to say it in here, but I was hopefully, although I was very uncomfortable with it, educating, in my view, some people to make them aware of how certain people conduct themselves.

Again, thank you for sending me the sheet. I will certainly be more aware in the future. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond. You are correct, sir.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I take that to be your apology for what you said. Is that correct?

Mr. McAllister: Yes. Mr. Speaker, again, you were absolutely correct to point it out. As I said, I said it, and I shouldn't have said it. I withdraw it if that's possible. I would have liked to have seen it done publicly as well by the person that initially said it. I think that would have satisfied us all.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, we'll let that matter stand there. Let that be a lesson to all.

Thank you for your humility in responding the way you have, hon. member.

I believe that concludes our Routine for the day.

Motions for Returns

Public Funding for Private Schools

M6. Mr. Hehr moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all government studies on the impact of reducing public funding to private schools.

[Debate adjourned March 18: Mr. Hancock speaking]

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Services, anything that you wish to add?

Mr. Hancock: No, sir.

The Speaker: Then the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo to conclude debate.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, during my time in the House I've asked the government from time to time about the appropriateness of funding private schools in this province. I come from, I guess, a background or a philosophy that sees private schools, although having a right to exist, as not having the corresponding right of having public funding automatically follow that private school choice. In my view, private schools tend to separate and divide children on the basis of a couple of things: wealth, religion, and in some other cases on the basis of ability and/or disability. In my view, government should be funding things that tend to bring people together.

Under the Alberta constitution act of 1905 our government has an obligation to fund our separate school system, our public system, and our francophone system. After that it is a political choice this government has made to prop up private schools in the manner that they do. As an interesting note, Mr. Speaker, we are one of only a handful of provinces that fund private schools. Many provinces do not even allow for any flow-through dollars to private schools if they choose to exist. In my view, we'd be better off going down that path.

On that note, oftentimes government members and others in the community suggest that a reason for private school funding is that it is, quote, unquote, a cost savings. They state that because we only fund private schools at 70 per cent of the per-pupil rate that we fund our public school system and there are also not some capital costs that are allowed in this process, it's a savings. Now, frankly, I don't think savings are the reason to do something, especially in this instance. In fact, you know, I believe it's not an argument in and of itself. In my view, if it was an increased expense to have all these private-school children come back to the public system, I believe our society would be better off in the fact that we'd have all children learning together regardless of things like wealth and religion. Or if they made their own choice to go to a private school, their parents would pay the full freight of that. But there's no need for us to encourage that.

It's one of those things where I always question the logic of many members of this House who say immediately: well, the reason why we allow this is because of cost savings. I don't necessarily know if that's true. You know, for instance, who says that if we cut off funding to private schools, 100 per cent of those

students will simply return to the public system? In my view, that's not what's going to happen. In fact, I don't see that happening at all.

Let's return to the concept of dividing children on wealth. It will augment my argument on this. You have many schools out there in Alberta, many in Calgary – Strathcona-Tweedsmuir, West Island College, Webber Academy; go down the list – that charge a tuition fee of \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the privilege of attending these schools. Not to say anything about the fact that the average Martha and Henry cannot send their kids to those schools, why would we, in fact, fund them if they're not open to all Albertans to attend, again separating people on wealth? I'd also point out that the average income of parents of the students going to West Island College is over \$280,000 per year. You know, if you take a look at it, those children are not going to return to the public system merely by cutting off the funding that we give to them. So the point is . . . [Mr. Hehr's speaking time expired] I was getting to the point. I'd like that information.

4:00

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Unfortunately, the time has elapsed, and I'm compelled to call the question.

[Motion for a Return 6 lost]

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

The Speaker: Hon. members, I rise just to provide a very brief reminder on the order for private members' bills today. Earlier this session and as the chair advised the Assembly on November 26, 2012, from *Hansard* at pages 1003, 1004,

the chair received a request from the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park requesting early consideration of his private member's bill, Bill 201, for third reading immediately following Committee of the Whole . . . There are still 74 minutes remaining for consideration of [Bill 201] in Committee of the Whole [but] before Committee of the Whole is called, the House must first conclude second reading debate on Bill 202, of which 23 minutes still remain.

Now, if there is any available time remaining for private members' bills this afternoon, then further to the request by the hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park the House will proceed to third reading of Bill 201. If there is no time remaining following the bill being reported from Committee of the Whole, then Standing Order 8 requires that third reading of Bill 201 be called first next Monday.

Bill 202 Public Lands (Grasslands Preservation) Amendment Act, 2012

[Debate adjourned November 5]

The Speaker: Who is up? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take an opportunity to speak to this. We had a chance one other time. I was approaching the end of the period, so I declined. It's an honour to speak to this bill and primarily because some portions of the bill specifically are addressed to the special areas, which are a great part of my constituency, and are causing great consternation amongst the constituents of that constituency and of the special areas.

We've seen this government make many ill-informed and rash

decisions regarding land-use regulation, and this is causing my constituents a lot of lost sleep and further red tape and regulation. Legislation like Bill 36, the Land Stewardship Act, centralized decision-making on land-use planning, and this continues to be another example of more of this regulation that's being brought forward. I've spoken to the member bringing the legislation forward, and I believe that he brings it forward with good intention, but it's brought forward in a fashion that seems to be heavy handed to the residents of the area and would reduce our competitive advantage.

Under Bill 202 individuals and firms must now wait for the government to clear more red tape, and it is unclear how the bill will create any increased oversight over the management of our grasslands or improve the environment. In fact, the member bringing the bill forward did meet with people of the special areas, and their consternation was expressed directly to the member. There is already proper grassland/rangeland management in the area, and this is already being self-motivated by the ranchers, who have been stewards of this property for many years, both leased land and private deeded land in the area.

My family, Mr. Speaker, is also one of those families who has managed this grassland and this private property for generations. I'm one of the third generation of that area. There is sustainable range management of these Crown grazing leases in place. I and the members of the area believe the people of the area, the lessees and the owners of the titled land, are handling it properly.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The bill in its current format is an amendment to the Public Lands Act that adds a section concerning dispositions and grants of Crown lands south of highway 16, including areas specified in the Special Areas Act. Personally, I am unclear exactly how the governance of this bill could possibly work, especially in the areas already identified under the Special Areas Act. This would create a more convoluted system of governance.

Within Bill 202 we see that the definitions of the terms "grass" and "significant wildlife habitat" are rather vague and open to a great number of interpretations, therefore leading to definitions that may be brought forward not by policy but by regulation, Mr. Speaker. How can we be sure that ranchers are not going to be unnecessarily affected by overzealous bureaucrats who don't understand the lighter footprint of grazing? That is creating some of the consternation that's been brought forward to the member.

If the intended goal of this bill was to make a long-term plan to ensure we don't sell too much grassland to be turned into cropland, that would be fine, but this is a whole new set of hoops that ranchers and energy companies will have to jump through for their businesses, and the government has provided no evidence that the grasslands are even being degraded under the current system. That's a concern that we have, and the constituents of the area have a concern on that.

It's important, in my opinion and in those of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, that we don't need new laws for the sake of simply having new laws. I believe my constituents believe that is the case. Landowners adjacent to Crown land who perhaps rely on grazing leases as part of the value of the ranches will see their operations devalued as a result of this step. Now, we understand that there is good intention – and I brought that forward before – but that is not the case. Some of these residents have even taken the drastic step of selling and disposing of their lease land prior to the potential invocation of bills like this.

Like the aforementioned Bill 36, Bill 202 gives cabinet sweeping new powers on how to define criteria for wildlife

habitat. Giving cabinet this type of power is wrong, and it eliminates the need for cabinet to consult with the businesses, landowners, and ranchers who could be impacted by any decision. It's not clear who will be footing the bill for all this added monitoring and study that will go into the assessments of our grasslands, grasslands that Alberta ranchers have done for a number of years, more than a hundred.

Ultimately, this bill, my constituents and many in the area believe, is an unnecessary new law that will only add new burdens on Alberta businesses and will do little to improve the Alberta environment and will create a convoluted system of governance. Mr. Speaker, I stand therefore with my opinion and do not support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise, in fact, to support this private member's bill, and I thank very much the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill for bringing it forward. I think it's an idea whose time has come, and in fact I think it has a unique opportunity to not only protect a valuable part of our Alberta natural heritage but also to protect the use of this land through agriculture and other means as well. It strikes a nice balance. You know, it's looking at something that's perhaps the least protected of our natural land here in the province of Alberta.

This is an amendment, Mr. Speaker, to the Public Lands Act, and it does require a wildlife habitat assessment to be completed prior to the disposition of a grant of public grasslands. Then if this assessment determines that the public grassland contains significant wildlife habitat, no disposition of the grants shall be made. As a condition of the grant the purchaser transfers privately owned grassland to the Crown.

4:10

You know, we do do several assessments by the provincial government before any sale, but at this time, Mr. Speaker, there are not any requirements for making the assessment public or for receiving public input. This bill seeks to require these assessments to be put through a 90-day public consultation period. It seems like a good idea, and in fact we have determined that we do support the concept, and we wish that we will see everyone, or at least the majority, agreeing with that as much as possible.

The bill gives cabinet the authority to make regulations establishing this criteria for determining whether a wildlife habitat is deemed to be a significant wildlife habitat and also gives cabinet the authority to determine the manner in which an assessment is done. Therefore, we don't perhaps know what meaning or force will be given to the term "significant wildlife habitat," but, you know, this bill is politically, I think, very interesting and gives us a chance to determine what that definition might in fact be.

Two things I would like to highlight. First of all, I find it a bit funny why there's not unanimity amongst the government on this particular private bill. You know, I don't see why they don't see the need for wildlife assessment reports to determine if a section of public grasslands contains significant wildlife habitat. It's not as though we are asking for the world here; it's just simply a sober second look at potentially a significant habitat for grasslands. I just wonder if denying public consultation and public access to government information is, in fact, sound and transparent public policy. I find that to be a bit disturbing as well. It's not as though we're getting in the way of the established process by which this land is used, but it's just a question of being able to look at it and have that transparency available to the public.

I thank the member for bringing this forward. It's a modest

proposal, I would dare say. In fact, it gives us an opportunity to protect rare and vanishing natural lands without necessarily putting a big fence around it and saying that we're not going to use this land, just to have appropriate stewardship and transparency to ensure that the land is being used in a reasonable sort of way.

Some of these grassland areas are some of the most beautiful and wild places we have in this province. I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that these lands do help to define not just the ecosystem of the grasslands but part of the character of our province as a whole. The vast open spaces and the potential that those spaces do create in the imaginations of people who live there and visit these places I think is partially why we should have greater degrees of preservation available to our natural prairie. Many other places across the Great Plains, which extend through Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba right down through the central and western United States, have been altered forever. This opportunity for us to preserve part of that heritage that we have jurisdiction over is not only prudent but responsible and the right thing to do.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, I noticed that you rose, but you have already spoken, so I have to recognize another member that hasn't spoken. You can't speak again. This is still second reading. You've already spoken once, so you'll have to wait for the next process on the bill.

Are there others that would like to speak? Seeing none, I'll recognize the mover, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill, to close debate.

Dr. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank those members who contributed to the debate today and also so many months ago. I would like to respond to some specific comments of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, both of whom inferred that Bill 202 would in some way affect the way that public lands are managed. This inference is false. The bill would only come into play when public grasslands are proposed to be sold. It would have no impact on the ongoing management of grazing leases or permits. The amendments which I tabled made that abundantly clear.

Bill 202 would recognize the important role of grazing leaseholders in maintaining the integrity of native grasslands. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition also apparently misheard me in reference to poorly managed grasslands. I never inferred that grazing leaseholders badly manage the land. In fact, what I referred to was some grasslands which have been made into parks and which don't have the benefit of any intervention of grazing and therefore have suffered habitat deterioration as a result. I am in fact a strong supporter of the management program which has been put in place for the new Glenbow Ranch provincial park, which incorporates cattle grazing as a key tool in preserving the native grasslands. I would argue that the long-term grazing lease makes it imperative that the grazing leaseholders take good care of the range as it's in their interest to do so.

Mr. Speaker, a number of members suggested that Bill 202 is redundant to the existing practices and it wasn't required to protect sensitive public grasslands. However, I would ask: if it was redundant, then why weren't the three assessments done for the government on the so-called Potatogate lands near Bow Island made public? All three of those assessments found that 16,000 acres of Crown grassland proposed for sale were environmentally sensitive and contained important wildlife habitat. Their recommendations

were that the land not be sold and it be retained as a grazing reserve, yet the best objective assessments and scientific advice were all ignored, advice which was only made public after the fact under freedom of information and a request thereunder.

The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition says that her party would be in support of closing the loopholes to prevent another Potatogate situation arising again, and I would suggest that Bill 202 will go a long way to doing just that.

On the issue of redundancy I'd also note that the regional advisory committee for the South Saskatchewan regional plan has recommended that the province retain in public ownership those Crown native grasslands which are environmentally significant or which contain significant wildlife habitat, and that is exactly what Bill 202 would encourage.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature who are not members of Executive Council are properly known as private members, of which I am one. As elected private members we have certain parliamentary privileges which are not available to those on Executive Council, who technically form the government of Alberta. Those privileges include the right to criticize the government, to hold the government to account, to ask questions of the cabinet during question period, and to sit on all-party committees of the Legislature. One of the most important privileges that we have is the privilege of bringing before the House for public debate motions or bills. Only a few win the lottery. I'm thankful for the opportunity to finally be able to debate my first bill after eight years in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the process for the sale of public land and particularly of our disappearing native grasslands is presently inadequate. It needs to be improved. I believe that there needs to be better transparency and better accountability to the citizens of Alberta when our public grasslands are proposed for sale. Bill 202 would do that. So I ask those members who support transparency and accountability in government to support Bill 202.

I'm under no illusions as to the prospects of success. However, regardless of the outcome of the vote on second reading, it's my sincere hope that Bill 202 will have made members of the Assembly and the public at large more aware of the need to preserve our publicly owned native grasslands as a precious yet vanishing part of Alberta's landscape and of the need to modernize and improve the process for the sale of public lands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for second reading lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:20 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

| | | |
|--------|---------|--------|
| Anglin | Donovan | Swann |
| Brown | Eggen | Wilson |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|----------|-------------|----------|
| Allen | Griffiths | Pedersen |
| Barnes | Hancock | Quadri |
| Bhardwaj | Horner | Quest |
| Bikman | Jeneroux | Rowe |
| Cao | Johnson, J. | Sarich |
| Casey | Johnson, L. | Saskiw |
| Denis | Kubinec | Scott |

| | | |
|----------|------------|--------------|
| Dorward | Lemke | Starke |
| Drysdale | Luan | Stier |
| Fawcett | McAllister | Strankman |
| Fenske | McDonald | Towle |
| Fox | Oberle | Weadick |
| Fraser | Olesen | Xiao |
| Goudreau | Olson | Young |
| Totals: | For – 6 | Against – 42 |

[Motion for second reading of Bill 202 lost]

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Rogers in the chair]

Bill 201 Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act

The Chair: Hon. members, there are a total of 74 minutes of debate remaining in committee. Amendment A2 is on the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A2 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:34 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mr. Rogers in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, we have a division on the vote on amendment A2. Just for the record and maybe for your recollection, amendment A2 was moved November 19, 2012, and it has two parts. In part A section 3 is amended by striking out subsections (5) and (6), and in part B section 8 is amended by striking out clause (e). That is the substance of amendment A2, on which we do have a division.

For the motion:

| | | |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| Anderson | Eggen | Saskiw |
| Anglin | Fox | Stier |
| Barnes | McAllister | Strankman |
| Bikman | Pedersen | Towle |
| Donovan | Rowe | Wilson |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Allen | Hancock | Pastoor |
| Bhardwaj | Horner | Quadri |
| Brown | Jeneroux | Quest |
| Cao | Johnson, J. | Sandhu |
| Casey | Johnson, L. | Sarich |
| Denis | Khan | Scott |
| Dorward | Kubinec | Starke |
| Drysdale | Lemke | Swann |
| Fawcett | Luan | VanderBurg |
| Fenske | McDonald | Weadick |
| Fraser | Oberle | Xiao |
| Goudreau | Olesen | Young |
| Griffiths | Olson | |

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------------|
| Totals: | For – 15 | Against – 38 |
|---------|----------|--------------|

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: Now we're back to the main bill. Are there other speakers? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Centre I'd like to present an amendment to Bill 201, and I can circulate it.

The Chair: The pages will circulate that. We'll just pause for a couple of minutes to get that in the hands of the members, hon. member.

This will be amendment A3.

Hon. member, you might as well start speaking to it. I'm sure the members will catch up with the reading.

Dr. Swann: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre was very passionate about the need for a term limit for this information to be made public on these individuals who are involved with the scrap metal industry and providing the materials for sale, that there should be a term limit on this rather important personal information that will now be made public. I'll read it as it's worded.

Ms Blakeman to move that Bill 201, Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act, be amended in section 3 by striking out subsection (4) and substituting the following:

(4) A scrap metal dealer or recycler shall maintain the prescribed information obtained pursuant to the section for a period not to exceed one year after the transaction.

This is intended to protect the confidentiality of individuals who have given their personal information and, therefore, not make it available for an undue period of time in which their privacy might be breached and other nefarious uses made of private information. The Member for Edmonton-Centre is particularly concerned about privacy and feels this is an unnecessary intrusion and a potential risk to people's individual privacy and personal protection. So that's the basis for this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is there anyone that would like to speak to the amendment? I'll recognize the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Member for Edmonton-Centre for bringing this forward. I've had some discussions with law enforcement about this and about what they really need and what they don't need. I think that in the interest of protecting the private information of individuals, this bill will still do what it's intended to do with this one-year restriction. So I'll be supporting this amendment, and I would encourage all members to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4:50

The Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others that want to speak to the amendment? The Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to clarify. In your remarks there you said that the information was public. It isn't public. It's restricted to certain people. I certainly support your amendment, but it is not public information. I just want to clarify that. It's for restricted users of that data, which includes the metal recyclers and law enforcement themselves.

The Chair: Are there others? I'll recognize the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Denis: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just very briefly, I will be

supporting this amendment. I just wanted to get it on the record that this amendment only deals with the scrap metal dealers and recyclers, which would restrict them to one year for keeping that information. In the event that there is a prosecution, it would be handed over to the police and the Crown prosecutors. That would not apply to them.

The Chair: Thank you. Are there others?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on amendment A3.

[Motion on amendment A3 carried]

The Chair: Back to the bill as amended. Are there other speakers on the bill?

Seeing none, would you like to close debate, hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, or would you just like to call the question?

Mr. Quest: I think we should just call the question, Mr. Chair.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 201 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? So ordered.

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Chairman, I'd move that the committee rise and report Bill 201.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 201. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Concur.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 201 Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act

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

Mr. Quest: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members for your support for this bill to this point. It has been a very long journey for Bill 201, and I think that in the interests of keeping that journey as short as possible, I would like you to call the question for third reading of Bill 201.

[Motion carried; Bill 201 read a third time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the time it wouldn't be prudent to move on to another bill at this time, so I would ask for unanimous consent to call it 5 o'clock and move on to motions.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Motions Other than Government Motions

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-MacLeod.

Alberta Land Stewardship Act

507. Mr. Stier moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to introduce legislation to repeal the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, formerly known as Bill 36, and replace it with a land-use framework that better protects the rights of landowners and respects the role of locally elected and accountable municipal councils.

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon, everyone. In 2009 the government of Alberta passed the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, formerly known as Bill 36, and then the floodgates opened. North, south, east, and west, Albertans were furious with this government's implementation of an eastern European style of central planning model, the assault on property rights, and the throwing overboard of the rule of law. Property rights, the rule of law, and respect for local land-use decision-making are the bedrock upon which Alberta's economy and communities are based. Bill 36 attacked them all.

Property rights and limits on the power of government, which constitute the rule of law, predate the founding of this province, going back some 800 years in the foundational document the Magna Carta. Albertans were rightly alarmed at the sudden shift to be taken by this government and its willingness to disregard our common heritage, the foundations of our market-driven economy and, at the same time, the government's failure to provide an effective model for land-use planning.

The government knew it had to do something to calm the waters, so in 2011 it drafted and passed Bill 10, which amended some of the more egregious sections of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act but left the worst sections and the central planning model intact. Bill 10 did not provide comfort to landowners across the province, who know, as historians and economists do, that central planning does not work, nor do government laws that assault property rights and the rule of law. With the lower Athabasca regional plan having already been approved, the south Saskatchewan regional plan is in progress and is poised to affect even more Albertans as there is far more private land in the south.

Today I'm proposing Motion 507, therefore, to repeal the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and develop a new and more effective – and I stress that – and respectful land-use planning approach for the province. I respectfully ask the Assembly to hear the reasoning for this motion and to please vote in favour.

The government has wasted significant tax dollars on the Land Stewardship Act, and it is understandable that the government will feel it needs to resist changing course. But when you make a mistake, the right thing to do is to fix it. As I will demonstrate today, repealing the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and replacing it with a more effective and respectful land-use plan is critical to avoid the economic harm that will result from this central

planning model and for regaining the trust of rural Albertans, resource industries, municipalities, environmentally concerned citizens, and the province as a whole.

When it passed, Bill 36 ended landowners' and resource companies' rights to have access to the courts to challenge government decisions that affected their legal rights and economic interests. The act explicitly denied compensation when cabinet decides to rescind water licences, gravel permits, feedlot approvals, environmental approvals, and other statutory consents that are essential for farmers and businesses to operate in our economy. Because they classify the decisions made in their regional plans as policy, there is no right to appeal the decisions that they can make to the courts.

Bill 10 removed the legal wording that said that cabinet could extinguish land titles, but it did nothing to change the top-down central planning philosophy nor the provisions which assault property rights and the rule of law. In short, Albertans are still left, therefore, with legislation which essentially robs them of access to appeal to the courts and of their traditional rights as landowners and resource users.

The Land Stewardship Act even as amended by Bill 10 not only pushes municipal authorities aside; it utterly undermines their authority and local democracy. Not only does it direct municipal councils to rewrite their bylaws to suit the minister's whims; it makes provisions for the minister to withhold monetary transfers to municipalities or to rewrite their municipal bylaws directly if the cabinet is not satisfied that the municipal council has complied with cabinet's edicts.

This sure sounds like bullying to me, not responsible government or responsible land-use planning. It shows the kind of disdain this government has for local decision-making and raises the question of why this government has so suddenly turned its back on the traditional values of this province and the foundational principles of our market economy.

Motion 507, though, will treat councils as partners and enable them to act in the best interests of their constituents. In 2011 the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties released a report on the impacts of forced regionalization which defines forced regionalization as "any form of regionalization that is not voluntary and where the explicit or implicit threat of imposed regionalization exists." This government's central planning model and the regional plans through which cabinet will be imposing its will on all Albertans and their local governments are certainly not voluntary and are being imposed on municipalities and their residents from above.

5:00

Motion 507 would reinstate local decision-making, protect municipalities from the whims and edicts of cabinet's forced regionalization, and take away the threat of withholding funding if a local decision does not conform to a provincial dictate. Certainly, every MLA in this Assembly knows their local councils would be happy to have their land-use planning powers and local democracy restored.

As written, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act causes economic uncertainty. The government of Alberta rescinded 19 oil sands leases in the lower Athabasca regional plan. Investors and industries need to trust that the government won't suddenly reverse course and confiscate their land or rescind leases after these companies have spent their time and money developing projects in Alberta. Bill 36 gave cabinet new powers to rescind without cause the licences and permits that make our economic wheels turn; for instance, pipeline permits, oil refinery approvals, coal mine permits, oil sands leases, timber licences, forest

management agreements, grazing leases, gravel extraction permits, mineral leases. The list goes on.

Previously, forestry companies, investors, and bankers could reduce their investment risk with the knowledge that the Forests Act limited the circumstances in which government could cancel or rescind a timber permit, licence, or forest management agreement. As the report from the Alberta Landowners Council into the economic impacts of Bill 36 indicates, the Forests Act “allowed investment . . . to take place with a reasonable degree of certainty that there was security of tenure in the timber harvest rights and that the timber harvest rights were enforceable and had value.” Now cabinet doesn’t have to abide by the Forests Act in the sense that there are prescribed situations in which permits can be rescinded. This power to rescind extends to every sector of the economy, whether it is permits, grazing lands, or oil production. It’s easy to see how this could cause some of our economic movers in Alberta to be very concerned, therefore.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, before Bill 36 Albertans enjoyed traditional property rights that prevented government from overpowering and bullying landowners without recourse to the courts and full and fair compensation. The Alberta farmers and ranchers and business owners became world leaders in their different industries based on those age-old understandings that their property rights would be protected. Bill 36 has not only threatened their rights; it has put the Alberta economy at risk by undermining the historic understanding our producers have had with government. This type of centralized decision-making has made it extremely difficult for landowners to invest in their property with any confidence.

Motion 507 would repeal Bill 36 and propose the development of an alternative land-use planning model that respects local autonomy, protects property rights, safeguards the environment, and rewards regional co-operation. Land-use planning by locally elected municipal officials and voluntary co-operation between communities is a very healthy practice and will be encouraged by Motion 507.

In the report mentioned earlier, the Association of Municipal Districts and Counties recommends co-operative regionalization, defined as voluntary participation of municipalities. Co-operative regionalization recognizes the political autonomy of municipalities and their right to remain independent. Motion 507 supports that concept. It’s time to end the economic uncertainty caused by the Land Stewardship Act and to move forward with a real plan for responsible land-use planning that will safeguard our environment without harming the economy. Motion 507 is a step in the right direction, and I urge all members of this Assembly to support this motion. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I’ll recognize the hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say thank you to the Member for Livingstone-Macleod for bringing this motion. I want to just make a few comments specifically to some histories that have been said across the floor here. It appears that there have been a lot of cases where people get really upset with politicians that say one thing and do another, especially during election time.

I remember that back a few years ago, on May 14, 2009, the Member for Airdrie spoke at length in this House and in the media in support of the Land Stewardship Act. He’s saying now that he’s changed his mind. I can accept the fact that he’s changed his mind. That’s fine. I viewed something on YouTube, though, that’s got over 1,500 hits, so it is a bit of a hit.

Even more questionable, though, is that the Member for Livingstone-Macleod’s first motion as a private member is to repeal the Land Stewardship Act when in his constituency he did make a few comments on April 14, not even a year ago. In fact, he said that there are wonderful things in the new Land Stewardship Act and that it, quote, reflects the thoughts of all people who worked hard on this document since 2006 and that the Land Stewardship Act does, quote, wonderful things that protect clean air, clean water, clean land, and all great and wonderful things. I’m not sure if he has changed his mind from that, but those were his comments on April 14, 2012.

Now, of course, today, Mr. Speaker, he wants to repeal the Land Stewardship Act in its entirety. What we see from this opposition is: saying something to one crowd, and then saying something else to another audience. This has been very prevalent on the whole issue of property rights, which they seem to care about so much, and I take them at their word on that. I have to wonder why the Wildrose continues to flip-flop, to say one thing, then say another in terms of property rights. Is it a hidden agenda? Is the fact that we just can’t trust this opposition?

Just last week the Leader of the Opposition was quoted in the *Bow Island Commentator* – and I do have family in Bow Island – saying that the government needs to restore compensation and the right of appeal of landowners. Well, Mr. Speaker, we’ve never taken it away, and we never will.

The fact of the matter is that the Wildrose scare campaign has been very profitable for them. I’m not quoting myself here. I’m quoting from the *Edmonton Journal*, August 14, 2011, page A3, in which the Leader of the Opposition indicates that “her party contributed \$15,000 to the group that supports [Keith] Wilson, Landowners Against Bills,” to help them with costs. Isn’t that interesting, Mr. Speaker? Of course, I’ll table those documents tomorrow.

Now, according to the documents submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer, the Wildrose received thousands of dollars in return from individuals involved in these groups. While this government was listening to real concerns of landowners, Mr. Speaker, which include access to water, preservation of agricultural lands, ensuring fair and timely compensation for any expropriation, the opposition was out on a wild tour raking in money from hard-working landowners.

The good news is that despite the opposition’s fearmongering on things that are not true, Alberta and Canada are internationally recognized for their strong property rights protection. It was made evident in an independent report by the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, a group not associated with this government, fully independent. The Frontier Centre for Public Policy along with the international Property Rights Alliance released in 2012 the international property rights index, which ranked all countries based on three areas: the legal and political environment as it relates to judicial independence, rule of law, political stability, and degree of corruption; physical property rights; and intellectual property rights. This study concluded that Canada is the highest-ranking country in the western hemisphere and is seen as a model of stability in terms of property rights.

The Frontier Centre also measures property rights protection at the provincial and territorial levels. It released on March 14 of this year, Mr. Speaker, a Canadian property rights index. Its conclusion was very positive for Alberta and Alberta property rights owners. It ranked Alberta as having the second-strongest property rights among the provinces, second only to Nova Scotia.

Even more interesting is how we ranked in terms of expropriation of property. As the Wildrose is scaring landowners into believing that their land will be confiscated like in a

communist country, independent reports determine quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. Alberta ranked number one in terms of rights of landowners during expropriation. This is something we can be proud of. That is because this government recognizes and guarantees through legislative means that when there is any expropriation of land for public processes, landowners are fairly compensated for their loss. This is of particular interest to me, of course, because I have represented in my past life a property rights organization, which I won't name because it's inappropriate to name past clients.

In fact, the Expropriation Act, which governs expropriation of land in Alberta, guarantees compensation for expropriated land. It would be beneficial for the so-called lawyers across the way to learn how to read legislation and understand that they can't pull one line out from one piece of legislation and use it simply as a fundraising ploy, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act I would suggest that the Member for Livingstone-Macleod has a lot of explaining to do to his constituents. I would suggest that the least he could do is apologize for telling his constituents one thing when running for MLA and then standing in the House today and saying something else. Perhaps he's changed his mind like the Member for Airdrie. Everybody changes their mind now and then, but the least they can do is to just indicate that they've changed their mind.

It's time the opposition gets real and starts being honest with Albertans, starts advocating for real property rights, and helps us ensure that we continue to enjoy the best property rights not only in Canada, Mr. Speaker, but in the western world.

Thank you.

5:10

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes, you know, you just can't get it right. You end up getting it from both sides. While we have the Official Opposition here with some concerns in regard to the Land Stewardship Act in regard to property rights, I would say as well that there are serious, grievous problems with the Land Stewardship Act in regard to environmental protection and being able to make a defence of different pieces of land in different areas in regard to environmental breaches.

This government goes out of their way to make it so easy for industry and for individuals to use land. Without proper environmental consultation this Land Stewardship Act just exacerbates this problem and causes more problems in regard to our ability to defend the environment and to have a proper environmental assessment, which not only affects the land but also affects how we are perceived sometimes internationally when we're trying to make energy deals and so forth. I certainly do support motion 507, and I thank the member for bringing it forward.

You know, sometimes you're going to get it both ways, Mr. Speaker. You're going to get it from the right, and you're going to get it from left, and in between you're going to get squeezed just like a pimple. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency, and Transformation.

Mr. Scott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise today to speak to Motion 507, the goal of which is to urge the government to introduce legislation that would repeal the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, formerly known as Bill 36. This motion proposes that the government replace the act with a land-use framework, that the hon. member believes would better

protect the rights of landowners as well as the rights of municipal bodies.

I feel the need to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that the proposed motion would not accomplish this goal. This is because we live in a province that leads the country as well as North America in protecting property rights. The access to courts and the right to compensation available to Alberta property owners is unmatched. No other jurisdiction in Canada enshrines and protects property rights to the extent that Alberta does, and this protection is connected to the great economic success we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy. It has helped us to open new markets and build meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with many individuals, businesses, provinces, countries, and organizations.

Because this government puts building Alberta at the forefront of its priorities, it is engaged in rigorous consultations with Albertans in order to tailor property rights protection to the needs of landowners. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act, that the hon. member would have the government repeal, was shaped by these consultations. The act as it currently stands is a product of Albertans, their input and their needs.

It is important that this House understand the process behind the consultations which have made Alberta such a bastion of property rights. Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act is the authority for regional plans for each of the seven regions identified in the land-use framework. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act creates conservation and stewardship tools to protect natural heritage sites and landscapes. It also includes related amendments to more than 25 legislative acts to support regional planning in the province. Section 5 of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act states that before a regional plan is made or amended, the minister must ensure that appropriate public consultation is carried out and that the findings of such consultations must be provided in a report to the Executive Council.

The Alberta Land Stewardship Act's effectiveness at protecting and upholding the property rights of Albertans is attributable to this government's three-part commitment to consultations, an explicit compensation model, and access to the courts for all property owners. This government has taken action in all three of these areas.

A Property Rights Task Force was established on November 24, 2011. The objective of this task force was to consult with Albertans on the approach that they would like to see taken regarding property rights in our province. Stakeholder meetings took place throughout December 2011, with open houses taking place in various communities throughout January 2012. Ten province-wide community sessions were held. All of these sessions were open to the public so as to encourage stakeholders to attend and make their needs and concerns known. Over a thousand people attended these meetings, yielding invaluable input.

Two other key stakeholder meetings were also held, one of which was in Leduc, the other in Airdrie. At these two meetings 26 key stakeholders were able to provide crucial insight into the issues surrounding property rights. These consultations reflect this government's intention to continue to be consistent, predictable, and timely in this process, as we always have been. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, the process of engaging in these consultations meant that the voices of Albertans were heard loud and clear by this government. The long-term results will be invaluable as well.

Because Alberta is the most steadfast protector of property rights in Canada, we have been able to leverage this reputation to encourage investment and expand our markets as businesses and

new residents flock to the province. This tradition of reliable consultations has been integral to building Alberta, and it is something we are committed to continuing well into the future. From this, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Alberta Land Stewardship Act is based upon meaningful consultations and the will of Albertans. It is even more clear that property rights in Alberta are protected to an unrivaled degree.

For these reasons, I cannot support this motion, and I urge all hon. members to follow suit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Member for Calgary-Mountain View, did you wish to speak?

Dr. Swann: Yes. I'll make a few brief comments, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to this motion. I think we've made some progress in this province in relation to some land-use planning. It's not a perfect document, Bill 36. I was involved in debating it. There are some areas that could be strengthened in terms of an appeal process and a clear public compensation review. But, to me, it is going to ensure that we have some kind of larger plan for this province and that we are not going to have continued conflicts over activities, the abuse of agricultural land when it's bought up for other industries and paved over without a long-term plan that actually protects agricultural land, protects conservation areas, and ensures that we manage our water and our transportation corridors in a responsible way.

It's at least progress. I see this not as a perfect bill, but it's progress. There are checks and balances on how government can impose these plans, plans which, by the way, in the different river systems are thoughtfully debated and discussed by residents and constituents. I would very much hate to see all the good work and the planning that has gone in across this province thrown out. It is an essential part of a provincial government's responsibility to help us set some limits, set some parameters around how we're going to develop this province, how we're going to protect those particular areas that need protecting, allow industry in certain areas, ensure that we have species protection in some of the areas with ecosystem protection.

Already there is a scramble for development on some of these lands because there is no designated plan. We are going to see even more potential destruction of limited habitat and failure to protect conservation areas, failure to protect animal habitat because of the stalemate. This has been stalled for three years. It's time to move forward, provide some support for this land-use framework, and, yes, challenge some of the checks and balances that need to be strengthened.

Do not throw out this whole bill, which has gone through a lot of important processes, debates, and support out in some of the regions of the province where people have already developed land-use plans that are at least going to move us a step forward from the free-for-all. A free-for-all is what we've had in this province for decades. It cannot continue. As soon as possible we have to implement the land-use framework, and this is not going to bode well if we make any attempts to repeal it.

I will not be supporting this motion.

5:20

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of Motion 507 for a number of reasons. First of all, back to the beginning: the importance of property rights. I read somewhere where it stated that property rights is where individuals' rights and responsibilities begin and society's and government's rights end,

the opportunity to know clearly where government can be involved, should be involved, and is not welcome to be involved and also on the value of property rights, past just real property, from the economic advantage.

I spoke in this House in the past about some of the fifth- and sixth-generation ranchers in my constituency that have been tremendous stewards of the land, on lease land and on deeded land, for many, many generations. I spoke about how the value can be accrued and increased from situations where different types of leases, different types of property rights accrue and can be sold. I spoke of how Walmart bought some leases from Target and Zellers for over a billion dollars, that as a society we were able to tax and applaud these individuals building their wealth.

I also want to talk about how it touches on the Alberta advantage. The importance of property rights, the importance of being a clear jurisdiction with the best property rights, can go a long, long way. We're very, very blessed in Alberta with our royalties, our oil and gas and our other natural resources. With the recent passing of a great leader, Premier Klein, we're reminded that he had to make some serious changes to protect from some of the mistakes that had been made. At a time when we're revisiting deficit and debt, we're still as a province being reminded by independent agencies like CFIB that we haven't done the best job of eliminating red tape, that we're possibly looking at tax increases to amend the situation. A certain situation where Alberta is a leader in property rights is only – only – going to help us stay competitive, create jobs and wealth for all of our citizens.

I'm not the only one that shares in that belief. I wish to quote our Minister of Municipal Affairs from August 20, 2011, in a debate for the PC leadership, after Bill 10 had been passed. Of course, Bill 10 was the bill that was struck to fix some of the errors that bills 36, 24, 19, and 50 had made and the huge, huge uproar of many Alberta citizens: what we need in this province is a blue ribbon panel of land experts and landowners to come up with some recommendation on how those four pieces of legislation need to be fixed and also come up with recommendations on how we can resolve this property rights issue once and for all. The most interesting part of the quote to me: because you cannot have a good democracy and you do not have a strong economy without security of property rights.

Now, here are some interesting things that I've noticed about how many, many Albertans feel about how secure our property rights are. Four hundred and forty thousand Albertans voted for the Wildrose in the election, many of them because of our stance on property rights. As our critic for sustainable resource development said a short time ago, over 9,000 Albertans affected by the South Saskatchewan River basin have signed a petition asking for that to be reviewed.

I've been to four or five meetings in Cypress-Medicine Hat over the last two years where between 200 and 250 constituents and Albertans have stood up and expressed concern, sometimes very, very serious in its nature, as to the way these bills were written, the way these bills are written. I believe I heard an hon. member from the other side say something about single words, single sentences in these bills. Well, when the single sentences say something like not getting access to the Expropriation Act or due process, of course it's very, very alarming.

I was at a meeting before the election at the Cypress Centre with politicians and candidates and MLAs of all stripes, where the government moderator from Stantec ended the meeting by standing up and saying, again to this meeting of 250 people: "We have heard you loud and clear. We promise to listen. We have heard you loud and clear. You have said to repeal bills 36, 19, 24, and 50." Funny that we still have it.

I don't believe it's a difference of opinion, but let's say that it is. Here is something that the Premier said the same night, August 20, 2011. I quote: got to protect property rights; have to understand none of this legislation works if Albertans aren't behind it; if this legislation isn't reflecting what Albertans want, then government needs to amend legislation. So Bill 19: owners have to be able to trigger expropriation. Bill 36: suspend it until we amend it to deal with compensation, consultation, and access to the courts. I guess it's impossible to know what somebody really meant when they said these words, but it appears that Albertans aren't behind it. Nine thousand on a petition, 440,000 that voted for Wildrose, hundreds in rooms asking for these bills to be repealed: that sounds like not behind it to me.

One more quote from that debate that's interesting. Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. People don't trust the PC government because the government hasn't admitted for quite some time when it has made a mistake. I was around when the Premier used to say, "I screwed up," and people used to smile and laugh and say, "Go fix it," and they did. But we have not for the last few years been willing to admit that we have made a mistake, and there are mistakes in those pieces of legislation. I would ask the government and, again, in my support of Motion 507: smile and laugh, and go fix it.

The Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to participate in the discussion on Motion 507. The motion urges the government to repeal and replace the Alberta Land Stewardship Act in order to protect the role of locally elected and accountable municipal councils. This proposed motion would be a redundant piece of legislation as we already have well-designed laws in place to effectively guide and address the issues of land-use planning. This motion suggests that there needs to be a change in the Alberta Land Stewardship Amendment Act. However, the legislation that is currently in place already respects the authority and role of municipalities in the land-use process. Through the act the government co-ordinates rather than prescribes land-use decisions made among others by municipal governments. Why would the opposition want to repeal an act that carries out exactly what they are proposing? This is counterproductive to the needs of Alberta landowners.

The opposition's unfounded allegations couldn't be further from the truth. The reality is that our government engages in active consultation with Albertans on property rights issues. This government respects the authority of municipalities and local decision-making. This can hardly be said of the opposition, which clearly disrespects the local decision-making by insisting that the city centre summarily be taken from the city of Edmonton. I wish the hon. member would demonstrate how he reconciles these two positions. The only explanation I can come up with is that hypocrisy can be politically expedient and convenient. But the government will respect the rights of decisions made by municipalities.

Under the jurisdiction of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act local authorities continue to make decisions on what happens to their land. Regional plans help balance development with growing needs of our local communities. Mr. Speaker, the role and responsibilities of municipalities in land-use planning is outlined in the Municipal Government Act. Under part 17 municipalities have responsibilities in planning, regulating, subdividing, and developing land in Alberta.

Further, they also have the authority to create planning and regulatory documents that prescribe how land will be developed.

These regulatory documents include statutory plans. Statutory plans describe the planning policies and types of land use permitted in the municipality and land-use bylaws, specifying development standards and regulations. Before these planning documents are approved, they go through an extensive public review and consultation process. This process ensures that the concerns of local communities are voiced and are respected. Consultation reveals the real concerns that Albertans face instead of employing self-interested, fearmongering tactics by the opposition.

5:30

Current legislation enables local authorities to make local decisions regarding what happens to their land. Regional planning simply provides an umbrella under which specific decisions are made. Our government has already undertaken extensive consultation to engage municipalities and local decision-makers about the concerns over property rights and land-use planning. This consultation continues. Partnerships between Alberta and local authorities are crucial to the development of effective legislative initiatives.

Respecting the role of municipalities is already included under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. Repealing current law only to replace it with legislation that would also respect the role of municipal councils and protect the rights of landowners seems like a misuse of time in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker. Motion 507 is redundant. For that reason I will not be supporting this motion, and I encourage my fellow hon. members to do the same.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm reading Motion 507 here, and I have to say that I side with the Member for Livingstone-Macleod. We need this. We need this motion to go through. Why? I mean, land-use planning by locally elected municipal officials and voluntary co-operation between communities is a very healthy practice, one that should be encouraged. However, this government has made itself the ultimate central land-planning authority here in the province. This cabinet has the complete power and authority to override the property rights of individuals and corporations as well as the autonomy of municipal governments when implementing their regional plans.

What did we hear earlier today? We heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs tell us that, you know, this was forced collaboration. In another time do you know what they called this when it was states dealing with other states? Gunboat diplomacy. In those times governments would intimidate other states into granting concessions or unequal treaties.

Well, how does the land stewardship bill do this? It does it through the Minister of ESRD. The minister can take steps to make sure that all municipalities come into compliance. If municipalities don't want to, the minister may take all necessary measures, including suspending the municipality's ability to make bylaws and withholding money and other grants payable to the municipality. This just can't stand. You are saying that cabinet has ultimate authority over another elected body, an elected body that is there, elected by the local constituents, to stand up for their locale. What's happening? We are watching this government run roughshod over another elected body. Gunboat diplomacy.

This just cannot stand. We need to go back. We need to have a look at this again. We need to propose something, an alternative regional planning model, one that respects local autonomy,

protects property rights, one that would reward regional co-operation, not mandate regional co-operation.

This is a motion that is not redundant. This is something that we need to look at. It's the reason why there are 17 Wildrose MLAs standing over here.

An Hon. Member: And Bill 10.

Mr. Fox: And Bill 10 as well.

We're here because of this property rights issue. Rather than ignore it, let's stand up, let's look at it, and let's fix it. There was a mistake made. It was compounded. Bill 10 tried to fix it. It didn't work. Let's go back. Let's get this right before we do something that irreparably damages this province.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll recognize the Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as a farmer and as someone whose property rights are just fine, thank you very much. During the election campaign I did my own research into this issue to make sure that my property rights and my family's property rights were protected, and I feel compelled to speak to it today.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is unnecessary for a whole host of reasons, but I only have a couple of minutes. Certain members across the aisle are concerned that the Alberta Land Stewardship Act gives the government sweeping powers to take away the property rights of Albertans. That is entirely unfounded and untrue. In order to address landowners' concerns, our government amended the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, further clarifying landowner rights.

There have been a lot of half-truths and misrepresentations put forth over the last couple of years, something that our government has been quick to address. In an effort to dispel the misinformation and half-truths, our government established the Property Rights Task Force and proactively sought feedback from Albertans with regard to their property rights. During the months of December 2011 and January 2012 communities across the province ardently presented to members of the task force their concerns and suggestions. The task force held 10 province-wide community sessions which were open to the public. I attended the one in Westlock. That was part of my research.

Two key stakeholder meetings were also held, one in Leduc and one in Airdrie. These stakeholder sessions included 26 key representatives from landowner associations and advisory groups, leaseholder organizations, freehold mineral rights owners, which I happen to be one of, the energy industry, agriculture producers, and municipal representatives. The community sessions attracted an estimated 1,035 people. In addition to being able to express their views openly and freely, attendees were encouraged to identify issues and provide suggestions. This allowed our government to debunk the opposition's misguided take on our province's landowner rights.

Throughout the consultation process the task force narrowed down its findings to three overarching themes: active consultation, appropriate compensation, and access to the courts and representation. Through active consultation Albertans want to maintain an open and meaningful dialogue with government, regulators, and industry officials in regard to legislation that affects them. Moreover, participants believed that past consultations focused too heavily on a wide variety of broader topics, which many felt did not specifically tackle particular issues. Participants also said that legislation was unclear and

ambiguous, leading many to feel that they would be somewhat left out of any consultation process regarding their property.

In response to these concerns our Premier recognized the need for our government to encourage a more transparent consultation mandate by reviewing engagement policies and procedures to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of all affected parties. As such, our government is making a more concerted effort to be consistent, predictable, and timely when drafting landowner policies so that it can give Albertans ample time to provide informed input.

The second key finding of the task force was appropriate compensation. Albertans want fair access to updated compensation formulas, to do away with restrictive provisions along with a more in-depth consideration of impacts on neighbours. For instance, a large number of participants stated that compensation levels attached to oil and gas leases were outdated and did not accurately represent current resource prices, which have increased a fair bit. Furthermore, people argued that oil and gas wells made a large portion of their land unusable and wanted to be compensated fairly for lost opportunities and income. In response to these concerns our government is reviewing the Expropriation Act as well as the Surface Rights Act in order to consider appropriate compensation measures and strengthen those acts relative to property rights.

Access to the courts and representation was the third main finding of the task force. Concerned landowners want reassurance that laws would not remove the right to appeal any decision made independently and would not deny them access to court. Many asked for this stipulation to be made explicit in all relevant legislation.

Taking these important concerns into consideration, our government responded by appointing a Property Rights Advocate, whose task is to disseminate impartial information about property rights. The Property Rights Advocate is committed to helping Alberta landowners receive timely and accurate information as well as providing Albertans an effective mechanism through which they can raise concerns.

I believe that our government has taken the findings of the Property Rights Task Force and proactively sought the appropriate measures needed to protect the rights of all landowners. As such, Mr. Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of this motion, and I urge all hon. members to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:40

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to speak on this, but after listening to the hon. member, I feel I have to say something to it. Today, for instance, we talk about the Property Rights Advocate, and I had lunch with him today. He's not a bad man. He's not a bad person. The reason he's got a job up to this point – because we never needed a Property Rights Advocate in this province – is due to these property bills, Bill 36 being the key one. In southern Alberta if you guys did a quick map of how most of the ridings went, it wasn't the traditional way because of bills like Bill 36.

The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod has brought this motion forward, and I think it's back to the process of making sure of the protection of property rights in Alberta. I think everybody wants that, whether you're the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar and you own a house in town or you're a rancher or a farmer such as yourself, as you had raised that. But the key part is being able to talk about it.

Now, you know, some of the key things that I hear from my constituents in Little Bow is that they aren't happy with it. They weren't happy with Bill 36 at any time because they didn't feel that the consultation was good. This is, I think, merely bringing up that we need to go back to the landowners' rights and respect the roles – and it's part of the motion in here – of the locally elected and accountable municipal councils. Being on council before, the problem with some of the property rights bills that came in was that they superseded the local planning authority ones, which had been put in by local people, the local planning decisions. They've done all of these things before. So it was somewhat that you snuffed what they had locally for powers, and then you sat and put in your own framework for how that was going to be done.

Now, in centralizing these things, which is basically, essentially, what some of these bills do, the centralizing planning with Bill 36, we've shown that in some of the other departments – I think we could probably name off quite a few between Health right now and Education that are having some struggles. I mean, both ministers are trying to do their best to deal with it, but AHS is a pretty prime spot where central planning hasn't worked. On paper it might have looked like a great idea to be able to sit and do these things. I mean, it ties back to this. You get landowners in our area that are very concerned about things.

I mean, you had a member of your own party bring a private member's bill, Bill 202. Now, the reason that was brought forth by the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill was because of Potatogate. It was a very large issue in the Cypress-Medicine Hat riding, and it affected up close to mine. Now, if you noticed, I got up and voted for it, much to the dismay of probably quite a few people in the world. But the point is that he brought up that bill because the bills that are in place right now don't protect against something like that happening again. So instead of everybody sitting down and reading that out, they could have gone through Bill 202 and figured out that the reason a member from your own party brought that forward was because he'd identified that it needed to be fixed. An avid outdoorsman, a lawyer, a very well-educated person could sit there and go: "Yeah. Some of these things need to be changed."

I'm not saying that you throw the baby out with the bathwater, but you have to stop at some point and figure out that some of these things are wrong. And if they're wrong, what's wrong with changing them? It's not a hard thing to do. I've been wrong on lots of things. You have to admit it, and then you've got to sit down and figure out how to change it. So this is just one of those things. I think Bill 36 needs to be eliminated to protect many of the fundamentals.

Now, the argument is always that, you know, we're fear-mongering and we're doing all these things. Well, no. We're protecting the rights of Albertans. It's not that we have to throw everything out. Yes, we need some planning. I've never argued that. I've been on county council for 16 years. You need some set plans. My argument is that most of the regional plans that were done were working because they were developed regionally. When they got superseded by Bill 36, for instance, the Land Stewardship Act, that caused some huge dissention amongst the people that had spent lots of days and hours and years essentially doing some planning so they could forward think on it, but it was local decision-making.

Where the problem falls back to, where this happened in our area anyway, is that a lot of people feel that they're not getting a vote or they're not getting a right in it anymore. So you go back to local decision-making, and then we can tie it back to – for instance, yesterday AHS put out a news release at 5 p.m. that there's going to be a public meeting today at 8 a.m. It's not really good notice. I mean, I'm not picking on AHS. But I think some of those things,

when you go back to central stuff, if you have local decision-making, I'm a firm advocate of that because the local people generally know what they want in their area. I think you need a plan of a ballpark of what you need in the province, but to sit down and mandate that into your areas – I think the key to probably at least 15 of our ridings, anyway, was property rights.

Now, everybody over there can argue whether there's a certain lawyer that was in a devil's suit and all kinds of things like that. [interjection] No. It wouldn't have been a lawyer out of Saskatchewan because we know they're great lawyers, and I would never want that member from that side of the floor to ever think that I was, you know, attacking him or any of the other lawyers that are in this building. But the process is that they're laying out the facts. Throw out the information, and let people make their own decision on it.

Now, you could see that pretty well from Red Deer south other than in some of the urban areas the decision was that they weren't happy with the concept of central planning and overriding and superseding the local decision-making that was done by regional planning. [interjection] No. I'm saying that there are quite a few. You know, Calgary-Glenmore, for instance, a great place. They probably had lots of issues, and they picked a fine MLA. I'd never take a shot at her at all on it. It's outside of there, people that sit there. I mean, they voted for what they thought was right. The reason they voted for her is because they had informed information, and they went through it.

People say that we just need to sit back and say: you know, it's not a good piece of legislation. It was put together – I mean, we're going back quite a few years when it was first started. But it tends to screw things up quite a bit when we don't listen to the local decision-makers. The problem is that they basically got told: well, you're going to get superseded by this either way, so you've got to go with it. In my riding alone it was a key issue. We had seven forums in my riding. I had a great candidate I ran against, a PC candidate, and he, too, had issues with the central planning of stuff.

So when you're sitting in a debate and the candidate is from the area – because that's what you're there to do. You're representing your constituents. I think that's all the Member for Livingstone-Macleod is trying to do with his Motion 507. He's trying to represent his constituents on what he hears when he goes around to things. This is a key thing. Yeah, it does fall within our party's parameters. What we were running on was property rights. I believe that we got at least 15 seats that were all rural on this side, a couple of urban seats, too.

I'd say that there are always different issues with everybody. I mean, I've gone through film footage of different things on property rights. There are members from all sides that are now on the government side. Lethbridge-East, for instance, had spoken very adamantly against this bill some time ago. Now, everybody has their right to change on things. I think she was representing her constituents at the time on that because it was a large issue that was done on – I'll pull it up sometime. I forget which date it was. But it was argued that this wasn't a good bill, the property rights in general, the bills that the government was trying to push through.

Instead of just sitting here and saying that it's just a bad motion and we've got to toss it, I really think we need to sit back and say: what's wrong with opening up the book again and figuring it out? Probably what split this province up the most, or one of the biggest things, is property rights. Instead of just sitting there and throwing your hands up and saying, "No; this is bad; we're right" – well, I guess you can do that – you could sit down and have a rational look at it and open up the debate and the decision again and have the conversation with people.

I think that's what people expect in Alberta. We pride ourselves on being able to be open and transparent people. There are 87 MLAs in here that are to be here to listen to what their constituents want. So, you know, even if you've got 20 or 25 per cent of a province saying that it's definitely an issue, then what's wrong with opening up the debate again on it and figuring out what's wrong with the bill? What's wrong with that?

5:50

Well, there were quite a few things wrong with it. I mean, it worked great for us because we were out campaigning, and that's what our constituents wanted. That why, as I say, we on this side of the floor got elected. It was on property rights. I mean, it's your own demise if you want to keep at it, and that's fine. Or you could sit there, and I think we could all be civil and have a decent conversation around what's right and what's wrong with it and open up, you know, to motions like 507.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, I believe 55 minutes have expired for debate on this item, so under Standing Order 8(3), which provides for up to five minutes for the sponsor of a motion other than a government motion to close debate, I would now invite the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod to close debate on Motion 507.

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite what various speakers have said on the other side of the House and some from the opposite point of view have said, I firmly believe that Bill 36 needs some real review, and that was the purpose of this motion.

Throughout my time as a candidate and even prior to that this was something that I heard all the time during the campaign, and it was something that many, many hundreds of people across Alberta spent many hours, miles, and dollars in trying to convince the government that this was poor legislation. I can recall going up to the massive meeting at Eckville one evening and seeing probably, I think, close to 450 to 500 people being jammed into that arena. Several ministers who were there, who spent the time, received a fairly big boo on what was going on. I was shocked. I was appalled. I'd never seen anything like that. I think that's just one illustration of how inflamed people were about this new change.

Today I mentioned in my questions during question period that it might be a good idea to at least go back to the regional advisory council in the process of doing the South Saskatchewan regional plan first draft and maybe have another visit now that we've had so many people speak out against this. I'd like to just repeat that over 9,000 people have signed a petition about the South Saskatchewan regional plan. That's 9,000 people. That's an awfully significant amount of people who are really, really concerned about what is going on here, and I think we have to pay attention to that.

I think it was also interesting today when I asked the Municipal Affairs minister about something to do with the municipal councils and how they are viewing this thing. I brought to his attention once again – and he and I have spoken about this – the AAMD and C document called forced regionalization. It's a huge issue.

I'd like to also remind the speakers that spoke up against me here today and talked about flip-flops. I think the hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia may have taken something out of context during one of my campaigns when someone asked me about the stewardship act and I said that, yes, there are some good things in it, but certainly I have some other concerns, which he didn't happen to include.

I think it's also interesting, when we talk about flip-flops, when

we see, as the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat alluded to, that during the debates for leadership two members of this House now spoke that they had really huge concerns during that leadership debate about these bills and particularly about Bill 36, and one of them is sitting here today. Just imagine that they had such concern then, and now they're seemingly on the other side of the fence. Is that a flip-flop, perhaps? Interesting.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's evident throughout Alberta and throughout these debates we've had about property rights over the past few months since I've been here in this House that this is a big, big concern for people. It's a big concern for many members, a big concern for many of their constituents, and I would really implore you to take a chance here and look at this motion.

I mean, it's not that hard. It is a motion that just basically says repeal this act and then replace it with something that better protects the rights than what you have now and perhaps respects and puts in place something that is going to help municipal councils like I came from in looking at how they're going to go about things with the pressure from overtop coming down on them to amend their bylaws, their municipal development plans, even though they may not want to, to conform to some of these things that they don't agree with.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 507 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:55 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

| | | |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| Anderson | Eggen | Stier |
| Barnes | Fox | Strankman |
| Bikman | McAllister | Wilson |
| Donovan | Rowe | |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Allen | Hancock | Olson |
| Bhardwaj | Horner | Pastoor |
| Brown | Jeneroux | Quadri |
| Cao | Johnson, J. | Quest |
| Casey | Johnson, L. | Sandhu |
| Denis | Khan | Sarich |
| Dorward | Kubinec | Scott |
| Drysdale | Lemke | Starke |
| Fawcett | Luan | Swann |
| Fenske | McDonald | VanderBurg |
| Fraser | Oberle | Weadick |
| Goudreau | Olesen | Xiao |
| Griffiths | | |

Totals: For – 11 Against – 37

[Motion Other than Government Motion 507 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 6:08 p.m. to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]

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