



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, May 15, 2013

Issue 59a

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 28th Legislature

First Session

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

Allen, Mike, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (PC)	Kennedy-Glans, Donna, Calgary-Varsity (PC)
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)	Khan, Stephen, St. Albert (PC)
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)
Anglin, Joe, Rimbev-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip	Kubinec, Maureen, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (PC)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)	Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
Bhullar, Hon. Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)	Luan, Jason, Calgary-Hawkwood (PC)
Bikman, Gary, Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)	Lukaszuk, Hon. Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND)	Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Leader of the New Democrat Opposition
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL), Liberal Opposition House Leader	McAllister, Bruce, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (PC)	McDonald, Everett, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)	McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Campbell, Hon. Robin, West Yellowhead (PC), Deputy Government House Leader	McQueen, Hon. Diana, Drayton Valley-Devon (PC)
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort (PC)	Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), New Democrat Opposition House Leader
Casey, Ron, Banff-Cochrane (PC)	Oberle, Hon. Frank, Peace River (PC)
Cusanelli, Christine, Calgary-Currie (PC)	Olesen, Cathy, Sherwood Park (PC)
Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)	Olson, Hon. Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)	Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (PC)
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Acadia (PC), Deputy Government House Leader	Pedersen, Blake, Medicine Hat (W)
Donovan, Ian, Little Bow (W)	Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Dorward, David C., Edmonton-Gold Bar (PC)	Quest, Dave, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (PC)
Drysdale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)	Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC), Premier
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Fawcett, Hon. Kyle, Calgary-Klein (PC)	Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)
Fenske, Jacquie, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC)	Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (Ind)
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W)	Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
Fox, Rodney M., Lacombe-Ponoka (W)	Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Scott, Hon. Donald, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (PC)
Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)	Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (AL), Leader of the Liberal Opposition
Goudreau, Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (PC)	Smith, Danielle, Highwood (W), Leader of the Official Opposition
Griffiths, Hon. Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)	Starke, Hon. Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Hale, Jason W., Strathmore-Brooks (W)	Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Hancock, Hon. Dave, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC), Government House Leader	Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)	Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-St. Albert (PC)	VanderBurg, Hon. George, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (PC)
Hughes, Hon. Ken, Calgary-West (PC)	Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)	Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)	Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)
Johnson, Hon. Jeff, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (PC)	Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)
Johnson, Linda, Calgary-Glenmore (PC)	Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL), Liberal Opposition Whip	Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC), Government Whip

Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 60

Wildrose: 17

Alberta Liberal: 5

New Democrat: 4

Independent: 1

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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

Bhardwaj	Olesen
Cao	Pastoor
Donovan	Quadri
Dorward	Rogers
Eggen	Rowe
Hehr	Sarich
Luan	Strankman
McDonald	Xiao

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Khan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Jablonski
Anderson
Casey
Dorward
Eggen
Kubinec
Sandhu
Sherman

Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Rogers	
Deputy Chair: Mr. Quadri	
Blakeman	Leskiw
Eggen	McDonald
Goudreau	Saskiw
Lemke	

Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

Chair: Mr. Allen	
Deputy Chair: Mr. Luan	
Blakeman	Notley
Dorward	Saskiw
Fenske	Wilson
Johnson, L.	Young
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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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Deputy Chair: Mrs. Forsyth

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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

Bikman	Leskiw
Blakeman	Quadri
Brown	Rogers
DeLong	Wilson
Eggen	

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Zwozdesky

Deputy Chair: Mr. Rogers

Casey	Mason
Forsyth	McDonald
Fraser	Quest
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Glans	Smith

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Xiao

Deputy Chair: Ms L. Johnson

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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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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

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

Allen	Hale
Barnes	Johnson, L.
Bikman	Khan
Bilous	Kubinec
Blakeman	Lemke
Calahasan	Sandhu
Casey	Stier
Fenske	Webber

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. As we bow our heads in solemn reverence, let us reflect on what it truly means to put the needs of others ahead of our own. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have a record number of guests to be introduced today. I'm going to ask you to please be as brief as you can.

Let us start with the Minister of Human Services, followed by Infrastructure.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a bright and enthusiastic group of 44 grade 6 students from Brander Gardens elementary school, located in my constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud. Accompanying the students is their teacher, Natalie Gago-Esteves, and I might say that Ms Esteves has been in this Legislature with grade 6 students every year over the last at least six years that I can think of. She's also accompanied by Mme Tracey Loehr. The group of students had participated in the School at the Legislature program earlier this year, and they're seated in both the members' gallery and the public gallery. I'd ask them now to rise and receive the traditional warm greeting of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure, followed by Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly on behalf of the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development a group of 18 bright grade 6 students from Sparling elementary school, located in Camrose. They've enjoyed a tour of the building and later will be taking part in a game called Race for the Ridings!, which will test their knowledge of what they have learned here today. The students are accompanied by teachers and parents. I would now ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Kathryn Westlund, a constituent of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood and a resident of the Highlands neighbourhood. For over four years Kathryn has been facing numerous obstacles with her WCB claim and the subsequent appeals process involved with that claim. Kathryn became so frustrated with the current process that she took it on herself to initiate a petition, which I'll be tabling later today. I would ask Kathryn to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there other school groups? None?

If it's okay with you, hon. members, I'd like to take a moment to do an introduction right now, and that is to introduce to you

someone who is very special to this Assembly because she is the Editor of *Alberta Hansard*, which, as you know, is our official minute book. Now, this particular individual knows all the ins and out and all the in-betweens that go on with the words that shape our speeches after we've said them or at least think we've said them. She has been with us in this capacity for 38 amazing years, which is an exceptional achievement in any individual's career, and throughout her career she has distinguished herself with the excellence, efficiency, and quality of our *Hansard*.

She has shown dedication and passion for this document, and she has worked to advance her career since commencing as a sessional editor till taking on her current role of managing editor. It is no small feat to publish this document, that we get and that the public gets within 24 hours of every sitting of this Assembly. It's in large part due to her perseverance, her dedication, and her incredible drive. Unfortunately for us, she will be retiring at the end of this session. I would ask all of you to please rise and join me in thanking Liz Sim. Thank you so much, Liz. [Standing ovation]

Thank you, hon. members, and thank you, Liz, for your outstanding service.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Denise Baillie. Some of you may recognize Denise as she's often at the front steps of the Legislature, raising awareness of her battle with multiple sclerosis. I first met Denise on a cold afternoon last fall when I stopped to talk to her on the steps of the Legislature and learned her story. As of April 30 Denise's message of struggle with MS has turned into a success story after receiving Dr. Zamboni's chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency treatment, CCSVI. In her words, this one-hour angioplasty treatment performed in California "took [me] from wanting a wheelchair to wanting a bicycle; from depending on government disability payments to wanting to go back to work and pay taxes again."

Denise is a strong candidate for the CCSVI treatment and has recently been appointed president of CCSVI Alberta. She urges our government to allow this procedure to be performed here in Alberta. When I spoke with Denise the week before she went to California to receive her CCSVI treatment, she could barely stand without the support of her walker. I would now ask Denise to rise and perform a jumping jack while she receives the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Did you have a second introduction?

Mr. Khan: I have one additional after that, sir.

The Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly St. Albert constituents Murray Barker and his wife of 45 years, Arlene Barker. Murray is a retired police superintendent with Edmonton Police Service, having served 35 dedicated years with the police force. His retirement was forced upon him due to multiple sclerosis. If it were not for this debilitating disease, Murray would still probably be chasing the bad guys right now.

Murray regularly stops into the St. Albert constituency office to keep us up to date on issues regarding St. Albert, the MS community, and various social issues as they arise. Murray volunteers for several organizations in St. Albert. He's a past nominee for St. Albert's volunteer citizen of the year and also received an award from the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General for his work with youth justice. I also had the honour of hosting Murray last

year at St. Albert's Art Walk and had the privilege of having Murray's photography and sculptures in my office. I would now ask that Murray and Arlene, who are seated in the members' gallery, rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: And your third and final introduction.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, for my final introduction today I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly St. Albert residents Ross and Irene Boyes, who came to speak with me in my constituency office just last fall, seeking assistance in helping them find weekend respite care for their son Bryan Boyes. Bryan is their adult child, who is developmentally delayed and blind. Bryan is cared for by his parents in their home. Bryan attends Winnifred Stewart during the weekdays but is unable to find respite aid on the weekends due to shortages in staffing availability. As any hard-working parents deserve, Mr. and Mrs. Boyes are seeking small breaks and have not had an easy time to find help. I appreciate their advocacy for all Albertan families who face this challenge. I would now ask that Mr. and Mrs. Boyes, who are seated in the members' gallery, rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont and Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The annual Historica Fair provides an opportunity for students from schools in the surrounding area to present projects celebrating Canada's heritage. In 2007 the Legislative Assembly, through your office, initiated an award to recognize Historica Fair participants who demonstrate outstanding achievement in celebrating an aspect of Canadian parliamentary democracy, governance, or political history, with a special focus on Alberta.

It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce this year's award winner, Libby Langenhahn. She's a grade 5 student at Vital Grandin Catholic elementary in St. Albert. Libby's project explored the many contributions of Alberta's Famous Five. Libby's project displayed her in-depth knowledge of the Famous Five, and she was able to use a comic that she produced herself to give context to their accomplishments. Way to go, Libby. Libby is with her mother, Heather Langenhahn; her father, Robert Langenhahn; and her grandfather, William Thompson. They are seated in your gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the congratulations and the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Horne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May 15 is Breathing Matters day here at the Legislature. Today we work to raise awareness for approximately 600,000 Albertans who suffer from respiratory diseases such as asthma and lung cancer. In recognition of this, we have some very special guests that have joined us today from the Lung Association as well as other citizens who have a vested interest in respiratory health. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that each guest rise as I state their name.

First, Leigh Allard, president and CEO of the Lung Association; Kate Hurlburt, volunteer chair of the board of directors for the Lung Association; Dr. Mohit Bhutani, representing the health care professionals dedicated to respiratory wellness; Julie Lavergne, who is accompanied by her daughter Naomi, an asthma sufferer;

Janis Seville, director of health initiatives for the Lung Association in the province of Alberta and the Northwest Territories; Nina Snyder, a dedicated caregiver that assists her mother, who suffers from an antirespiratory deficiency; Darlene Gallant, whose husband has idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, and she is here on his behalf to generate awareness for this condition; and last but certainly not least, Rick Curren. Mr. Curren copes each day with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and is a tremendous advocate for lung health in our province.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House I'd like to thank our guests for the work that they do every day on behalf of lung health in our province and ask my colleagues to join in providing our traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two wonderful ambassadors of Alberta culture from the Art Gallery of Alberta. Kristy Trinier is the newly appointed curator of the AGA, and I'm sure we'll see some bright work from her in the future. With her is Catherine Crowston, who is the gallery's executive director and key curator, whose goal of putting well-appreciated effort into showcasing the AGA's permanent collection is certainly praiseworthy. I'd ask both of them to rise and receive the Assembly's traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all Members of this Legislative Assembly some guests of mine in the gallery. They're here today to raise their concerns regarding the government's plan to close Michener Centre and the continued, devastating cuts to PDD services. They're upset that the government has broken their promise, and they have brought with them thousands of signatures, which I'll be tabling in the House today. Here today are Jenna Baynes, Lee Kvern, Jody Kvern, Russell Clark, Andrea Benoit, Angela Pala, Lorraine Strand, and Christine Yargeau-Becker. I thank each of them for their advocacy and ask that my hon. colleagues provide them with the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by the leader of the Liberal opposition.

Mr. Bilous: Merci, M. le Président. J'aimerais vous présenter, à vous et à tous les membres de l'Assemblée, Mylène Coderre-Proulx. Elle est détentrice d'une maîtrise en politiques internationales à l'Université du Québec à Montréal ainsi que d'un baccalauréat en études internationales de l'Université de Montréal. Ses recherches portent sur les thèmes relatifs aux politiques d'immigration, à l'intégration et aux droits des immigrants. Participante au programme d'échange interprovincial Québec-Alberta, elle intégrera le caucus du NPD en tant qu'assistante de recherches et de mobilisation. J'aimerais maintenant inviter Mylène à se lever pour être accueillie chaleureusement par l'Assemblée.

[Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you Mylène Coderre-Proulx. Mylène has a master's degree in international politics from the Université du Québec in Montreal and an undergraduate diploma of international studies from the University of Montreal. Her fields of research are related to immigration policies, integration, and the rights of immigrants and refugees.

Mylene is here in Edmonton as part of the Quebec-Alberta employment exchange program, and she will intern with the NDP caucus as a research and outreach assistant. I would now like to ask Mylene to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. [As submitted]

The Speaker: The member did kindly provide an English version of what he just read in French.

Let us move on to the leader of the Liberal opposition, followed by the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations.

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two young filmmakers, Akash Sherman and Tim Choy. Akash is my son, and it's his first visit to the Legislature. Akash and Tim are friends who produced award-winning short films that were featured at the Edmonton International Film Festival, *A Teaching Game* and *For Them, For You*. Their latest adventure, *Uprising*, is a movie trailer they produced for CineCoup's nation-wide \$1 million competition. They made it to the final 10 of 90 entrants and are now the last remaining Alberta team. I encourage all members to help support *Uprising* by sharing on Facebook or tweeting cinecoup.com/uprisingmovie so Albertans can vote for *Uprising* and support local Alberta talent. I would ask Akash and Tim to rise and please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you two gentlemen from my constituency, John Harms and Graham Schofield. John Harms was hired as the CEO and general manager of Westerner Park in Red Deer in 1996, with the responsibility of overseeing the day-to-day operations of the organization. During his tenure at Westerner Park they have seen accomplishments such as the construction of the Harvest Centre, the naming of the Enmax Centrium, the Westerner campground, the expansion of the equine show and stabling areas, and the recent expansion in the Enmax Centrium. Since arriving in Red Deer, he's also become involved in the community by volunteering for organizations such as United Way of Central Alberta, Crime Stoppers, the board of directors of STARS, and the board of governors of Red Deer College.

Mr. Speaker, Graham Schofield is a lifetime Albertan, growing up in Edmonton, spending a decade in Calgary, and the last eight years in Red Deer. Until the last couple of years Graham spent his career in print media, most recently as the publisher of the *Red Deer Express*. He now works for Stantec Consulting, managing their regional marketing presence in Alberta and the northern territories. Graham's wife, Lori, is an actor and a teacher. They have two young children: Connor, nine, and Zoe, six.

Mr. Speaker, my guests are seated in the members' gallery. I'd like to invite them to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you my guests Erin Waite, Jayne Myatt, and Beverly Hills. Erin, Jayne, and Beverly are part of a group of hundreds of Albertans who have come here today from all over the province to protest this government's cruel cuts

to PDD services. These are services which are in place to protect some of the most vulnerable citizens of our province by giving them the support they need to lead happy and successful lives. The fact that the government of one of the wealthiest parts of the world would even consider cutting such services is incomprehensible. I would now like to ask Erin and Jayne and Beverly to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Red Deer-North.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to rise today to introduce to you and through you seven guests seated in your gallery. Mr. Krishan Chawla, a good friend of mine and a constituent of yours, is a very active member of the Council of India Societies, past president of the Hindu Society of Alberta, and is involved in many other different organizations. He had a distinguished career for 36 years working for Alberta agriculture. In 2000 he was awarded the Premier's award of excellence for his involvement with the special crop product program. He's joined here today by his nephew Saket Batra and his wife, Richa, and son Aanava. Also visiting today are his niece Rinku and her husband, Vikas, with their son Arayan. They just landed here from Mumbai yesterday. They're probably still jet lagged. I ask my guests – they've risen – to please accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red-Deer North.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly Karen Burnand, who is here today for the constituency engagement program. Karen was born and raised in central Alberta and has lived in Red Deer for the past 20 years. She is currently employed by the county of Red Deer as an accredited property assessor. Karen plays an active role in her community, where she volunteers with various organizations and councils. She is the chair of the Piper Creek seniors' housing foundation, the president of the central Alberta zone of the Senior Citizens' Housing Association, and a member of the Premier's Council on Alberta's Promise. I thank Karen for all she does for our community and look forward to working with her for many years to come. Karen is in the members' gallery, and I ask that she please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the clock requires us to move on to the next phase of our Routine. There are 13 more individuals who have introductions to do, and we'll do them after QP.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. First main set of questions.

Review of FOIP and Conflicts-of-interest Legislation

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, we ask some tough questions as part of our official duties of holding this government to account. Ministers point us to independent officers and processes to get answers. We ask for the all the health expenses. They tell us: do a FOIP request. We ask about infrastructure priorities: do a FOIP request. We ask about staff severance: do a FOIP request. Yet often those requests are met with delays, redactions, omissions, court fights, and hefty charges. They claim that they have the gold

standard for openness and accountability, so will the Premier raise the bar and be a little more forthcoming with information?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member obviously doesn't like the rules of the Assembly, but the opposition is a part of making up the rules. The fact is that as government we have to keep a balance of releasing information, making it available, which is very important, but also protecting private or proprietary information, which has to be protected. To do that, those decisions are not political. There are experts in every department that review a request and release the information that is available, that can be released. Those are the rules by which we have lived for a long time, and they seem to be working very well.

Ms Smith: Here's the problem, Mr. Speaker. The government tells us to use the FOIP process, but then they complain that it costs too much money and takes too much time to process our requests, so things have to be fixed, quite obviously. If the Premier wants to live up to her promise of raising the bar on openness and accountability, will she agree to our demand for a full, public, open, transparent, complete, comprehensive, and meaningful review of the FOIP legislation?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, yes, there are costs involved when we receive requests for information. Often entire departments stop what they're doing, and they pull out information to make it available, so there are costs involved; there's no doubt about it. But it's the right thing to do. Sharing information that can be shared is the right thing to do. Yes, there will be a review of FOIP. All political parties will be involved. Stakeholders, Albertans will be involved. We will do a thorough review of FOIP and see how we can make it work for Albertans even better.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The events swirling around the Member for Edmonton-Manning point out some serious failings in the conflicts-of-interest legislation, too. The Ethics Commissioner has no ability to offer complete information about assets or liabilities or other important information. These loopholes need to be closed. Will the Premier agree to a full, public, open, transparent, complete, comprehensive, and meaningful review of the conflicts-of-interest legislation and not just a cosmetic rewrite?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Conflicts of Interest Act provides for reviews. The reviews of the Ethics Commissioner's office are available through the Leg. Offices process if there are issues. If at any time there are identified deficiencies with respect to the process, that's available for Leg. Offices to raise. It's available for the Ethics Commissioner's office to raise. In fact, we discussed a number of years ago the completeness of the reporting process. There's a balance to be made between the privacy of individual members in terms of what the report says and the public's interest in knowing.

The Speaker: The hon. leader for her second main set of questions.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that answer, hon. House leader.

Supports for Couples Aging in Place

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the government claims to be supporting Alberta's seniors, but they're not. They have failed to keep their promise of two baths a week. There are cases of abuse and neglect that get overlooked. We keep hearing about devastating cuts to front-line workers in seniors' homes and the ridiculous hundred-kilometre rule. Moving people as much as a hundred kilometres from their families was supposed to be a temporary measure in response to the H1N1 crisis four years ago. That crisis has long passed, but the rule that creates divorce by nursing home remains. When will it end?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, we've been over this ground many times before during this session. As the hon. member knows, the hundred-kilometre policy is a response to what we believe is a temporary situation involving scarcity of continuing care beds in the province. Unfortunately, in some cases that involves couples who need different levels of care at the same point in time. The hon. member also knows that in a discussion at Public Accounts this morning, the chief executive officer of Alberta Health Services talked about their work today to review that rule and to end that policy as quickly as possible.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the minister has stepped in personally before when Alberta Health Services policy has threatened to split up couples, but he can't step in personally every single time it happens. They need to change the policy. Now, I acknowledge that AHS CEO Chris Eagle told the Public Accounts Committee this morning that they are having some second thoughts about this horrible policy. Rather than just another feeble defence of the hundred-kilometre rule, why doesn't the minister just end it?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, what is feeble is a question that completely ignores the fact that we are in the fastest growing province in the country. We have growing numbers of seniors who need care, both home care and facility-based care, and we are actually better off than most of the country in terms of our capacity to build those additional spaces, a thousand per year. This is an unfortunate policy that has had to be in place in response to the situation today. Obviously, none of us in this House want that situation for any of our constituents, and we're taking the appropriate steps to end it.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the number of seniors is increasing, yet the number of beds available is decreasing. It doesn't make sense.

The Wildrose opposition has had to fight for more seniors' baths, for better seniors' meals, for more front-line workers, for a sensible drug policy, even for veterans' hospital parking, and now we have to fight for an end to divorce by nursing home. This government has ministers for health, for wellness, for disabilities, for seniors and still can't seem to manage to get this right. The minister's claim that no one cares more about seniors than the Premier: that's just nonsense, isn't it?

Mr. Horne: Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. That was a question? I'll answer it. I'll answer it by reminding this House and the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition that this government is on track to build a thousand continuing care spaces per year, a rate that far exceeds any other jurisdiction in this country, and all of those beds are capable of housing residents requiring all care needs from supportive living right through to long-term care.

The Speaker: The hon. leader. Third main set of questions.

Ms Smith: Well, the minister will get another question about that a little bit later, Mr. Speaker.

Restructuring of PDD Services

Ms Smith: The minister responsible for persons with developmental disabilities spent a long time in the Assembly yesterday attempting to reassure everyone that his planned changes to the delivery of services will work, but it is another government failure, evidenced today by the big protest rally outside. The Alberta Association for Community Living, Alberta Council of Disability Services, and Alberta Disability Workers Association represent almost everyone who's involved in PDD. They are joining together to ask the minister to stop. Why won't he listen to the voices of the people who are most affected?

Mr. Oberle: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I've met with all of those organizations, and I met with individuals out there today. I'm going to continue to do so and to meet with people. I made it clear in my statement yesterday. I made it clear out there in the province. We clearly understand there's an issue with transition and an issue with the overall funding. As I did make clear in my statement yesterday, I'm working on that.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the organizations I mentioned represent PDD clients, families, service providers, and support staff. They point out that this is the largest cut ever imposed on people with developmental disabilities in Alberta's history. They also point out that PDD funding reductions are based on an arbitrary formula that will impact the lives of thousands of vulnerable Albertans. We've made the same arguments for months. When will the minister listen and do something about it?

Mr. Oberle: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am listening. First of all, as I explained in my statement yesterday, people perceive cuts because they're looking at the disability services envelope. They're not looking at the other side . . . [interjections] Could I finish my answer? Thank you. If they were aware of what supports are available on the Human Services side of the budget and my commitment to ask . . . [interjections] Well, they don't want to listen to the answer, so I won't give it to them.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the drastic changes could lead to a PDD crisis. The families are warning the minister. The clients are warning the minister. The workers are warning the minister. The agencies who deliver the services are warning the minister. The opposition is warning the minister. He ignores us all just to placate the Treasury Board and their misplaced priorities. When will he do his job and stand up for the needs of Alberta's most vulnerable?

2:00

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I'm attempting to do, and in order to do that, you have to get down there and listen. Now, I didn't see any of the opposition members doing that today. They were at the microphone, pandering and telling people how they're going to be all things to all people. You've got to get down on the ground and listen to people. That's what I've been doing and I will continue to do.

I'm in 20 communities over the next two weeks. The meetings are on the Internet. I invite people to come out and talk with us. We'll do this as much as we can over the coming weeks and months, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, you rose on a point of order at 2 o'clock and so did Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, so we have two points of order raised between 2:00 and 2:01. They will be addressed later.

Let us move on to the leader of the Alberta Liberal opposition.

Supports for Vulnerable Albertans

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last election the Premier campaigned by promising honest and transparent government, that she would listen to Albertans, and, of course, no service cuts. Promises made, promises broken. To the Premier: how does starving programs that help persons with developmental disabilities and patients requiring palliative care meet your promise of no service cuts?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, I think the question is to me. I'm not aware of a specific case. I'm not sure I know what the member is talking about, if he'd care to enlighten me. I would caution him, of course, about talking about any individual's health care situation.

The Speaker: Let's move on, then. Maybe we'll get it in the supplemental.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, it's the minister's \$42 million cut to his program.

It's beyond ridiculous for this government to pretend that they have not cut services to persons with developmental disabilities and those requiring palliative care. They're not fooling anybody, Mr. Speaker, except themselves. What they are doing is hurting a lot of vulnerable people. These are not expenses to be cut. These are real people that need real help. To the Premier or whoever wants to answer the question: will you please look up from your spreadsheet and realize that persons with developmental disabilities and patients requiring palliative care are not line items?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, I have been clear, and I will continue to say that if you need services in our province, you're going to get services. For that hon. member to lump palliative care and persons with developmental disabilities services together doesn't really make sense to me. If he's got an individual case that he would like to make some progress on, then I invite him to do so in the proper way.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, this government missed math class. They promised no service cuts. They cut funding, cut staff, and then they say that they're not cutting services. So many groups, including doctors, nurses, postsecondary students, staff and faculty, corrections officers, municipal leaders, and now First Nations have all voiced concerns over this Conservative government's heavy-handed approach and lack of consultation. To the Premier and yet again any other minister: how can Albertans view this as anything else but an abuse of your majority to bully into submission anyone who doesn't agree with you?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, this government and this Premier have always been very clear that we will deliver the services that we have been entrusted with, and we are doing that just very well, thank you. But we have also been very clear that we will be very prudent with Albertans' finances, and we are doing that just as well. We will not have the opposition lecture us on what they would do because every day they change the tone and they want to be everything to everyone all the time. As government we actually have to make decisions and be accountable for them.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the New Democrat opposition, followed by Calgary-Fish Creek.

Member for Edmonton-Manning

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. The most sacred responsibility of government is to uphold the law and ensure that the law is enforced. There's clear evidence, which was tabled in the Assembly yesterday, that a member of this Assembly may have signed a false affidavit, which, if true, would constitute a criminal offence. Will this Premier fulfill her responsibilities and request a police investigation of this matter, and if not, why not?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, allegations are just that. We dealt with this question yesterday. The member himself has referred the issue to the Ethics Commissioner for investigation to clear his name. He's recused himself from caucus and government. He's done the honourable thing.

The affidavit that was filed was filed in a civil lawsuit presumably, and the judge will be able to determine whether or not the affidavit has veracity. If there's an issue with that, I assume it'll be dealt with in the appropriate way. Simply making wild allegations and then requesting government do something about them is not the way we do justice in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government is attempting to dodge its responsibilities and leave it up to the judge in a civil matter whether or not there should be an investigation into a potential criminal matter. They are not wild allegations. The evidence was tabled in this House yesterday.

During her leadership campaign the Premier said that regaining trust is critical if Alberta's political system is to stay healthy, but getting there requires more than platitudes and promises. How can Albertans trust a government that doesn't do what it says and instead just leaves people with platitudes and promises?

Mr. Hancock: The way it works, Mr. Speaker, is that we respect the law, we respect the process, and we do not make wild allegations to drag the political process into the mud every time we think it will make political gain.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Mr. Mason: I'm good.

Restructuring of PDD Services (continued)

Mrs. Forsyth: Mr. Speaker, this out-of-touch government continues to target our most vulnerable people. The Association for Community Living, the Council of Disability Services, and the Disability Workers Association are all calling the minister's \$42 million cut to PDD the largest in Alberta history. Worse yet, they are warning that these dramatic cuts will throw the community into chaos and crisis. All the while the minister has the audacity to insist these cuts will not impact services. Minister, how can you possibly guarantee that these vulnerable Albertans won't lose services as a result of these shameful cuts?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, I think I need to ask the member to revisit the fact that the disabilities services envelope has not been cut; it's whole. In fact, it increased by 3 and a half million dollars. In addition to that, I identified in my speech yesterday that there are additional resources on the Human Services side of the ledger

in employment supports, and I also indicated – pretty clearly, I thought – that if there's additional support needed, I will seek that support. I am not going to cut services to individuals who need them. End of story.

Mrs. Forsyth: Given that the PDD community is disputing the minister's claim that these cuts will lead to more effective services, in fact, Minister, warning that these cuts will set positive changes in the system back, and I'll quote, further than ever, how can this government possibly excuse trying to find savings off the backs of our most vulnerable Albertans? Why are you doing this, Minister?

Mr. Oberle: I also made it abundantly clear, I thought, yesterday that I'm not looking to seek cost savings, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking to improve a system that is in need of improvement. We can do better, and we're going to do better.

Mrs. Forsyth: Given that the Premier gave a mandate to the minister asking that he continue to provide support to Albertans in a compassionate and caring manner, can the minister explain how leaving staff, family, and Albertans with developmental disabilities meets his definition of compassionate care?

Mr. Oberle: I think there was a clause missing in that question, Mr. Speaker. It didn't quite make sense to me.

As I said, I have been out there in communities across this province, 20 more communities in the next two weeks. I'm out talking to people. I'm understanding what their situations are. There is fear and anxiety out there. I freely admit that. I said that yesterday. We're dealing with it. We will have new contracts in place, and we will continue. If you need services, you will get services. End of story.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Market Access for Alberta Products

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is blessed with manufacturers and producers of products and resources for export. In order to be successful, we need to be able to sell those products in a global marketplace. The success of the Alberta economy supports schools, roads, hospitals, and all the government programs that continue to make Alberta the best place to live, work, and play. To the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations. We know that protectionist firewall politics don't work. What is the government's actual plan to ensure Alberta products get to market?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Dallas: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker, and to the hon. member, thanks for the question. Job one for this government and especially for my ministry is getting products to market, getting a fair price. That's why later in this week I'll be announcing our renewed international strategy. We have a choice. We can assertively seize new and important global opportunities, or we can look back and let other competing countries eat our lunch. We're going to go for it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is so important, will a strategy document, regardless of how good it is,

really be enough, or will the minister commit to taking action now to get the job done?

Mr. Dallas: Well, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, this is a renewed strategy, and under the leadership of our Premier our government has been looking outward right from day one. The Premier has travelled to Washington four times to advocate for Keystone, our Finance minister is in Hong Kong right now working on attracting investment and opening up new opportunities for Alberta companies. Next week, of course, the agriculture minister will be opening up new doors for our farmers and ranchers in Kazakhstan. Our renewed international strategy will help co-ordinate our efforts as a government and as a province to ensure we're succeeding globally.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the same minister: given the election results last night in B.C. how will this government work with the Clark government to build on successes we've had in the western provinces in eliminating trade barriers and find ways to open up global markets?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, let me start by congratulating Premier Clark and the party as well as all the candidates that put their names forward. [interjections] It was an exciting election to watch, and I guess we'll reserve judgment on the polling.

Alberta and B.C. have a proud history of co-operation through the New West Partnership, and I only see that getting stronger. To succeed globally, we must work together domestically. [interjections] We'll try to reach out to our neighbours like B.C. and have productive conversations about where we can go in new global markets.

The Speaker: Hon. members, let's keep the side conversations down to whispers. If you must converse, then leave the Chamber, please.

Let's move on. Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, followed by Edmonton-South West.

Long-term Care for Seniors

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we had a stunning admission at Public Accounts Committee. AHS admitted that there are absolutely no plans in place to create any more long-term care nursing beds. Yet in the PC Party 2012 election brochure this government promised to increase long-term care, not continuing care, spaces by a thousand a year. Even more shocking is the FOIP of the AHS capital submission, which shows the government is gutting up to 1,700 long-term care beds over the next five years. How can this minister continue to tell Albertans they have a plan for long-term care when clearly they do not?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province has kept her promise to add a thousand spaces a year. What the hon. member continues to ignore is that all of the new spaces that are open in Alberta are built to the B2 building standard, which is capable of accommodating all levels of care, from supportive living right up to long-term care.

Mrs. Towle: No long-term care spaces.

Given that it is clear that this government is not adding any new long-term care beds and they're not meeting the demand in

continuing care and given that this government continues to make promises it has no intention of keeping, when will the minister finally admit that you are failing Albertans and you are failing seniors in care?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, what this government will proudly admit is that we are exercising the leadership necessary to provide for all needs for seniors across the province, from independent living and home care right through to long-term care.

The obvious difference between us is philosophy, a philosophy opposite that is rooted in the 1960s and '70s model of warehousing seniors in traditional nursing homes as compared to our philosophy today which supports aging in place as needs change, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order noted from Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills at 2:14 p.m.

Third and final question, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mrs. Towle: Given that today in Public Accounts Committee the AHS CEO, Chris Eagle, agreed that the divorce-by-nursing-home hundred-kilometre rule should be reviewed and given that Dr. Eagle himself acknowledged the devastating impact that this rule has after a simple three-minute conversation, why does this government continue to ignore what has been brought before you day after day after day?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member gives herself a little too much credit. [interjections] The debate in Public Accounts should have served as an education to the hon. member about the very good work that is going on in this province to provide for the needs of seniors.

We've dealt with the question of beds. All beds are built to accommodate long-term care. We spent the session talking about many other services that are made available. Alberta Health Services has shown that as soon as it is able to, it will eliminate the hundred-kilometre rule.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Too many conversations going on across the bow here and too many interjections and too many rude interruptions of each other. Show some respect for each other, even for your own colleagues in your own caucus. It would be helpful.

Edmonton-South West, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

Skilled Labour Shortage

Mr. Jeneroux: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's unemployment rate is currently 4.4 per cent, and we have skills shortages in a number of areas. Employers in southwest Edmonton have indicated to me and many other members in this House that the lack of skilled labour is the biggest challenge they face. Our own government projections indicate a labour shortage of 114,000 workers by 2021, and this is affecting our future economic potential. With these pressures it's clear to see that the workforce concerns of Alberta's businesspeople are being ignored. Now in the tone of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark: why, Deputy Premier? Why?

Mr. Lukaszuk: With friends like these, Mr. Speaker, I don't need enemies.

Mr. Speaker, there is truly one dark cloud that's hanging over our Canadian economy. It's the shortage of labour. We all agree throughout Canada that we have to make sure that we maximize on the skills that are available in our province, so jobs for

Albertans first, for Canadians second, and then relying on the outside workforce if we have to. That's what we'll be focusing on, making sure that our young students graduate with skills that are compatible with the economy of Canada.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that in my constituency I have a number of new immigrants who are eagerly looking for work and there are a number of young mothers and fathers looking to get back into the workforce, what specifically is our government doing to address labour challenges? What, Deputy Premier? What?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Speaker, having anyone in any province who is not maximizing on their skills and not contributing to the maximum of their capacity is definitely a loss. So making sure that they are certified, that their skills are recognized in this province and in this country is a priority, and we're working with immigrant groups on that. Making sure that support services through the Ministry of Human Services exist for families so that mothers and single parents can go to work is also very important. At the end of the day, with such low unemployment, we have to make sure that every person works to the maximum of their capacity.

Mr. Jeneroux: To the same minister. If employers cannot find Albertans or Canadians, they'll hire from abroad. Where can employees go to find the assistance available? Where, Deputy Premier? Where?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Human Services has 59 Alberta Works offices throughout the province. They're very accessible. Now there are also websites available where employers list positions that are available to employees. Matching employees with compatible skills is something that's very important. Focusing on our aboriginal community, persons with disabilities, single parents, and those who are often underemployed is very important. But go onto the website, look at Alberta Works, and you will find additional information and resources.

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

Restructuring of PDD Services (continued)

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today hundreds of people from across the province with the greatest of life challenges, with courage and sacrifice came to the Legislature to demonstrate their opposition to what this government is doing to persons with disabilities. The government's agenda to cut \$42 million from their services risks health and safety and is poorly planned according to those who happen to know: the individuals themselves and their families and caregivers. This government is compounding its own financial mismanagement with mismanagement of our most vulnerable Albertans. To the minister: how does this not make a mockery of your much-touted social policy framework of putting people first, being proactive, showing dignity, collaborating?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The social policy framework is a very important document, not only a document

from government but from the community, developed through the community. It's important that we address all issues with dignity and compassion and respect, and the hon. associate minister is doing exactly that, working with persons with disabilities and their families to ensure that the services that they need will be there and that they will have what they need to participate in an inclusive way in our society. The fact that we're changing some processes with respect to the community access program and moving to a better model is demonstration of exactly that dignity and respect.

2:20

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, an organization called SKILLS Society Edmonton must eliminate \$200,000 per month starting July 1. Will the minister tell us how he would accomplish this without risking the health and safety of his clients?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that there are a number of service delivery organizations across the province, and some of them are going to have to change the way they deliver services, from the community access services they provide now to the support services that are necessary to ensure true inclusion of their clients in society. If they cannot make those changes, other organizations will pick up the changes. The focus is not on the organizations. The focus is on the Albertans who need the services and ensuring that they get the services they need to be truly included in a truly inclusive society.

Dr. Swann: Well, it's clear to most of us in Alberta that this government hasn't really planned this change well. It's too short. It's too drastic. Will the minister assure this House that he will delay the implementation of these draconian changes?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, there is clearly some fear and anxiety out there. I talked yesterday in my statement about it. Some organizations like the SKILLS organization that he raised are fearful of the money that they see inside the PDD envelope. They're not looking at money that is outside of that envelope in the Human Services budget. As I said yesterday, if I need additional support, I'll get it. I'm out talking to people across this province. I said yesterday that it's crystal clear that people are concerned about the transition. Not what we're doing but how we're doing it and how fast we're doing it really is the problem. They're concerned about funding. I'm working on both of those. We will do a funding transition . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by Little Bow.

Support for Vulnerable Albertans (continued)

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has made a list of the top 10 ways in which this PC government has broken their promise to Albertans with disabilities. Ten, cut basic income supports of up to \$280 per month to disabled seniors; nine, cut the disability service program at MRU; eight, double the wait time for AISH; seven, terminate Alberta's only American Sign Language program; six, cut 20 per cent of speech pathologists in Edmonton schools. To the minister in charge of standing up for disabled Albertans: why is this PC government so intent on making Alberta's most vulnerable citizens pay the price of its fiscal incompetence?

Mr. Oberle: Well, Mr. Speaker, that top 10 list might have a spot on *David Letterman*, where people appreciate comedy and fiction. The fact of the matter is that this government cares about vulnerable people in our society. I laid out a plan, in fact a few years' plan, about the transformations that are needed in this ministry. We'll make sure that if you need service, you will get service in our province.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, in this province you can either laugh or you can cry.

Given that the fifth way this government is hurting Albertans with disabilities is through a \$180 million cut from pharmacy benefits that will see the sickest and most disabled seniors pay the most and given the fourth way is through a 20 per cent cut to addictions and mental health funding and the third way is through the elimination of almost half of Calgary's palliative home-care nurses, why won't this government stop making Alberta's sick and disabled a target of their cuts?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this province has a very proud record of supporting vulnerable people across society, including seniors, including people with addictions and mental health issues, including many others. To reduce the discussion about such important matters to, for lack of a better term, a top 10 line of questioning does not do justice either to the people involved or to the policy challenges that are in front of us.

Ms Notley: Well, lip service doesn't give justice either.

Given that the number two way this government has let down people with disabilities is by closing the Michener Centre despite promising families that they would not and given that the number one attack on Alberta's citizens with disabilities is a \$60 million cut from programs that secure the safety and quality of life for Alberta's citizens with the most severe disabilities, why won't this government admit that in at least 10 different ways their so-called tough choices are always made at the expense of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens?

Mr. Oberle: Well, there's a good example right there, Mr. Speaker. The party in question here has been lobbying for years that we can do better with community living and more inclusive, more engaging ways of addressing the needs of disabled people in our province, and now they're going to protest that we're closing the Michener Centre. In fact, that is an implementation of a body of research and best practices developed in Alberta and across North America, and we're going to continue with it because it's the right thing to do.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Little Bow, followed by St. Albert.

Michener Centre Closure

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Secrecy and deception are becoming two recognizable traits in this government's continuing care plan. Last year Albertans watched as AHS executives tried to secretly close the Carmangay centre. That's not all. Through FOIP we have learned that AHS wanted to withhold the actual final closure date of the Carmangay centre. The Health minister said that he learned from the mistakes of that closure in Carmangay, but it doesn't look like it to me. To the Health minister: why is this practice of secrecy and miscommunication being allowed to continue with the closure of the Michener Centre?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member well knows – we've had extensive discussions in this House – that the situation surrounding the Carmangay centre and its closure most certainly could have been handled better in terms of relationships with the community and the residents and the staff. We've said that. Alberta Health Services has acknowledged that. They've taken appropriate steps to work better with communities and residents and staff in the future, and that's as it should be.

Mr. Donovan: Mr. Speaker, given that yesterday the junior minister of AT and T stated in this House the government's record of "unprecedented transparency" and something about a gold standard, will this junior minister take the last part of his title seriously and actually take steps to transform the way this government communicates information to all Albertans, especially the ones under their care?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the opposition needs to spend more time listening to and looking at what this government is delivering. We are delivering unprecedented transparency. We have delivered the gold standard in expense disclosure, we are reviewing FOIP, and we've developed whistleblower legislation. That is delivering transparency.

The only thing that I'm seeing delivered from the other side is unprecedented hypocrisy. That's what I'm seeing delivered from the other side.

Mr. Donovan: Mr. Speaker, the name-calling is hurting me.

Given that this government has offered no insight on how they came to the decision to close the Michener Centre and given that they've blindsided all those that are involved, will the junior minister of AT and T stop with his gold star rhetoric and raise the bar on transparency by releasing the list of further closures that are going to affect all of the people and staff so that everyone can be prepared?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, there was no secrecy involved with the Michener Centre. If we could all just brush aside the political rhetoric for a while and just focus on the facts . . . [interjections] Apparently not. If we could just focus on the fact that we're talking about the care of some very vulnerable people in our province. We're taking this step because we know we can do better, and we're going to do better. That's why we're doing it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by Strathmore-Brooks.

Respite Care

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Retired constituents in St. Albert have identified concerns about caring for loved ones that not only adversely affect the quality of life for seniors but also PDD adults. A retired couple from St. Albert, Ross and Irene Boyes, have a 41-year-old son named Bryan. Bryan is developmentally delayed and blind and has always lived at home with his loving parents. The Boyes have searched for weekend respite care for Bryan, and although they've found agencies that provide respite services, the agency waiting lists are long, and they are finding that care is not actually readily available. My first question is to the Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities. How is respite care administered for seniors with adult PDD children, who may have an increased need for relief in their homes?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Mr. Oberle: Well, thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker, and my thanks to the family that came in today. My hat goes off to people that provide care for their loved ones in their home. I know that circumstances are difficult. This is actually one of the reasons why the SIS assessment by itself isn't a good predictor of funding and supports necessary. There are circumstances around an individual.

Our PDD program does provide for respite care. I don't know if the individuals have actually spoken to the CEO of the PDD network. I invite them to do so immediately or to provide their details. I will work with the MLA on resolving the situation.

2:30

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. We hear that staff retention in agencies offering respite care is very hard to maintain due to low wages and challenging work for respite staff. Minister, are we adequately supporting the agencies to hire an appropriate number of qualified employees?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, the disability services network out there is probably one of the keys to providing services going forward. We have some 20,000 people providing care in this province, just unbelievably dedicated and qualified staff. That's why we moved this year to offer a 10 per cent wage increase across the board, last year a one-time bonus. We're going to continue to bring their salaries up to parity. We're also working on a workforce alliance to talk about education levels and recruitment and retention tools so that we have a stable workforce going forward.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the same minister: does your ministry recognize the many families in this predicament who may not have other supports in place, and if so, is there any specific action the government is taking to put plans for proper relief in place for aging parents of adult PDD children?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Oberle: Yes. That's an excellent question, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the MLA for it and, again, the family for coming in today. This is exactly why personal conversations are needed around SIS assessments, so that we can understand what personal circumstances are and allocate resources appropriately. I will take this particular case up with the department and the PDD staff. I certainly invite the family to do so with the CEO and with their MLA. We'll do everything we can in this particular case, but on the broader question it's a very valid one, and I will look at it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, followed by Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

PDD Community Access Funding

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government cannot be trusted to care for persons with developmental disabilities. In Strathmore-Brooks the Newell Community Action Group provides a variety of excellent learning opportunities with the community access grant, which are now at risk due to this government's callous restructuring of PDD programming. Some of the programs that may be discontinued include cooking classes, computer training as well as reading, writing, and math. When will this government acknowledge that they are shortchanging our most vulnerable by slashing programs that provide crucial learning opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities?

Mr. Oberle: We're doing no such thing, Mr. Speaker. We're transforming a PDD system that will allow people to be fully engaged in their community through employment or other opportunities, volunteer work, whatever else. We want to improve the services that we give, not slash them. The hon. member is wrong.

Mr. Hale: Given that this government continues to downplay the significance of these cuts, will the associate minister for PDD explain how this government has somehow determined that reading, writing, and math instruction as well as cooking, volunteering, occupational development, and other community access programs aren't important?

Mr. Oberle: I don't believe I ever said any such thing, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member has some specific examples of programs that are being cut, I would be more than willing to talk to him about it. What I did say yesterday – and it holds true today – is that no service provider out there has a new contract and is aware of any specific cuts. There's a lot of fear and anxiety. We're moving to calm that. We're going to provide services that people need, that improve their quality of life. We're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Hale: I have received many letters from PDD clients upset about these cuts. As one person states, quote: I feel very upset for what you guys did to us; I feel very upset; I feel it's not fair to us; you should try to walk in our shoes and see how it feels. Given that earlier today the minister suggested that if he has to go back and request more money, he will, can he please outline exactly how much more money he will be asking for to fulfill his promise that if you need the service, you will get it?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my statement yesterday, no individual has been informed that they're getting any cuts to their services either. There is a lot of fear and anxiety out there. If the hon. member is truly concerned about the welfare of any particular individual, then why doesn't he forward that letter to my office, and together we can work on a resolution to it? It does no good to talk about it on the floor of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, followed by Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Underground Electricity Transmission Lines

Mr. Quest: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Energy. We hear a lot of myths from the opposition about power transmission costs in Alberta, so if we could get some facts. Will the minister provide the actual cost estimate of a 20-kilometre portion of the 500-kV dual circuit heartland transmission line installed underground through Strathcona county versus the cost of an above ground line?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that the heartland project is a key piece of infrastructure for the underpinning of the economy in this province. The Alberta Utilities Commission estimates the construction of the line to be about \$9.5 million per kilometre for the existing construction. If that were to be an underground solution, it would be \$16 million per kilometre, which is like 70 per cent more. We are determined to protect the interests of consumers in Alberta and keep the costs of this kind of infrastructure down because all Albertans pay for that infrastructure.

Mr. Quest: My first supplementary. To the same minister: what would that cost all Albertans? What's the cost difference, and how would that impact Alberta ratepayers?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, we've given the Alberta Utilities Commission more teeth in order to ensure that proponents, the operators who are building these facilities, have to justify every single dollar that they spend on these transmission lines. That's new. That's a new initiative of this government. Under the leadership of Premier Alison Redford we're working hard to ensure that consumers are protected throughout the piece.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Quest: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplemental. To the same minister: does the technology exist today to construct a 500-kV dual circuit underground line reliable enough to ensure the same level of reliability as an above ground line?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, unlike some, I'm no expert, but it would appear that the work that was done by the Alberta Utilities Commission found that underground cable would actually not be more reliable than an overhead line, especially in winter. There are technical issues related to this. This is something that was clearly looked into at the time of the approval of the heartland line. You know, all Albertans rely upon the system so that when they turn on the switch, the lights go on. All Albertans rely upon that, and they have good reason to.

Notice of Power Line Development Public Meeting

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, before the Premier was the Premier, she promised to restore citizen engagement in public affairs and improve the way all branches of government work. Things sure change quickly. The Alberta Utilities Commission, a branch of government, recently notified people in Cypress-Medicine Hat about an information session being held regarding two power lines. The letter of notification was dated May 1, postmarked May 2. My constituents got the letter on May 7, and the meeting was May 8. Does the government really think that one day's notice for a public meeting is open, transparent, and accountable?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly be happy to take that case under advisement. Clearly, the Alberta Utilities Commission is an independent agency, quasi-judicial in its nature, ensuring that it conducts its responsibilities as it should according to the policy established by the government. I'm happy to look into the individual case.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, the government may not be concerned, but my constituents certainly are.

Given that my constituents only had one day's notice for the meeting and given that one of my constituents who was able to attend the meeting said that the AUC did not provide the attendees with a very good understanding of the opportunities for participation in the review process, people are beginning to wonder: why doesn't the government want Albertans to participate in the review of power line developments? Is this your idea of a gold standard?

Mr. Hughes: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually concerned that Albertans have an opportunity to participate fully in a process. For that reason, I'd be very pleased to take the specific example and look into it and ensure that the process works according to the way it should. You know, there are rules in place, there are practices in

place that are designed to protect the interests of landowners, of those who would be affected by developments, and they should be followed appropriately. In most cases they are, but if there are exceptions, I'm happy to look into that on behalf of Albertans.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will follow up.

Given that my constituent was told to get a lawyer if she wanted her transmission line concerns heard, is the government worried that we are going to run out of lawyers if every Albertan upset with this government is told to get one?

2:40

Mr. Hughes: You know, Mr. Speaker, it would be very unusual for me to express a concern about running out of lawyers.

In the original intent of the earlier questions and the original intent of my response to that, I look forward to receiving specific information from the hon. member and working on behalf of those constituents as well as all Albertans.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the time for QP has expired.

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: We'll carry on with Introduction of Guests, starting with the Associate Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly Mr. Qiang Lin and Gord DeJong, who are seated in the members' gallery. Qiang and Gord run a business known as Siwin, which is presently located in Leduc. They are moving to a new value-added processing facility in Edmonton this October. Siwin provides meal solutions made from top-quality Canadian ingredients to Alberta stores right now as they gear up for export markets. This company currently employs 14 Albertan workers, and it was established with support from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency, the government of Alberta, and foreign investments. I would like to also acknowledge their contribution to yesterday's Asian Heritage Month celebrations. I would ask the members to join me and give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by the Associate Minister of AT and T.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly my guest and constituent, Said Ammar. Said is a chemical engineering graduate from the University of Alberta, and he's also an active volunteer in various community organizations: six years with the Druze Association of Edmonton, including a stint as vice-president of programs, also assisting in organizations such as the World Lebanese Cultural Union Society and other organizations around Edmonton and the province. I would ask him, please, to stand and receive the warm traditional Assembly greetings.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation, followed by Calgary-Glenmore.

Mr. Scott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly our ministerial intern, George Huang. George joins us for the summer from the University of Calgary, where he is currently studying law. I'm sure he's very excited by the discussions here

today about lawyers. George spends his extracurricular time providing legal aid to clients through the university student legal assistance program. He plays rugby, soccer, and fencing and is also fluent in Mandarin. I'm very pleased to have him as part of my team this summer, and I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this House.

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

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am humbled today to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature two-thirds of my office staff, individuals who are a significant part of my success as an MLA. First, Carrie McKay has two daughters and a stepson. She is an active community volunteer in Parkland county and was an energetic member of the re-election campaign of our colleague the MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert. Carrie is a legislative assistant for the MLA for Calgary-Hawkwood and myself. She runs our calendars, prepares our documents for meetings, and is the calm centre in our Annex offices. To quote my colleague: Carrie is a fabulous, calm, and resourceful assistant, a joy to work with. Please stand, Carrie.

My second introduction is Devon Dinsdale. Devon is graduating from Mount Royal University with a bachelor of arts in policy studies and is a resident of Calgary-Glenmore. Devon brings research experience and analytical skills to my Calgary office. He is also a pilot and a wilderness guide and ski instructor. Each day I ask what he finds fascinating, and he always has a challenging question or observation regarding how this world is different from the textbooks and classroom scenarios in school. Devon, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislature.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members Nancy Dick and John Ressler* from the disability action hall, Ryan Geake from the Calgary Scope Society, and Donna Dunn from disability studies at Mount Royal University, here today to support the protest occurring on the steps of the Legislature and add their voices to calls for this government to reverse its devastating cuts to PDD services. These organizations have had their budgets slashed along with PDDs. The cuts will prevent these organizations from delivering vital front-line services to the developmentally disabled. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Legislature.

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

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. David Orlecki from Two Hills. I appreciate him taking the time today to come to the Legislature. After meeting with him last week, he told me he wanted to come and visit for the first time to see what really happens here as well as to take in the tour of this beautiful building. Mr. Orlecki works as a construction co-ordinator and has been active in the Lions Club and the fish and game association of Two Hills. I'd ask Mr. Orlecki to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Dorward: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a friend of mine, Ms Darlene Gallant. Darlene is here with the Lung Association for Breathing

Matters day, representing idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable disease. The only option is a lung transplant. Bill 207 recognizes the importance of organ and tissue donation, and this registry is very important for all Albertans. Darlene's husband, David, was on the lung transplant list for two and a half years, but unfortunately he passed away before receiving a transplant. I would ask that Darlene rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by Calgary-Currie.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly representatives of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association, which celebrates 30 years of accomplishments and ongoing contributions within the Filipino community in our capital city. Today I have nine guests seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to please rise as I mention their names: Mrs. Joyce Dizon, current president; Mrs. Nenita Gallardo, board member; Mrs. Nellie Naval, board member; Mrs. Lucy Manuntag, business manager; Mrs. Lucy Sagun, member, recently celebrating her 95th birthday; Mr. Ted Dizon, member; Mr. Pol Naval, member; Mr. Cesar Manuntag, member; and Mrs. Eloisa Lau, long-time friend and supporter of seniors. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all my guests for adding immeasurably to the Filipino community, our city, province, and country. I would now ask that we provide them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Just before we go to Calgary-Currie, do I understand that the leader of the New Democrats' guests have not arrived? Similarly, Calgary-Shaw, your guests have not arrived?

We'll go to Calgary-Currie, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Dr. Mark Anselmo from Calgary. Dr. Anselmo is the section chief of respiratory medicine at the Calgary Children's hospital. I had the honour and privilege to serve as principal to his wonderful children, Emily, Sean, and Daniel, when I was at St. Michael school. I would like to thank Dr. Anselmo for all of his hard work today in promoting Breathing Matters day at the Legislature. I'd now ask Dr. Anselmo to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Sherwood Park.

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions. My first is to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Michele Ford, who is seated in the public gallery. Michele is here to raise awareness about food allergies in Alberta schools. She's a strong advocate for anaphylaxis awareness and is also a mother of a child who suffers from this severe condition. Those of you who follow on Twitter will see that her Twitter handle is @albertaadvocate. I would ask that she rise and that we provide her with the traditional warm greeting of this Assembly.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, I would like us to recognize today the constituents from Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville who were here through question period. They are three constituents of my riding that have provided the riding with a great deal of support through their

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

many community activities. Tom and Mae Adamyk are from St. Michael, active in the agricultural society, and Mae is also the vice-chair of the Lamont health centre. With them today is Hazel Anaka from Andrew, Alberta. I'd like to recognize Hazel for her work on a new event, Babas and Borscht, which will be on August 24 to 25 in Andrew. I would like us to recognize their attendance here today.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park, followed by Edmonton-South West.

Ms Olesen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly four constituents of mine who were with us today during question period. First, we have Gordon Swityk, who is a mechanical engineer who retired from Sherritt International. He's the director of infrastructure for the Edmonton Radial Railway Society and operates the streetcars going over the High Level Bridge. Also, we have Doug Sklar, who is a valued member of our community and is a retired professional forester living in Sherwood Park. We have Robert Parks. He's the president of the Sherwood Park PC association and a long-time volunteer in our community and was a key volunteer in my provincial campaign. Tom Lo is also a Sherwood Park resident, who is the owner of T and T mechanical. He's been actively involved in democracy since he moved here from China in 1977, being involved in every single provincial election. He was nominated and won volunteer of the year by PC Alberta last year. If you could please join me in welcoming them today.

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

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my young friend Amy Peng. Amy was an applicant for MLA for a Day last week, but due to an exam and other school work, Amy had to regretfully decline the opportunity. However, we just couldn't keep her away. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to meet with Amy after this. As for her application she is more than qualified to be MLA for a Day. I'd ask that Amy and her guests seated in the members' gallery today please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I proceed with my introduction, I just wanted to ask the House through you for unanimous consent to waive rule 7(7) and continue the Routine past 3 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Deputy Government House Leader has requested unanimous consent for us to move on beyond 3 o'clock to conclude the Routine if it becomes necessary. If anyone is opposed to that motion for unanimous consent, please say so now.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Now, on with your introduction.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One thing I've often said is that one thing Alberta needs is more lawyers, and I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you an aspiring one, Matthew Glass. Matthew was born in Toronto, raised in Edmonton, and is currently attending law school at the University of

Ottawa. Matthew will be working out of my Edmonton office this summer on stakeholder meetings, policy analysis, and event planning. We're very happy to have him along this summer, and in addition to asking for the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly, please wish him a belated happy birthday from last Friday.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Well, that's good because that set a record. I think well over 30 people were introduced today.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have the Leader of the Official Opposition, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

Wildrose Sessional Retrospective

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another session is just about in the books, and for the members opposite it can't end soon enough. When the last bell rings, they'll hit the highway faster than you can say Mayo Clinic, and who can blame them? Day after day of waste, scandal, incompetence, and broken promises. It's been another ugly session from a government that can't seem to do anything right. In fact, I'd say that the only thing more daunting than facing another day in the Legislature is having to go home to their constituents to answer for it all.

Let's review, shall we? After a debt-free decade thanks to the leadership and courage of Premier Ralph Klein, this Premier took us back to the 1980s, back to the days of structural deficits and crushing debt. With the back-in-debt budget Albertans will be on the hook for \$17 billion of debt by the time the next election rolls around, with no plan to pay it back.

On we go to the never-ending stream of health care executive expense scandals. During the session we learned AHS brass had dinged taxpayers for everything from personal life coaches to self-help seminars to private health treatment in the United States.

Still going. Delays in the court system led to accused violent criminals walking free and brave victims like Dani Polsom without the justice they deserved.

Not done yet. AHS decided a good way to save money was to axe discounted parking for our war heroes. When confronted, they wondered aloud: what did these veterans ever do to deserve special treatment? Shameful.

Onward. We saw elder abuse cases; political donation loopholes; a pharmacy debacle; bungled consultations with First Nations; near weekly protests, including another one today to protest cuts to programs for persons with development disabilities; and more millions of dollars for PC insiders, this time for failed staffers in the Premier's office.

All of this in the last two months, Mr. Speaker. We don't envy you, hon. members opposite. This is a lot to answer for. Enjoy your summer.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by Calgary-Varsity.

New Democrat Sessional Retrospective

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the session has been rife with broken promises from this PC government. They broke their promises to provide stable and predictable funding for education, health care, and postsecondary institutions. Alberta's school boards and teachers are left with a bad deal that will leave them with ballooning class sizes, fewer students with the opportu-

nity as well to participate in extracurricular activities because of this government's budget cuts and broken promises. The PCs cut \$147 million from postsecondary education. Students across the province will lose opportunities to take programs such as nursing, office administration, disability studies and will end up paying for these PC government broken promises with increased noninstructional fees.

Across the province vital health care services for Albertans are being cut. Half of the palliative care home-care nurses in Calgary, for example, have been laid off, and laboratory services in rural communities have been slashed.

The Alberta New Democrats have been holding the government to account for all of these broken promises as they tried to push through important legislation at breakneck speed. Meanwhile the Official Opposition has given this government a free pass at the end of this session. Mr. Speaker, because there is little difference between this government's policy and the ideology of those of the Official Opposition, there's very little that the Wildrose can really disagree with in this government's policy agenda. Both the government and the Official Opposition, for example, supported undercutting collective bargaining by legislating the teachers' deal. They both have no problem with legislation that violates the privacy rights of vulnerable children.

New Democrats are proud of working hard in this session, standing up for today's Alberta families, for students, for seniors, for Albertans with disabilities, and workers.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Innovation in Alberta

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a more positive note, reconnecting science to society has a deeper purpose than developing the next marketable technology. It's about creating the kind of society we want to create, a society in which there is optimism, confidence, and purpose. Scientists need to know why they are doing science, and society needs to know why it supports them.

Mr. Speaker, this wisdom from quantum physicist Neil Turok, director of the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, Ontario, funded by Research in Motion, reinforces the virtuous circle between pure science and industrial innovation, and that learning is well appreciated in my constituency of Calgary-Varsity, home to corporate R and D, the University of Calgary, and a vibrant research park.

Here's a sampling of the innovation lineup in Calgary-Varsity. U of C's research is multidisciplinary and often done in partnership with companies or fellow institutions, and the outcomes are impressive. For example, in the health care field researchers have discovered a plant-based insulin that is a fraction of the cost of today's current price and a new painkiller more effective than morphine.

Innovate Calgary is a partnership between Calgary Technologies, the city of Calgary incubator, and the University of Calgary to support tech start-ups and commercialization of research.

Alberta Innovates: Tech Futures, a government initiative, also partners with the U of C and others to focus and advance innovation; for example, supporting nanoresearch into new storage for wind and solar electricity.

There are smaller players, too. CETAC-West, championed by innovation guru Joe Lukacs, serves as a hub for 70-plus small and medium enterprises annually, including, for example, Brooks-

based TCB Welding, that develops and manufactures a cleaner and more efficient alternative to conventional pumpjacks.

Corporations can also lead the research. N-Solv Corporation, a private company, utilized funding from the Climate Change Emission Management Corporation to develop a pilot for an in-situ gravity draining process that utilizes warm solvent vapour as its working fluid in lieu of water.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Edmonton-Decore.

3:00 Food Allergy Awareness Month

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May is Food Allergy Awareness Month. More than 50 per cent of Canadians know someone with a known food allergy. It's not just all about peanut butter. There are currently 170 foods that are known to cause allergic reactions. However, nine foods are responsible for about 90 per cent of allergic reactions. These allergic reactions can occur at any given age. Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and can cause death. I personally have watched a member of my family have to deal with an anaphylactic reaction. You feel totally helpless as you watch someone struggle to speak and to breathe. Seeing a child suffer through this type of reaction would be far worse, and anyone who works with children should know and be aware of this serious condition.

Awareness and support of the community are key to keeping our children safe. Allergy and anaphylaxis information and response resources are part of our School Boards Association policies, but despite the policy advisory of school employees to receive training to recognize signs of an anaphylactic reaction and how to administer an EpiPen, many have not received the appropriate training, training that takes less than an hour.

I encourage you not to ignore early symptoms, especially if you've had a reaction in the past. Always take a possible reaction seriously and act quickly, and remember that not every reaction will always look the same.

Visiting with us here today is a strong advocate for awareness and training for our educators, Michele Ford, a mother I had the opportunity to introduce earlier. She is the mother of a child who lives with anaphylaxis. If your child has a food allergy, you should seek proper medical attention and be very aware.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Filipino Senior Citizens Association Anniversary

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege for me to rise today to commemorate the 30th anniversary milestone and ongoing contributions of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Edmonton, also known as FSCA. The establishment of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association was inspired by many individuals, including Mrs. Tekla Beltran, Mrs. Lucy Sagun, Mrs. Annie Dioquino, and Mr. Maxima Corpus, to name a few. Also, through the instrumental assistance of numerous Filipino seniors the FSCA became a registered not-for-profit organization on February 19, 1982.

With admiration and sincere appreciation the raison d'être of FSCA of Edmonton encourages Filipino seniors to help one another, enjoy each other's company, and maintain goodwill and togetherness between and amongst themselves. Mr. Speaker, the

association's officers and members are known for their humbleness, personal warmth, and strong leadership in support of the tireless dedication to their operations and the inherent betterment of its members.

Special highlights of formidable accomplishments which galvanize and provide meaning to the FSCA include hosting a special citizenship court at the provincial museum and receiving a citation for outstanding community service; one of their marquee events, organizing annual FSCA Valentine Queen of Hearts and Miss Little Queen events; and celebrating Pabasa during the Lenten season, which is part of Filipino culture and tradition, for all to appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta spirit, essence, and history of the FSCA with pride is based upon the shared volunteer effort and commitment of the present and past members. My heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all those helping hands who have given so generously to build and strengthen the long-standing success of the FSCA. Congratulations and best wishes for 30 years of continued accomplishments. Mabuhay. Maraming salamat po.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Support for Small Business

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got a letter this week from a business owner who got a government grant. He told me he thought subsidies were a good use of government money. He used his grant to grow his business, employing a dozen people, accessing local inputs to produce items otherwise unavailable in Alberta. And he invited me to visit his operation.

I thanked him for the invitation and pointed out that government does not have any money of its own. Although it was a grant and, therefore, free money for him, it nonetheless came from the taxes of profitable businesses and regular taxpayers. I told him I was pleased to hear that his business is growing and prospering. I wrote: if it's because your products are meeting a large enough need in a cost-effective way, then you'll continue to succeed, and if you do, I hope you'll choose to repay the grant from your profits.

The economic principle here is that for government to have money to grant, it has to take it from successful businesses and hard-working taxpayers. I've lost contracts to subsidized competitors who used my own taxes to underbid me. My employees and I were not amused.

Governments do not create wealth. Too often they overtax and misallocate it. Government's job is to create a stable environment in which businesses can prosper, free from overregulation and unnecessary red tape. I applaud the government for resisting suggestions from the less economically enlightened left wing in this House about progressive income tax. I encourage you to go further and eliminate corporate welfare all together. Have faith in the free market, reduce red tape, and then stand back and watch the economy grow under a renewed Alberta advantage. But I know you won't. That's why we'll be trading places in 2016.

Presenting Petitions

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

Mr. McAllister: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise to table a petition that has been vetted, reviewed, and approved by Parliamentary Counsel as to form. This petition has been signed by 1,600-plus people from Chestermere and area who are seeing their property

taxes go up by 53 per cent this year. The petitioners are asking the government to please phase in this increase in the property tax over a period of four years or more to lessen the financial impact on them. The petition was put together by a member of my community. His name is Pete Tindal. He's a great advocate. He didn't even have to go door to door to get 1,600-plus signatures.

If you would indulge me with one more point, Mr. Speaker, the frustration for the people of Chestermere is that although being told in here over and over again that it would be phased in, they are still getting 53 per cent this year, so they have risen up and put together a petition.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You need only look at Alberta's schools, communities, families, and playgrounds to see Alberta's promise, our children and youth. We live in a dynamic province with a young population and strive to give young people every opportunity to be successful. Alberta's Promise and its many business, nonprofit agencies, and community partners across the province seek to support children and youth to realize their potential. Alberta's Promise 2012 annual report incorporates the following information: program mandate and activities; messages from our Premier, from myself, from vice-chairs Bernie Kollman and Sue Riddell Rose, and from Ruth Copot, Alberta's Promise executive director; and the Premier's Council membership and board listing. I'm pleased to table the 2012 annual report for Alberta's Promise and would ask all members of the Assembly to stay tuned for further messages about Alberta's Promise and its impact on our province.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I forgot to table this. It's a petition, but it is not in order to be presented, so we're tabling it. I forgot to do it yesterday, and no fewer than four people have reminded me, so here I go.

This is signed by people from Taber, other places in southern Alberta, Calgary, Grassy Lake – oh, my goodness, all over Alberta. They are asking that

the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Alberta to refrain from reallocating the estimated \$42 million from the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Access Program into other government budgets as it will create substantial financial and personal hardships for both clients and service providers.

I am tabling this on behalf of my colleague the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. I'm sorry; I can't even tell you how many people have signed this, probably close to a thousand.

Thank you.

3:10

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence I have three tablings today. I'd like to table another letter sent to Premier Redford from a concerned worker who provides community disability services to adults living with developmental disabilities in Lethbridge. This is the first tabling.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I have the appropriate number of copies of a petition which calls on the government to increase post-secondary funding rather than imposing devastating cuts on college and universities. There are 1,377 signatures in this tabling.

My third tabling is the appropriate number of copies of a petition which calls on the PC government to protect the rights of injured workers by amending the Workers' Compensation Act. There are 113 signatures on this.

I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I actually have a fourth tabling. This is a letter sent to the Minister of Human Services from a community disability services provider for adults living with developmental disabilities. They are extremely concerned about the cuts to PDD.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Just a reminder that it's a longstanding tradition to not refer to members by their private names, which I believe you did in your first tabling.

Let's move on to Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Saskiw: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings with the requisite copies. The first is a document that's been signed by hundreds and hundreds of people from Elk Point. They're asking Alberta Health Services to stop the closure of the acute care beds in their facility and requesting that "the Health Centre be restored to full capacity with 12 acute care beds in full operation and Emergency Services open 24 hours 7 days per week." This has been a very stressful time for the people in that area, and I'm going to continue to advocate on that.

The second tabling is a petition from the same area, Elk Point, again with hundreds and hundreds of names signed onto it. These people are upset with the pharmacy services.

Two big issues in the Elk Point area: obviously, some of the decisions made by this government aren't going over well there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, followed by Strathmore-Brooks.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually have two different tablings today. The first tabling is over 3,700 people, Friends of Michener, who have signed to show that they are not happy with the closure of Michener Centre, and they have also forwarded all of these to Minister Oberle – sorry; the minister of PDD's office. They have also gone as far as to have a total petition of, I believe, over 18,000. So that'll be coming his way.

The second tabling is the two documents I referred to today in my question. The first document is the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta election platform 2012, page 9, where it says, "A new PC government will increase the number of long-term care spaces" not continuing care, "by 1,000 per year." That's very clearly stated in their platform. The second document is the FOIPed copy of Alberta Health Services, which we're required to do because the government doesn't give us any information. We did that, and it is the Alberta Health Services detailed capital submission for seniors' care facilities across Alberta. It gives the zones, and it shows a reduction in long-term care spaces of just under 1,700.

They're all there.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member, and just a cautionary note to you as well that it is not appropriate to refer to ministers by their proper names.

Let us move on to Strathmore-Brooks, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today with the requisite number of copies. The first is a letter from Pat Whyte, who is the Newell Community Action Group executive director. She explains in her letter her concerns for the excellent programs that they support through the community access and day programs. I would like to table that.

Also, I would like to table the requisite number of copies of 12 letters I received from clients with the Newell Community Action Group in Brooks. I would strongly urge the minister to read these letters. They're very heartfelt, and they get right to the point.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dorward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table 88 postcards of the My Face, My Place campaign asking the minister to reverse the cuts to PDD.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statement by the Speaker

Page Recognition

The Speaker: Hon. members, if I could have your attention, please, for a special tribute that I wish to do on your behalf. Each year we are served in this Assembly by some very dedicated young people who have qualified to be our pages. The role of a page, as we would all know, is an extremely honourable one and one that these pages take very seriously and deliver to the utmost of their abilities. However, there comes a time when some of them move on, to be replaced by others.

Before I invite the Deputy Speaker to make a presentation, I want to read you a letter, dated today, addressed to me on your behalf from the retiring pages. It reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker,

As Session once again comes to a close, we face the regrettable reality that some of us will not be returning as Pages in the fall. In our capacity as Pages, we have had front-row seats to the legislative process and, we would like to think, have left our own humble footprints in Alberta's history. For this wonderful opportunity, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude.

We would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, the Table Officers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the LASS, the lovely ladies in 315 and 412 and all the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office for making our service to the Assembly memorable. We must also thank all of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, without whom, our role in the Chamber would not exist. Additionally, we would like to congratulate both the newly elected Members and you, Mr. Speaker on an admirable first year of service in your new roles.

We entered the Page Programme as ordinary high school students, each with our own preconceived notions about politics.

Hear, hear.

However, we all leave with a broader understanding of the human side of politicians and those who support them. We have come to know real people with real gifts, flaws, and quirks. By observing them, we have had the opportunity to see that it is quite possible for real people to do great things with their lives, and stand as an inspiration for ourselves to aim higher than we might have previously thought possible. Even when nothing else our time here was entertaining; perhaps it is a pity that Question Period is not broadcast during prime time.

For over a century, the laughter and footstep of Pages have crisscrossed through this building, and we truly are honored to have been able to participate in the history of the Alberta Legislature. If every citizen of this province was as informed as we are now, parliamentary democracy in Alberta would certainly be better served. It is now our duty to use our knowledge of the political process to improve society in whatever path we each choose.

Farewell, and don't forget us.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen McClure, Donald Ademaj, James Bonnell, Ann Dang, Claire Edwards, Gabby Peter and Lizzie Winton

Let's give them a round of applause.

And now for our pièce de résistance, a special presentation on our collective behalves by the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I too want to thank our pages for that wonderful tribute to us.

Hon. members, it is with regret that we say goodbye to seven of our hard-working pages at the end of this session. They are Ellen McClure, the head page, Donald Ademaj, James Bonnell, Ann Dang, Claire Edwards, Gabriella Peter, and Elizabeth Winton. I ask you to join me in recognizing the efforts of our diligent pages, who daily show patience and understanding, and believe me, Mr. Speaker, they do need a lot of patience with our many demands. They carry out their tasks with attention to duty, including some very late nights of work with us, as recent as last night.

On behalf of all members each departing page is given a token of our appreciation. These gifts are from the personal contribution of every member of our Assembly. Along with the gifts are our best wishes. We are honoured to have our pages work with us in the Legislature to serve Albertans.

I now ask our Deputy Chair of Committees to hand a gift to our head page, Ellen McClure, who is representing all the retiring pages. Ellen, in turn, will present each of the rest of the retiring pages with their gifts from us later.

Mr. Speaker, I might want to add that some of them were sobbing as you read that letter. They are genuinely pleased and touched by their service with us, and we are touched by them. Ellen, thank you so much. God bless you.

3:20

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. pages, you will go down in history as the class of 2012-2013, but for us you'll go down as class, period.

What better way to follow, then, with points of order? I can't think of anything better.

On a serious note, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, the leader of the New Democrat opposition, rose on a point of order, so we'll recognize him or someone on his behalf at this time.

Point of Order

Factual Accuracy

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising on a point of order in reference to Standing Order 23(h), (i), (j). The comment that was made by the associate minister was clearly intended to create disorder in this House and, quite frankly, was untrue.

First and foremost, I and the members of the Alberta NDP caucus have been having ongoing conversations with organizations, with caregivers, and with people with developmental disabilities for years, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, the hon. associate minister made a claim that we were not present at the rally that took place outside, where the

Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, the Member for Edmonton-Calder, and myself were in attendance at the PDD rally, speaking with many of the participants, many representatives of organizations, many family members, and adults with developmental disabilities themselves. I'll also add that there were members from all the opposition parties at this rally.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the associate minister to withdraw his incorrect, false, and offensive comments.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there's another point of order on this same point, I believe, from Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills. Let's hear the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills on this same point. We'll deal with the two points of order together, and then we'll recognize the hon. associate minister.

Mr. Saskiw: Very briefly, for my second point of order, I will withdraw that one. I'd like to just speak to this one here.

Again, I rise today in accordance with Standing Order 23(h), (i), (j). Often in this Legislature we have a different opinion, or we have different interpretations of facts. What the associate minister of PDD did here, though, was make a statement that was completely and utterly untrue. Whether that was deliberate or not, the consequences are the same, and that's what gives rise to this point of order.

His comments were with respect to attendance at rallies with respect to PDD, and I think it's categorically true that members from our caucus – Calgary-Shaw, Medicine Hat, the Leader of the Official Opposition as well as members of other caucuses, I believe, the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview and perhaps others from his caucus – did attend that. What is clear is that we are listening. This is a very serious issue. Cuts to PDD are very, very serious.

One aspect I would like to mention, though, is that there is a precedent in this House that we are not to refer to the absence or presence of a member in this Assembly. Along that same principle, although it's not a hard-and-fast rule, I think this should be applied here, that the member should not be speaking about the absence or presence of an individual at a certain event outside, particularly when it's completely untrue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat amused that I'm being called on a question of order that something I've said offends sensibilities in the House, creates, in fact, disorder, in part by the hon. member, who interrupted me so much that I had to not deliver an answer today.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that I didn't say that the hon. members opposite weren't present at the rally. I said that I did not see them in the crowd talking to individuals, and that is actually the truth. I did not see them. However, I endeavour not to create disorder in this House. I endeavour to uphold its fine traditions. I withdraw any offending remark unreservedly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The associate minister has withdrawn his comments, and it will be noted as such. We'll move on, then.

The last point of order has been withdrawn voluntarily by the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills just a few moments ago.

That concludes our Routine for today, including points of order. I think we are now able to move on.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 26

Assurance for Students Act

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. J. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and move third and final reading of Bill 26, the Assurance for Students Act.

This legislation is necessary to ensure that schoolchildren and their families can count on stability in classrooms across the province. The Assurance for Students Act will allow the education system to put its focus back where it belongs, on the student.

I'm proud that this legislation puts students first, but I am disappointed that it has come to this. Legislation is by no means an ideal way to deal with labour negotiations. However, with 61 of 62 school boards supporting the framework agreement and 60 of 62 ATA locals, representing 95 per cent of Alberta's teachers, we simply cannot let a small minority prevent this agreement from going forward. It's time to do what's right for kids and refocus our efforts on bringing the vision of Inspiring Education to life. Therefore, I hope all members will join me in supporting this extremely important piece of legislation.

Thank you.

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

Mr. McAllister: Mr. Speaker, thank you, and thank you to the minister for his work on this bill. I spoke to it at length in a previous reading, and I give it our full blessing, from myself and from our caucus. As the Official Opposition Education critic and as a parent we all want to see, you know, what's best in the classroom.

But I do think it's pertinent to touch on an issue from the Alberta School Boards Association. I would like to, if I could, read a letter into the record from the president of the Alberta School Boards Association, which is a public letter now, outlining the frustrations from the 62 elected boards in the province of Alberta and how we got here. This is from Jacquie Hansen.

What I am hearing from most school boards is that they are relieved these torturous labour talks are behind us. As evidenced by the local votes, most school boards decided the promise of four years of labour peace and a clear idea about what teacher salary costs will be for the next four years made this deal acceptable.

I must stress, that even as school boards signed on to this deal, they expressed concerns about the structural changes the deal makes to decision-making processes with regards to teacher assignments, classrooms, schools and jurisdictions. We don't know the details of the role the exceptions committees will play in overseeing principals' and superintendents' local decisions. We know that moving to the 907 hour limit for all teachers will be a costly proposal for some school boards.

As this process winds down, I must say the path these talks took – through all their iterations – is not a journey school boards or our association would willingly follow again. At many junctures – including this proposed legislation – democratic rights were trampled. There was undue intervention in local discussions and school board decisions. Certainly, having the minister of education meet in the final days with school boards to seek reversal of their decisions was most unusual.

We have taken some time to review the legislation and have these observations:

1. First, we are relieved that, with a key exception, Bill 26 reflects the intent and language of the Framework Agreement. This was important because teacher locals and school boards based their decisions about the Framework Agreement on that language. Significant changes in the language of the legislation would have been very problematic.
2. We are deeply concerned the government has excluded school boards, who are the employers, from finalizing a central component of the Framework Agreement: the wording of the Ministerial Order. Through this legislation, the provincial government has given the union – the Alberta Teachers' Association – the ability to "veto" the final wording of this Ministerial Order. School boards – through the ASBA – will not have the same influence on the outcome. We will be "consulted". Therefore, under this legislation, the government will negotiate directly with the union – without the employers – school boards at the table to finalize this important document which outlines teacher working conditions.
3. We have heard a great deal from the minister of education about his dismay that not all teacher locals and not all school boards accepted this deal. And this made Bill 26 necessary for moving forward. The reality is the minister of education himself set the requirement that all 62 school board and all 62 teacher locals ratify this deal. From the outset our association urged the minister not to impose this artificial requirement on such an important decision. Our view is that this put unnecessary pressure on the process and local decision-makers. We had suggested a process whereby boards and teacher locals would "opt-in" to an agreement. To have the minister criticize the process – of his own making – is curious.
4. Finally – and this is something we totally agree with the minister on. We need a new bargaining system in this province. We look forward to working with him on this. In 2003, the Alberta Government's Learning Commission came to the same conclusion – and recommended the government change the bargaining structure.

That was 10 years ago.

No action was taken. In 2005, based on the Learning Commission's recommendation, the Alberta School Boards Association proposed a specific bargaining model to the government... Again no action was taken. In 2008, the ASBA's Fair Bargaining for a Better Future report... also called for a change to the bargaining structure in Alberta. Again no action. I respectfully suggest that the minister of education take a look at these reports using the Learning Commission's 10-year-old document as a starting point.

That letter, again, is from Jacquie Hansen, the president of the Alberta School Boards Association, which represents the 62 elected school boards in this province, the boards that we as members should be consulting with and discussing what's going on in our schools. Many of us do. I would recommend to all of us regardless of what party we sit with that when we leave for our break, we take the time to meet with our school boards, hear what they're learning in our schools and what they're recommending. Clearly, they have some suggestions going forward.

3:30

I'd like to end on a positive, Mr. Speaker. With the relationship that I have with the Minister of Education, I can express my views and disagreements with him respectfully. I believe he worked very hard on this deal, and he inherited some of this. I would be willing to work with him in any capacity to work toward a better process in the future. I'm happy for our kids and, as I said, honoured to be the Official Opposition Education critic and see this legislation pass.

Thank you.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief in my comments on this bill. I've not had an opportunity yet to speak to it. Just a few points.

First of all, I along with my colleagues in the NDP caucus will be voting against this bill, and there are several different reasons for that. I want, of course, to make it very clear that that vote is still within the context of our belief that it is important to establish certainty and stability within our K to 12 education sector. The way to establish that certainty and stability is for this government to keep its promise to maintain certainty and stability within the K to 12 education sector.

For instance, there were certain three-year funding commitments made by this government that would have ensured both teachers and school boards were in the position to negotiate a fair agreement that met the needs of both sides. The reason that that became more of a difficulty, of course, was that this government, immediately upon getting elected, broke its promise with respect to K to 12 education funding and immediately threw the whole system into a crisis. This is the product of a fundamental broken promise. That's the first thing, Mr. Speaker.

The second thing about this bill, which is very offensive to me, is that, of course, it is being brought basically as an emergency. We're ramming it through, and we're imposing time limits and closure on this bill. Now, there is no emergency right now, just to be very clear. There's not a work stoppage in place right now. That's normally the context in which the government uses this kind of heavy-handed approach. The emergency that is in place right now is that if we were to simply respect this Assembly and respect the rules of the parliamentary process, the emergency that this government is trying to avoid is that they would be asked to be in the House a bit longer.

We all know how that creates a crisis in their minds because the last thing they appear to want is to be in this Assembly openly and transparently debating in a fulsome way each and every element of their legislative proposals. That apparently is the emergency that has pushed us into this situation, where the government is, I would suggest, misusing the rules of the House to ram through this bill. So just in principle it's really difficult to support such a mechanism and a precedent like this being set.

Now, the third reason why I am concerned about this bill, of course, is that it fundamentally undermines the authority of locally elected bodies and the ability of locally elected bodies to exercise their authority as contemplated under their legislation and under the overall system of legislation that governs K to 12 education.

We have one school board, for instance – granted, it's only one school board, but it's a school board that represents 20 per cent of students in the province – that voted against this. We had the Edmonton public school board, which did in fact vote in favour. By all means, you know, it was a close vote, but it did vote in favour, so the government is certainly entitled to rely on that vote. Nonetheless, they were very reluctant in that choice because they were concerned about how this highlights a structural problem

with respect to the delivery of K to 12 education in this province, where the school boards are asked to take the blame for everything that goes wrong but are not given the authority to make decisions about their own funding.

This is sort of a long-standing problem, which really flies in the face of the respect for local democracy and direct democracy and those who get involved in running for school trustee in an effort to reflect the desires of the parents and the children and the families in their electoral districts. This runs against that.

Of course, we know that once you take into account inflation and you take into account the increase in the number of students, effectively our school boards are being asked to wrestle with cuts, so they're trying to wrestle with those at the same time that they're having terms and conditions imposed upon them. It disrespects their authority, and it also puts them into a rather untenable position.

The final reason, Mr. Speaker, that I will be voting against this bill is because it fundamentally assaults the principle of collective bargaining. Now, I appreciate that this government doesn't have a tremendous amount of respect for that and that we have labour legislation in this province that relates to many public-sector workers, which flies in the face of the International Labour Organization's conventions on basic human rights. Indeed, this government and this province have been cited repeatedly by the International Labour Organization, a subsidiary of the United Nations, for their breach of the United Nations convention with respect to the rights of working people by bringing in legislation that negates and rejects the value of collective bargaining. Obviously, when the government legislates an agreement over the objections of a bargaining agent and in this case two bargaining agents, it is disrespecting the fundamental principle around the importance of collective bargaining.

This does actually relate back to the best interests of our children, Mr. Speaker. If our kids are going to thrive, the teachers who work with them day in and day out need to be respected, and they have chosen to be part of a bargaining unit which has the right to collectively bargain on the terms and conditions of employment. Quite frankly, telling teachers that they need to go for the next four years without a pay raise is, in my view, disrespectful to them and to the work that they do.

3:40

You know, the minister would like to say that the majority of teachers agreed with this deal. That may well be the case, but here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. The ATA, as is its right, voted on a ratification process. The ratification process that they voted on was one where each local got a say. The ATA itself has put the ratification process into place and has said: this is how we are going to make sure we respect the democratic rights of each of the members that we represent. It requires every local to endorse the agreement. As you know, every local did not endorse this agreement. This flies in the face of the democratic process by which the ATA has established how it will ratify or not ratify. This agreement was not ratified by the ATA by the terms of its own process.

In short, then, this bill represents the trampling over of a number of significant rights and responsibilities of the parties here. This is happening (a) because the government broke its promise on education funding and (b) because this government is in crisis. We're in the Legislature right now, and they don't like to be here. That is an unfortunate abuse of this process, and we cannot support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, we'll go to the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by the leader of the New Democrat opposition.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my first opportunity to speak to Bill 26, Assurance for Students Act. Notwithstanding some of the comments from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona I think there are pressing issues in the education system, and after this length of discussion, debate, and negotiation we do require action. However, there was concern expressed by one of the ATA members with section 2(2), which reads as follows. I hope the minister can give a little clarity before we move to the vote.

- (2) In addition to the modifications referred to in subsection (1), the Minister may, by order, make further modifications to the Framework Agreement with respect to the role of the ASBA under Parts C and E of the Framework Agreement.

This is seen by the association to be quite ambiguous. Can the minister comment on what the intent of this section is, what the implications are, and could he clarify whether or not this could be a means for cutting out the Alberta School Boards Association from further negotiations? This is, I think, a reasonable request since there is some ambiguity in that section.

Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this bill. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Mr. J. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to answer that question – it's a good question – and maybe throw it back at the member. There are a couple of exceptions to the framework agreement in this legislation, and they relate to the role of the ASBA. There is no intention to change the role of the ASBA or do anything beyond just getting this legislation across the finish line. This is just a logistics piece, just for this agreement, so it won't affect their broader roles. There's no intention to do that. It really has to do with the ability to turn around and get decisions from the ASBA in a timely manner.

The ministerial order was sent to both the ASBA and the ATA some weeks ago, after we helped build it with the three groups. We have approval back from the ATA already. We were not able to get approval back from the ASBA because they need to wait to get approvals from all of their members. Obviously, all of their members didn't approve it. We adjusted the language so that no one would have a veto on this bill going forward. We are going to consult with the ASBA on the MO, but the ATA has the ability to approve it. That's not meant to differentiate between the two in terms of their authority on this. It's just the logistics. The ATA has already approved it, and the ASBA cannot get us approval in time to get this bill through. We don't want to leave them with a veto.

I'm sure that the member would want us to make sure that no one has a veto after this and that there's nothing that's going to hold up the bill any further. That's why there might be an occasion to adjust the role of the ASBA in this if they have difficulty agreeing on who their representatives would be on the exceptions committee. They've proven that they want to listen to their members. Often their members don't entirely agree or come to a unanimous agreement. In the event that that happens again, we will have the ability to just alter their role so that we can make an appointment, someone representing the ASBA on the exceptions committee. But it's very small. It's not intended to injure or affect the role of the ASBA going forward.

The Speaker: Are there others under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, let's go on to the hon. leader of the New Democratic opposition on the main bill, third reading.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to have the opportunity to stand up and speak to Bill 26, the Assurance for Students Act. I want to say a few things just about how this has been done. First of all, the government passed a motion that this was a very urgent matter; therefore, we could shorten the debate and the discussion. Admittedly, it has still been over two days, but the only urgency on the government's part is wanting to get out of here by the weekend and not have to come back next week. I just wanted to say that I thought that that was not a sufficient degree of urgency to invoke that particular standing order.

As well, of course, the government used the same false conception of urgency to impose closure with respect to this bill right off the bat. From that point of view, I think it's distasteful how the government has dealt with this particular piece of legislation, but it's more distasteful to me how they've dealt with our education system and the resulting issues around an agreement with teachers going forward.

The question that I have, Mr. Speaker, is why teachers were put in the position of having to accept a deal that gave them no pay increases for three consecutive years. Why should teachers have to accept no raises when everybody else gets raises, when the cost of living continues to rise? There's no compelling reason in terms of their work why they should have to accept a deal where, given increases in the cost of living over the next three years, they're going to be handed essentially an 8 to 10 per cent reduction in their buying power. That's what this deal really is, a reduction in the salaries of our teachers.

Now, teachers in Alberta are well compensated. Most jobs in Alberta are well compensated compared to the rest of the country. But it gets back to the question of why this deal has now been imposed by the government over the objection of many teachers. My colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona has outlined the fact that the ATA has its own process for ratification, and the deal that was negotiated has, by those terms and conditions, not been ratified. It has failed to be ratified by the ATA, and that's why the government is imposing the deal through legislation, a very bad thing to do in principle and in general, Mr. Speaker.

I want to come back to the question of why teachers have to take an 8 to 10 per cent reduction in their real salaries over the next three years. Why? Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason is that the government has not managed the finances of the province well enough, and they have a resulting shortfall in revenue. They blamed it, of course, on the so-called bitumen bubble, which has been widely, I think, discredited by those who are knowledgeable. But the government's own management now has to be paid for by teachers. That's what this deal really means. They have to take less money because the government can't manage its finances and hasn't planned adequately for the future and hasn't ensured that there are stable revenue sources to pay for the program spending in our province and has depended far too much on volatile royalty revenue from oil and natural gas.

How is that the teachers' fault, Mr. Speaker? How is that the responsibility of teachers, and why should teachers and others in our province have to pay for this government's incompetence? That's the question. That's the question on the minds of many teachers.

3:50

Lots of teachers did vote for this deal because they felt they had no choice, but even here in Edmonton, where the deal was ratified,

40 per cent of teachers voted against it. The school board in Calgary voted against it. In other parts of the province the deal has been rejected. Where the deal has been passed even though teachers felt they had no choice, there's always been a sizable number of teachers who are angry about the deal and voted against it, and I think rightly so, Mr. Speaker.

The point that I want to make is that teachers, like others in this province, are expected to take less because this government can't get its financial act together. This government will not reverse the flat tax. This government will not reverse major cuts to corporate income tax. This government will not change its policy of charging some of the lowest royalties in the entire world. So the rest of us have to pay and pay and pay. Mr. Speaker, that's wrong.

I don't think Albertans with developmental disabilities should have to pay. I don't think postsecondary students should have to pay. I don't think people should be laid off in the health care system. I don't think our seniors should have to pay. I think that this government needs to sort out its financial affairs and put the finances of this province on a firm, sustainable footing. Despite many warning and many urgings from us as well as their own people and their own experts, they have refused and failed to do that year after year after year, so teachers have to pay, and that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. Teachers shouldn't have to pay.

That's why we're opposing this bill. It's bad for teachers. We think it's bad for schools. We think it's ultimately bad for students. We think that the bill is absolutely misnamed, called assurance for students.

What we need is the government and the school boards and the teachers to go back to the bargaining table and arrive at a fair and equitable deal for our teachers that ensures that kids get the best-quality education and ensures that teachers don't fall behind increases in the cost of living through no fault of their own. I think it's shameful, Mr. Speaker, that this government expects teachers and others, including people with disabilities and students and health care professionals, to pay the price for its financial incompetence.

I don't think Albertans should accept it. They may feel in many cases that they have no choice, but they are very, very right to be angry about it. They're very right to be angry at this government, which misled them in the election about its intentions, which misled them about its financial situation, and then after the election turned around and attacked the very people who had supported it in its bid to be re-elected. I think it's shameful, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's acceptable.

For that reason, our caucus is opposed to this legislation because they are asking teachers, students, and others to pay the price of their mistakes, of their errors, and because of the fact that they favour the wealthy and the corporations in this province at the expense of the rest of us. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there other speakers? Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in strong opposition to Bill 26, the Assurance for Students Act, in third reading. Before I launch into the bill, it's important to note that legislation like this passing through the Assembly at breakneck speeds, often in the wee hours of the night, as opposed to giving legislation the proper due process and time that should be allocated for a proper and thorough debate – I mean, that in itself, I think, is the first black eye for this government.

Mr. Speaker, this bill quite simply is awful. It's terrible for a lot of reasons, which I will go through. First and foremost, this bill is a complete and open attack on not just teachers in this province; this is a bill that attacks all working people in Alberta. The fact that you've got a deal that's being imposed via legislation on teachers is an affront to the basic rights of unionized workers in Alberta and their rights to collective bargaining. You know, I can appreciate that the government has been trying to negotiate a deal for two years, but this is not the answer, where if you don't get the result that you're looking for, you turn around and just end up bullying the other side into accepting your terms.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation definitely flies in the face of teachers. On the one hand, the government often talks about how we are the wealthiest jurisdiction in North America, how we are very fortunate with our abundance of natural resources, how our economy is growing, and how things are looking up and looking well for the province, yet because of a mismanagement of funds and a failure to collect revenues through royalties, a progressive tax system to stop the corporate welfare that this government is insistent upon, it's professionals like teachers who have to bear the burden and pay the cost.

Mr. Speaker, I mean, it's important to know that this isn't just about teachers. I find it quite offensive, actually, when the minister stands up and says: this is for students, and students are first. To be honest, I think this bill is more like: students first over the cliff. If the government respected students and parents and families and wanted to ensure that they had the best quality of education and access to that education, then they would put their money where their mouth is.

When we have, you know, class sizes that are going to be growing and that continue to grow, Albertans are tired of this government saying one thing out of one side of their mouth and then another out of the other, with their actions altogether quite opposite. Class sizes are continuing to rise. With the cuts that this government has imposed and is imposing on education and our education system, there is going to be a rise in class sizes.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, it's a compounded effect. Just the other day I was at one of my schools in northeast Edmonton, and their special-needs teachers are losing their positions as of June of this year, and they will not be back in the fall. I can't tell you what a disadvantage that's going to place on not only students with special needs; we're talking about students where English may be their second language or third language. We're talking about students who need additional help and supports, who are now going to be thrown into a classroom with 25 to 35 other students and one teacher trying to juggle everything that teachers have to do in a classroom today.

It's going to have far-reaching effects. That's another issue that I have with this bill and with many government decisions, their lack of long-term vision and planning. For example, jamming too many students into a classroom with not enough supports is going to have an impact on those students for the rest of their lives. Again, to this government, in their mind, it's probably penny wise but pound foolish as far as the long-term well-being of students, parents, and families.

Mr. Speaker, another reason that the Alberta NDP opposes this bill is that it undermines the authority of locally elected school boards. You've got an example here where there were some school boards that voted against this deal, and as opposed to the government respecting their wishes and decisions, they just decide to bring forward legislation and railroad or hammer all teachers everywhere.

Now, the minister will love to get up and wax about how the majority of school boards have accepted this offer. You know, the

devil is in the details, and what we don't know and probably won't know is how exactly the minister and this government convinced some of the school boards that this was their best option.

It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that there were boards that initially voted against this deal, so the response from the government is: we'll have another vote just in case you change your mind, in case you didn't quite vote the way that you really wanted to.

4:00

Meanwhile meetings were going on behind closed doors in the backroom. We don't know what was said or what wasn't said or what was implied, but we do know that this government has a history of at times bullying. What we don't know is if school boards were put into that position. This PC government doesn't approve or like the way they voted, so they decide to have a second vote, where suddenly some boards did come onboard.

Mr. Speaker, an important point is that not all the boards voted in favour of this deal. It's concerning that the response to the deal is for the government to then bring in legislation and force it upon all teachers and professionals within this province. I fail to see how this is an emergency. The government, again, tries to paint the picture that we had to ram through this piece of legislation. I completely disagree. There are many teachers that I've spoken with who feel that this deal is unfair and awful. I find it quite hypocritical that the government offers some deals for some professionals and offers the teachers 0, 0, 0 and a meagre amount in the end. Really, when we look at the cost of living, inflation, and how it's rising year to year, by the time this deal comes to an end, it really will be a 10 per cent cut to teachers, which is completely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bad deal for teachers. This is a bad deal for Albertans. This sets a very harmful precedent that, again, this government has no concerns, no qualms about riding roughshod over the collective bargaining rights of our professional organizations of Alberta workers. Quite honestly, that's just wrong. The government should have done the right thing, respected the decision by boards. It's irrelevant if it's 90 per cent of school boards and ATA locals or if it's 1 per cent. The point is that it was a deal that was not accepted by all of those that are going to be affected, and they should have gone back to the bargaining table.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that our teachers and our students, our children and our families should not have to bear the burden of the fiscal mismanagement of this government, which is clear to all Albertans. Again, when we look at our economy today and we look at the state of the province and the fact that the government has passed this austerity cuts budget, Albertans are shaking their heads in disbelief and, quite honestly, are fearful of the future, of when the province does dip into a recession, of what that budget is going to look like if they're facing cuts today, when Alberta is in a period of growth.

Clearly, that illustrates there's been a party in power for too long that no longer knows how to manage resources or ensure that we are taking care of our students, our seniors, our most vulnerable Albertans. They shouldn't have to pay the price for the mistakes, failed planning, and poor management that this government continues to demonstrate.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I am vehemently opposed to Bill 26. I think it's offensive to all working people, especially to professionals, that put their heart and soul into their careers and their jobs to ensure that our children and students are given the best and most opportunities that they can. The reality is that they need the resources to do their job and to do their job well. It puts them in a very, very awkward and binding position when you pull

out the resources from under them, when you knock the supports out from under them, and when you don't value them by, first of all, respecting their rights and, second of all, by valuing them through the salaries and benefits that they earn. You know, money is only one indicator of value in our society. However, you know, this clearly shows that this PC government does not value the work that teachers and support workers do in this province.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this bill and will ask all members to vote this bill down. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing no one under 29(2)(a), other speakers?

The hon. Minister of Education to close debate?

Mr. J. Johnson: No. Just the question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:07 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Fraser	McDonald
Anglin	Fritz	McIver
Barnes	Goudreau	Oberle
Bhardwaj	Hale	Pastoor
Bhullar	Horne	Quadri
Bikman	Jablonski	Quest
Brown	Jansen	Rowe
Calahasan	Johnson, J.	Sarich
Campbell	Johnson, L.	Scott
Cao	Kennedy-Glans	Smith
Cusanelli	Khan	Swann
Donovan	Klimchuk	Towle
Dorward	Lemke	Webber
Fawcett	Luan	Wilson
Fenske	McAllister	

Against the motion:

Bilous	Mason	Notley
Eggen		

Totals: For – 44 Against – 4

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a third time]

4:20

Bill 22 Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start on the bill, I'd ask for consent that we go to one-minute bells for the rest of the afternoon.

The Speaker: Hon. members, unanimous consent has been requested to reduce the division time between the ringing of the bells to one minute, which means that the bells will ring for one minute, there will be silence for one minute, and then they will ring again for one minute, so it's essentially a three-minute interval. Does anyone oppose that particular request?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and move third reading of Bill 22, the Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act. Last night, as I was sitting on the couch at about 3 in the morning contemplating life in general, realizing all the doors I knocked on to have this wonderful job, I was thinking about the bill. You know, I've spent my whole life in labour relations. While the opposition talks about the unions, I'm a proud union member, have been and always will be, just for the record. I'm a member of the United Mine Workers of America. Our motto was: tough enough to chew nails, stupid enough to want to.

I've been involved in a number of change processes and dealt with people, worked for people, you know, cared about people's interests. Mr. Speaker, lots of times when you do things, it's on intuition, or it's a gut reaction. Your gut says that it's the right thing to do. In the year that I've been in this ministry and the year that I've spent out in the landscape talking to First Nations, talking to industry, talking to other stakeholders, I can honestly say that this is the right thing to do. I've thought about this. We had a robust discussion in second reading. We had a robust discussion in Committee of the Whole.

When I look at what's going on out in the landscape and I look at the challenge that First Nations people face in this province, this bill will bring balance to the consultation process and provide First Nations the adequacy that they so need and so deserve to do a proper consultation when we talk about treaty rights and we talk about traditional land use. Mr. Speaker, our focus is on a consultation policy that respects First Nations treaty rights and provides them an opportunity to be more engaged in the consultation process for their benefit and for the benefit of all Albertans.

Bill 22 supports the consultation process by allowing legislation to create a mandatory levy that would help First Nations participate in meaningful consultation. The idea for the levy came up during discussions with First Nations and industry as part of the development of the consultation policy. Revenues from the levy would only be used to support Alberta's consultation initiative. This is enabling legislation, Mr. Speaker – and that's all it is – which will allow us to develop regulations to enact the levy. First Nations and industry will be involved in the creation of those regulations. The idea of supporting increased First Nation consultation capacity through a levy has been discussed extensively with First Nations and industry over the last little while. Both First Nations and industry have told us that, in their view, the current capacity funding levels from Alberta are inadequate to enable First Nations to carry out their consultation obligations.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of the industry levy was first introduced in October 2012 in a discussion paper on First Nations consultation. I invited all Alberta chiefs to meet on the discussion paper on November 19, 2012, and received written feedback from them on December 15. On February 1, 2013, I met with chiefs, industry, and municipalities to provide a summary of what we heard from the meetings and written feedback and outlined changes that Alberta plans to make based on that feedback. The responses we received from First Nations and the stakeholders on this along with other concepts introduced in the discussion paper guided the development of Bill 22.

Senior ministry staff met with professional staff of First Nations and stakeholders on April 18, 19, and 22, 2013. I hosted leadership meetings with First Nations and stakeholders on April 29 and 30, 2013, where the industry levy was further discussed. At these meetings I indicated that enabling legislation will be needed for the increased capacity funding to become a reality.

At the multiparty leadership meetings I committed the government of Alberta to developing the details of the size of the levy fund, the manner in which the funding is distributed, and the manner in which the levy is assigned through a formal process involving both First Nations and industry. Whatever the final amount of the levy, it will be based on providing First Nations with a reasonable level of capacity to assist them to engage in the consultation process.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that there is still a need for substantial engagement with First Nations and stakeholders on a number of matters related to consultation, including the development of the proposed consultation office, the industry levy, and the consultation process matrix. However, this initiative is the result of years of dialogue and information exchange between the government of Alberta, First Nations, and affected stakeholders, extending all the way back to the development and implementation of a 2005 policy and subsequent guidelines. As a matter of fact, the previous three ministers before me have all been involved in developing a new consultation policy.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is trying to achieve a system that supports First Nations people and sustains communities. This consultation process is one initiative aimed to support those efforts. This is innovative, groundbreaking legislation that puts Alberta at the forefront of First Nations consultation in Canada.

Saying that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to support this legislation, and let's move forward and make sure that we have a proper consultation process in place and the capacity to make sure that First Nations can do a proper job in dealing with industry and stakeholders on this landscape.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak against Bill 22, the Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act, not because I don't support the intent of what the minister is trying to do. I respect that the minister means well and is trying to move the relationship with industry and First Nations and the provincial government to a different level moving forward.

I have watched with interest over the last number of years as the government has forged new relationships with aboriginal communities on education in particular and found ways to attempt to bring aboriginal communities into greater involvement in the Alberta economy. I think that the government has done some good work in that regard. I know that the previous employment and immigration ministry was one where they looked at ways in which we could continue to engage traditionally underrepresented communities in the broader economy, and aboriginal communities were one community that was identified.

As I've travelled the province, the range of development that we do see on First Nations has been shocking to me. Some are quite well developed. Some have their own businesses. Some have active engagement and employment in aboriginal businesses. On others the conditions, I think, would be described as poverty level. I think we all know that, so I understand what the government and the minister are attempting to do.

That being said, I don't think that you start into a new relationship with our aboriginal peoples or First Nations in particular on a consultation process that doesn't include adequate consultation – and I will talk about that in a minute – because while I appreciate that the minister is meeting with many First Nations, he is not talking with them in the way that they wanted to be engaged on this particular bill. On this particular bill what they

were asking for was a direct conversation on the contents of the bill itself. That is the kind of consultation that they were looking for.

The government does this a lot. They think that because they have high-level discussions about matters of principle, about what ought to be done, that replaces genuine consultation on the actual detail and legal clauses in a bill after it's been introduced. I know the minister understands the difference between the two. I know this because he took such a different approach with the Metis Settlements Amendment Act, 2013. He took a very different approach in making sure he had buy-in from the members of those settlements and making sure that there was absolute buy-in on every word that was put into that legislation, to the point that he was unwilling to make even a single wording change when that came through.

I know he knows that there is a difference between talking on a high level about a concept versus doing a clause-by-clause agreement and buy-in with legal representatives from every community to make sure that they're onboard. So I don't accept that the minister actually did that in this case, and I think it's part of the reason why he is facing such a backlash on this bill.

I think the broader problem that we have is that this goes against the commitment that the Premier had made about having a different process to approve legislation. Before the Premier was Premier, she seemed to understand that rushing bills through the different stages so quickly was leading to bad and sloppy legislation, was leading to an absence of proper and thorough stakeholder consultation, and I had anticipated that we would see a different type of legislative session this time around. Instead, I have to say, it seems that it's actually far worse.

Now, I understand that we can't get unanimous stakeholder buy-in on virtually any issue, and I wouldn't have expected the minister necessarily to get unanimous buy-in, but it would have been nice if he had introduced one stakeholder in the Legislature who agreed with the approach that he was taking in this legislation. We introduced nearly 50 people in the Legislature who didn't.

We introduced press releases from Treaty 8. We introduced letters from chiefs of Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 indicating their serious reservations with the bill. If the minister had even just introduced a handful of stakeholders so that we could have some confidence that anyone in any aboriginal band supported the position that he was taking, we might be able to acknowledge that he was making these decisions from a basis of informed consent. Unfortunately, we did not see one – not one – stakeholder come and be introduced in the Legislature who supported the government's bill. I think that's important when you're talking about consultation with aborigines.

4:30

Forcing a bill through, or ramming it through, as others have said, is not relationship-building. If I've learned anything in my time as aboriginal critic, it's the absolute, crucial nature of the relationship in being able to build trust between First Nations and the provincial government. The relationship is key. Once you have the relationship and you've established trust, then you can move forward with some of those difficult negotiations. I think that the minister, unfortunately, has set his relationship back. I think he may have. I take him at his word that he's developed some very good relationships in First Nations communities, but I don't know why he would be willing to sacrifice that rather than take the steps to do it right. It's counterproductive to pass this legislation today.

We are trying to help the minister. We have tried at every stage since the introduction of this act to slow it down and to bring

forward amendments that would improve the bill. I think it's worth looking at just how quickly this legislation has moved through the process. Now, I can't say with certainty that this is the fastest movement of a bill through its various readings. I think Bill 26 might get that honour, but it has got to be a close second. We had it read into the record last Wednesday, first reading. Second reading we began on Thursday, so just 24 hours later, and carried over to Monday evening. Committee of the Whole, Tuesday night: we were all here until 1 o'clock in the morning. Here we are on third reading on Wednesday, less than a week after seeing this legislation for the first time.

It is now going to be the law of the land, fundamentally changing the relationship that the province has with our First Nations communities, serving the Crown in all of the relationships that our aboriginal communities have with industry. It's a phenomenally intrusive piece of legislation to have just been sprung on everybody, with essentially six days' worth of review. The government was so committed to passing this without due diligence and proper consultation that they served notice that they would be prepared to invoke closure if the Committee of the Whole process went on too long. I think that that also sends a pretty bad message to our First Nations communities, who we're trying so hard to build a new relationship with.

As I say, we did try to help. We put forward at different stages different ways that we could have slowed this bill down. We suggested a referral motion so that we could have put the bill forward to the Resource Stewardship Committee. They could have gone through and had the consultation over the summer with industry and with First Nations so that we could come back with a better bill in the fall when we return to session.

When that failed, we proposed a hoist, which would have done the same thing. Bringing this bill back after six months of review, in the middle of November, would have been another opportunity for the minister to take the time to take this bill out, consult with First Nations and industry, and get it right.

Then, of course, we went through the committee process last evening. Several of us were here, as the minister was as well, until quite late in the morning getting through those amendments. The amendments that I put forward were aimed at addressing the kinds of issues that the minister is going to hear now that he's going to go out on his after-the-fact consultation once this bill becomes law. The nature of the amendments that I brought forward had come directly from my consultations with First Nations and their legal counsel over the four or five days that we had to be able to try to put together a response to a bill that we had never seen before. The minister certainly didn't consult with the opposition other than the day before the legislation was introduced, so I was just as surprised by the contents of it as were many of our First Nations communities.

That being said, we attempted to do our due diligence so that we could bring those concerns forward. We proposed amendments that would have put more structure on the annual report to include a list of projects that were funded out of the fund. We would have turned the fund into a trust by eliminating one of the sections so that the dollars that were collected had to be held for the purposes for which they were collected and couldn't be used as general revenues at some future point. We attempted, along with supporting a motion by the NDP opposition, to build in a process to establish the levy with First Nations consultation so that the minister doesn't have the latitude to do that unilaterally. We attempted to put forward another amendment to mandate First Nations and industry consultation to be able to establish that levy.

We've heard both sides. We've heard that First Nations are concerned that what the government is actually trying to do is cut

in half the amount of compensation they get for aboriginal consultation. We've also heard from industry that they're concerned that not only are they going to have to pay the same amount of consultation they've always paid but that this levy is going to be in addition to that. We believe that it was vitally important for us to put in the letter of the legislation an obligation on the minister to consult with First Nations and with industry.

We would have put forward a change to one of the sections that would have ensured that there was an appeal process. The fact that there's a section in there that says that none of the decisions are subject to appeal, that the decisions are final – we think that wouldn't stand up in court. Removing that section would allow for some certainty that there would be an appeal to the Court of Appeal.

The three provisions that we put forward that we felt the minister really missed out on passing – he really could have improved the legislation and really addressed the concerns that were brought forward by Treaties 6, 7, and 8 if he had accepted our amendments to change one of the powers he has given himself to define what an aboriginal group or organization would be. We tried to argue that he should resort to the definitions that are in the Indian Act and the Canadian Constitution. That one failed.

We also attempted to address the issue under section 8 of the act, which provides for a broad range of information collection, including the agreements that aboriginal communities sign with industry, on the grounds that have been raised again and again, that it is a discriminatory clause. Nonaboriginal landowners don't have to disclose their agreement, yet now we have legislation before us in third reading, that we will be passing into law, that would enshrine discrimination, enshrine a different treatment of First Nations and aboriginal communities in their agreements with energy companies that is not defined for anybody else. That, I think, was the biggest red flag for the First Nations communities we spoke with.

I think that we did attempt in the last amendment I put forward to address the broader issue of the powers that the minister has given himself to pass regulations on a whole range of different issues. It's fine to do that as long as there's an obligation to go back to First Nations to ensure that they were consulted in a meaningful way on any changes or additions to regulation or any changes or amendments to the legislation. I'm still not sure why the minister wouldn't have accepted this amendment because it's language that is already in the Metis Settlements Act.

It's a practice that the government has already taken in dealing with Métis nations. Any change to a regulation requires a 45-day notification period, requires written notice and a written response and due consideration on the part of the minister before passing it into law. It seems to me that the best way to start out with a new relationship with First Nations is to model it after a successful relationship with Métis. I don't know why the government chose not to pass that amendment and failed to do that. I think it would have actually gone a long way towards getting buy-in on the part of the communities.

I guess the worry that I see from our First Nations members is that they look at what the government has done in this legislation – many of them were here in the gallery listening to hours and hours of debate – and they've got to be scratching their head wondering: well, the minister says he's going to consult with us, but why is it that at every single opportunity to affirm that through the opposition amendments that were put forward, he denied every single opportunity to write it into the legislation, to obligate his ministry to do that? That's the question I think our First Nations friends are asking themselves. I think that the minister has set himself up for failure, quite frankly, with such an ambitious

project to change our entire consultation process around resource development. Such a major misstep right out of the gate is going to just make it that much more difficult.

4:40

I do want to alert the minister to a couple of studies, that I hope he will read over the summer break. They just came out. They're by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, and they're part of their series on Aboriginal Canada and the Natural Resource Economy. They just came out this week. The first one is called New Beginnings: How Canada's Natural Resource Wealth Could Re-shape Relations with Aboriginal People. It's by Ken Coates and Brian Lee Crowley. There is also Canada and the First Nations: Cooperation or Conflict? That's by Douglas Bland.

Now, I haven't had a chance to read both of these studies. It would've been nice to have been able to read them before we passed this major piece of legislation, but being that there are going to be additional amendments and additional legislation coming forward along these lines, I think it's worth it for the minister and anyone else who will be debating and considering this bill to read the work that has been done by these academics.

Let me give you the Coles Notes of what it is they would observe in the new relationship that is beginning to form across the entire country in a government-to-government relationship with First Nations. One of the things they point out is that there is this perception that aboriginal communities and many individuals are unalterably opposed to resource development in their traditional territories, but a large number, they say, probably a majority, are open to resource development provided that they are involved from the outset in the decision-making processes and the development processes on mutually acceptable terms. So there is a win here for the government. There's a win here for industry and First Nations.

My experience in travelling and meeting with many chiefs has been that the number one issue that they're concerned about is ensuring that their people have access to education and their people have access to training and their people have access to opportunity in the form of jobs, not only jobs at companies but also jobs that they might create for themselves as entrepreneurs.

That being said, if we get the relationship right – this is again being written by Ken Coates and Brian Lee Crowley – natural resource wealth can unlock a brilliant future for aboriginal and nonaboriginal Canadians together. Given their newly recognized legal and political power and authority, however, aboriginal people can and will be a powerful obstacle to any development that does not respect their interests, their histories, and their cultures.

I think the minister needs to take this under advisement. The fact of how this bill came forward, the fact that we have so many First Nations now activated and concerned I think is a setback to what the minister has aspired to do in the province. I think it's a setback for our industry here.

I am going to do my best to continue to travel and consult around the province. In fact, the minister in some ways has made my job a little bit easier. Ever since the bill was introduced and we started speaking on it, my office has been flooded with invitations for me to come and visit First Nations so that I can hear about their concerns on this and other issues. I suppose I should be grateful that he's angered the First Nations so much that they are reaching out to me so that I can be a voice for their concerns in the Legislature. I take that role seriously as Aboriginal Relations critic, and I intend to do that on this and other issues.

That being said, I would have preferred to be able to stand here today and speak in support of this bill. I wish I'd had confidence

that the minister had gone through the same process of due diligence that he had on the previous piece of legislation. I wish I'd been receiving calls and e-mails and a flood of faxes from aboriginal communities and chiefs that were in support of the bill, but I'm sorry to report that that has not been the case. In fact, it's been the exact opposite.

I think there is still an opportunity for the minister to do the right thing today. I believe the hon. Member for Rimbev-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre is going to give them one last chance through a hoist motion to push this off for another six months to do the proper due diligence, to do the proper consultation. I hope that the minister takes the opposition up on this one last opportunity to get it right.

I know what I'm going to be doing this summer. I do have some concerns about what might happen over the summer if First Nations communities do feel like this bill has in some way abridged or violated the traditional aboriginal rights that are acknowledged under the Constitution. I certainly wouldn't want to see the entire effort that the minister is embarking on derail because a piece of sloppy legislation was passed that overreaches the authority of the provincial government and doesn't have buy-in from the key stakeholder in it. That's why if it does end up going to a vote, I will certainly be voting against it.

But when the hoist motion comes forward, I would encourage hon. members, including the government and the minister, to vote in favour of that so that we can take the time to get this bill right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there other speakers? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, we've had a lot of debate on this issue and some emotional responses, especially from the subjects of this bill, which is intended to benefit First Nations.

On the surface it has some plausible and some positive dimensions to it. Certainly, consultations with First Nations have been fraught with challenges, not only from the point of view of funding appropriate resources so that First Nations can do their due diligence as they would like to and have the expertise and the resources to do so but also in the context of the complexity of many development projects that would benefit from expert advice and an opportunity for First Nations to examine very clearly the risks and benefits of various development projects and how they might affect not only their livelihoods but their environment, any social impacts, any employment opportunities, any resource-sharing agreements that are possible and that may be missed without appropriate resources to do the reviews and really carefully examine what is in the best interests of the First Nations community in a particular case.

Having said that, it was no little surprise to me to see in some aspects of this bill both some discrimination with respect to disclosure and some conflict over the lack of any due process, I guess I would say, based on what the First Nations, almost to a band, have said is the case. It may be that at some level this government feels they have consulted, that they have discussed these issues. But there is a critical dimension of, I guess, consultation that perhaps this government hasn't learned yet, and that is to examine an implementation process before they implement such that those being impacted can raise legitimate points of concerns, raise alarms, and iron those out to the extent possible.

I mean, these are fairly major considerations when First Nations are able to say, "This clearly violates basic, consistent human

rights," to require disclosure, for example, when that disclosure isn't required elsewhere. It's a fairly basic decision to get through, that there's no appeal to the minister's decision. It's a fairly basic discussion to have that some elements of this bill will damage the relationship between First Nations and industry, let alone the relationship between First Nations and government.

I was quite shocked, as I think many were, that the strength of the reaction to this was such that it makes it impossible for us to feel that this will be a positive, constructive, long-term, sustainable relationship that we're setting off on here. I hope the minister will consider the possibility that a delay of some kind, further negotiations, anything that we can do to address at least those key concerns, would serve the interests of all of us as Albertans, First Nations, certainly, and this government in its attempts, I think sincere attempts, to build constructive relationships with First Nations.

4:50

I see trouble on the horizon, and I think this could be a critical piece for First Nations in Alberta, in particular right after the federal omnibus bills have offended so many across the country. This could be a critical turning point for more unrest in our province, more justification, I guess I would say, for actions, either legal or otherwise, among First Nations communities that this is heavy handed and that this is paternalistic and that this is not respecting their rights, particularly as Nations.

The minister is a reasonable man. I think and I hope that he will take this under advisement and look at any possible opportunity to delay the passage of this bill. By all means, bring it forward again in a different form in the fall after we've had a little more time, a little more consultation with First Nations. This could be a saving grace for both the government and First Nations if we do our due diligence and take a step back. I think there's a lot of evidence that we are going to set back relations with First Nations many years, and I don't think any of us want to do that.

I guess the question for the minister is whether, having put so much effort and so much blood, sweat, and perhaps tears into this, we pause for a bit and ensure that we have the best bill possible, that we have the trust of First Nations, that we have the best opportunity for an ongoing, sustainable relationship that's seen to be not only on paper but as experienced by First Nations to be respectful of due process. I gather from virtually every leadership that we've heard from that it hasn't been experienced in that way.

I cannot support the bill. I do feel that we should reconsider the question again of delaying, referring, consulting further on the bill, and not in any partisan way but in the best interests of our First Nations people primarily.

With that, I'll take my seat, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is now available.

Seeing no one under that section, do we have any other speakers? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is my last opportunity to speak to Bill 22 in this House, a bill which exemplifies how out of touch this PC government is, a bill that will and has destroyed almost all trust between First Nations governments and this minister. You know, I don't understand how the minister can lose the confidence of all First Nations and councils within our province yet still retain the confidence of this Premier. The minister's job is to foster strong government-to-government relationships based on mutual trust and the honour of the Crown. This bill does the opposite of that on both accounts.

Before I get into specifics, Mr. Speaker, I just want to acknowledge, first of all, that our Legislative Assembly sits on Treaty 6 ground.

There are, as we speak, more letters that are coming in and submissions from different First Nations on their opposition to Bill 22. I mean, I've been very public as have the Alberta NDP in our calls for this bill to be completely withdrawn. You know, the only solution that is going to satisfy the Alberta NDP and most First Nations from treaties 6, 7, and 8 is if this bill is taken off the Order Paper and completely thrown out.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that Bill 22 is only seven pages long yet is completely riddled with problems. Almost every section is unsupportable. Even in the preamble the government presents a diminished view of the treaty and aboriginal rights, rights which need to be clarified, that were not extinguished by the signing of the treaties. Instead, they're protected by the treaties and should be protected by the honour of the Crown.

Section 1(1) defines First Nations, Mr. Speaker, with the reference to the Indian Act, which many First Nations find offensive. It also does not accommodate the First Nations who aren't listed under that and who have reserve lands within the province.

Subsection (2) prohibits the creating of a trust in favour of a First Nation, and this is utterly ridiculous. Under section 26(3) of the Interpretation Act singular meanings also imply plural meanings. Therefore, the government is expressly saying that this fund will not be used for the exclusive benefit of all First Nations and aboriginal groups. If the intention of this act and this aboriginal consultation levy is to secure funds to increase the capacity for First Nations to participate in consultation, then all of those monies should be exclusively for that use, Mr. Speaker.

Section 3 tells us that the consultation levy will be decided behind closed doors, in the secrecy of cabinet confidentiality. It will not be determined through negotiations with the very people that it directly affects.

Section 4 tells us by omission that administrative penalties and outstanding interest charges on unpaid levies will not go back into the levy fund to support First Nations capacity building but could in fact go into government general revenues and be spent frivolously.

Section 8 is extremely offensive. According to legal counsel for Treaty 6 this section should be removed entirely. It's unnecessary in terms of accountability, as I spelled out in second reading and during many of the late-night debates of Committee of the Whole, and it imposes information-sharing requirements upon aboriginal peoples that, again, are not imposed on nonaboriginal peoples. Again, all members of this House should be equally offended by this. You've got one set of rules for one group of people based on race, and you've got another set of rules for other people.

Again, an example that I've said a few times, Mr. Speaker, is that if this type of bill was forced upon landowners, they would balk at it, that they must disclose their private agreements between industry and themselves. So how this is possibly included in a bill that forces aboriginal peoples to disclose is ridiculous. It's also in violation of the UN declaration on indigenous rights, and according to some First Nations they feel this is in violation of the Constitution and of the Canadian Charter. You know, it's kind of ironic because it's the kind of clause or section that human rights lawyers should know and should be aware of and should be opposed to. I'll leave it at that.

Section 9 is a blank cheque to the minister to do whatever he wants because the decisions are final – he has total power and complete authority – and are not subject to review. Last time I checked, we still lived in a democracy, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's antidemocratic, and it's unacceptable.

Section 10 is another example of a blank cheque that this bill will give to cabinet and reserves the powers, including the amount of the levy. Again, we're debating a bill that is supposed to garner resources to help facilitate an increased capacity for First Nations to consult, yet the amounts that will be levied are not included in the very bill that this government would like this Assembly to pass. That makes absolutely no sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

Furthermore, some of those that are in industry already do provide some financial assistance to certain First Nations bands to help with their capacity to consult.

5:00

That figure, given to me by the minister himself, was somewhere around \$150 million per year. The amount that the government is intending to levy is somewhere around \$70 million. Although the levy act has the intention of providing resources for First Nations to increase their capacity to consult on projects, it's actually going to be or likely to be far less than what is currently going to some of the First Nations around the province, which is ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, one of those blank cheques that cabinet is going to get, not only the amount of the levy but how it's going to be collected, how the grants are going to be made, whether or not there will even be administrative penalties, raises the point that there is no enforcement mechanism in this piece of legislation. If a proponent refuses to pay a levy or decides not to pay a levy, there might not be any consequences. As well, cabinet reserves the right to exempt any proponent or industry or an entire class of proponents from paying the levy. To me, that's a giant loophole, where this PC government gets to choose which proponents or companies pay the levies and which do not, which does not sound like it's a very fair or equitable system at all.

Mr. Speaker, we have no assurances whatsoever in this bill as it is currently written that consultation funding, like I'd said, will not decrease, which poses quite a significant problem, considering that the minister is touting how beneficial this bill will be.

Mr. Speaker, over the past week we've seen a massive public outcry from different First Nations across the province, from all three treaties. As soon as Bill 22 was tabled, Treaty 8 expressed its shock and dismay. They told us that the bill was never mentioned at their ongoing meetings, including a meeting on May 3, 2013, with the minister.

Grand Chief Roland Twinn had written in a letter, that's already been tabled to the Assembly over the last few days, that they oppose the new legislation because there was no meaningful and proper consultation. They view it as a continuation of the paternalistic attitude that this government has toward First Nations and that they've struggled against. Treaty 8 feels that this legislation is more likely to hinder than to help, and the minister's complete power that is granted to him under this bill is an alarming, authoritarian stance that denies the principles of justice, fairness, and equality.

Treaty 6, Mr. Speaker, echoed these concerns, saying that legislation came equally as a shock to them. In a letter signed by Grand Chief Craig Makinaw, which, again, was tabled in this House, he wrote that at a meeting with the chiefs of Treaty 6 on May 3 there was zero indication that any levy would be placed into law, nor was it mentioned that that law would arrive five days later. In this respect, many of the chiefs of Treaty 6 feel that the Alberta government is moving ahead on their own agenda and ignoring the recommendations and the voices of First Nations peoples in Alberta. The grand chief had said in that letter: why trust Alberta now? First Nations will reject and resist this policy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is deeply flawed, and the problems are quite substantive. Before I go through those, I just want to mention as well that a couple of letters that have gone out recently from the Onion Lake Cree Nation, by Chief Wallace Fox, talk about and mention how there's been no meaningful consultation that has taken place with the Onion Lake Cree Nation on this proposed legislation.

There are a couple of documents that they have made public, Mr. Speaker, and I strongly urge the minister to read these documents if he hasn't yet. The concerns that Onion Lake Cree Nation have are that they've not been considered as equal partners, and they ask, "Where is the meaningful mechanism to reconcile outstanding Treaty obligations and the Honour of the Crown?" They comment on the matrix that this government has developed and how they have their own protocols and processes on consultation and how, with several of the treaties, they have put forward consultation papers, their own consultation policy, if you will, that has been continually ignored and rejected by this government.

I'll read this one line from the letter, that I'll have to wait until our next day to table, Mr. Speaker. "The Onion Lake Cree Nation strongly opposes the perceived jurisdiction that the province of Alberta and the State of Canada has over lands and resources in our Treaty and Traditional Territories."

Mr. Speaker, I'll talk about at least three of the fundamental problems with the process that led to this bill, and part of the major thrust of my opposition to this bill is the process by which this bill was written. First of all, democracy demands that when legislation is being drafted and considered, the people who will be directly affected should have the adequate opportunity to be consulted, to provide feedback, to have input on legislation that will directly affect those people. Responsible government should also be responsive government. In this session the Premier has shown that she is not responsive to First Nations or to students or to seniors or to persons with developmental disabilities, and she's refused to hear the call of these people, of these groups, and of the opposition to rethink her budget.

Secondly, aboriginal relations, Mr. Speaker, involve government-to-government relations. First Nations are not subordinate to the minister nor to any government. They are equal partners and should be treated in that fashion. By failing to consult with First Nation chiefs and councils, the minister has really violated the protocol agreement and imperilled the relationship between the government of Alberta and First Nations.

As the minister sits down to renew the protocol agreement . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be very pleased to hear what the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview thinks should happen when the minister sits down to deal with the protocol.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. To answer that question, first of all, the minister needs to engage in meaningful consultation with the various First Nations and to treat them as equals and to have more than just meetings or discussions.

Further to that, the different treaties and several First Nations have put forward year after year, going back to, I'm sure, long before 2006 – I know that there are letters from Treaty 6 – what they would like included in consultation, their idea of how consultation should unfold. In conversations with Treaty 6 I know that their proposals have been continuously rejected by this government.

Mr. Speaker, you know, another reason why this bill should be completely withdrawn is that I and other members of this Assembly have made and proposed amendments in Committee of the Whole that were done in consultation with First Nations that this PC government chose to reject and voted down.

5:10

I called specifically for ensuring that the consultation levy fund is large enough to cover all costs associated with consultation as well as capacity building. I called for a firm statement that the levy funds will never be considered accommodation or compensation for infringements upon treaty rights. I called for negotiations between First Nations and the government to determine the amount of the levy as opposed to being unilaterally decided by this PC government. I called for the removal of the clause exempting proponents from paying the levy, and I supported other good amendments that were brought forward by other members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I strongly urge all members of the Assembly to oppose this bill in its third reading as many Albertans, many First Nations representatives and leaders have very vocally opposed this bill in its entirety. This bill goes against the will of the very people that it was written to help. If we want to respect First Nations, if we want to respect the will of the First Nations leaders, chiefs, and grand chiefs, then this bill should not see the light of day. It should not pass through third reading. It is our responsibility to listen to and respect the voices of those we are elected to represent.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, anyone else under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, then let us move on. Are there any other speakers? Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Much to everyone's disbelief, I will attempt to be brief on this issue. [interjections] I will try. We'll see how it goes. I'll just take a look at my watch here.

I want to begin by thanking the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview for his very detailed consideration and outline of the elements of this piece of legislation with which we have great difficulty, so I won't bother to repeat them on a clause-by-clause basis.

I think that, fundamentally, the reason that many members or all members, I suspect, of the opposition are voting against this bill goes to one critical issue, and that is that the very people with whom the government hopes to consult through the work being done by this bill do not agree with the bill. You know, we're going to embark on a whole process for coming up with a consultation policy, and then presumably at some point we're actually going to start using that consultation policy and start developing a more positive, collaborative relationship with First Nations in Alberta.

To start out that process with a piece of legislation that the First Nations leadership does not agree with is, in my view, a really ill-advised strategy, and it's an ill-advised decision. I think that the minister, you know, had some good intentions with respect to this, and obviously what we need to do is ensure that we do fund adequately the capacity of First Nations to engage in a meaningful form of consultation. I'm not convinced that this legislation actually deals with ensuring a minimum amount of financial support to facilitate meaningful consultation.

The fact of the matter is that the minister began his comments in third reading by outlining all the various and sundry meetings that he's had with representatives of First Nations groups, including

the chiefs. The fact of the matter is that just because you have a meeting, just because you're all in the same room together does not mean that you've engaged in consultation. This is a theme that we've seen with this government. They seem to think that by telling people what's going to happen, they've consulted or, conversely, that by saying something like, "We are going to work together to make Albertans move forward," somehow talking about that kind of high-level statement amounts to consultation.

The fact of the matter is that we should have more faith in Alberta citizens, all Alberta citizens, and in this particular case we should have more faith in First Nations in that they want to know the particulars of what the government is considering. They want to know what the bill says. They want to know the details of what the government is planning to do. That is consultation as well, listening to what they think about those details.

If you simply go into a room and make some broad, general comment, a statement of principle, how can you possibly expect the people with whom you are consulting to give you wise and informed feedback on the direction you're heading in? You aren't giving them the details about the map. You're not giving them details about where you're going, so by definition the product is almost doomed to failure. It's almost impossible to imagine something on which there will be consensus.

Given the ironic nature of this, that a bill to facilitate consultation was devised without consultation, and given that this is a first step towards what I hope will be greater, more meaningful consultation and growth and positive relationships between First Nations government and our government, I think that it is wisest for this Assembly to vote against this bill so that the government can go back to the table, actually consult with First Nations grand chiefs and their representatives, and then bring forward a bill in the fall on which there is consensus. I don't think that is such a huge challenge. I do think that will bode well for everything that follows, and I think that would be the wisest course of action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing no one, are there any other speakers? One final speaker. The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think all the points that needed to be made have been made, but I will give a summary of the points that I want to make sure I leave the minister with. Before I do that, I have an amendment that I would like to submit to the chair.

The Speaker: Hon. member, while it's being distributed, why don't you just describe the amendment briefly and then carry on. Is that agreeable to the House?

Mr. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motion for third reading of Bill 22, Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act, be amended by striking out all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 22, Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act, be not now read a third time but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. The net effect of this is actually a hoist amendment.

Mr. Anglin: That's right.

The Speaker: It will propel an immediate answer to the motion you've moved and then an immediate call on third reading for the bill itself.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Trying to be as efficient as possible, then, I would like to just speak a little bit on, really, a few main points that we try to impress upon the minister.

First, this is a consultation act that now suffers from the allegation of lack of consultation. It's ironic, but it does. I understand exactly what the minister said, and I really do appreciate the fact that you did mention the number of times that you met with First Nations. I do not doubt that one bit. What I have confusion about is the number of First Nations that came here and said that they were not consulted. That's the issue. I think every speaker now has sort of communicated that.

It's funny because you see that in a number of areas with this government, and we actually saw that even in question period today. It's consistent with this. We had a little discussion on transmission lines, and the member brought up a comparison that I made a few weeks ago. When you look at that on the surface, how that information is conveyed, I made a comparison of apples versus apples. The hon. member compared a double-circuit AC direct buried line versus a single-circuit unidirectional HVDC: two different technologies, much different costs, and different capacities. The hon. minister really didn't know the difference, but that's okay. That would come out in consultation, but we didn't have consultation on that either.

5:20

These are the things that consultation is important for. That's where you get down to the nitty-gritty. What should have happened – and I believe this wholeheartedly – is that once the minister saw all of the treaties show up here, all of the nations represented over the last couple of days, it should have been a caution to step back and at least admit that one side in the conversation doesn't agree with the other side. It should have given some caution or pause to step back and say: I have to renegotiate or negotiate. But does it matter whether it's a second negotiation or not?

The fact is that we do not have buy-in. That is so important whenever we bring legislation forward. We do this for industry. We did this for teachers. We talked about it at length for teachers. With the legislation we just brought, we did have buy-in from a great many school boards. Sometimes it's tough to get 100 per cent buy-in. The Minister of Education might validate that. I understand the Minister of Aboriginal Relations may not be able to get 100 per cent buy-in, but you should be able to get some buy-in. We couldn't find it. I mean, we couldn't find it. What we saw were representatives here who said that consultation did not take place. It's absolutely important that we take that under consideration.

There were a couple of other points that many of the First Nations, if not all of them, mentioned when they came here. Under section 8 of the act they referred to that as discriminatory. Now, the ministry used some colourful language today: being tough as nails and stupid enough to chew them. I've never been guilty of using that saying before, but I've been guilty of using colourful language. The fact is that in the language of the bill, when one side uses the word "discriminatory," that should stop and make people pay attention. Whether it's right or wrong is not the issue. The fact that one side in the conversation is making that allegation: that's the point right there. Deal with that issue. That should take place between the ministry and the First Nations, not

on this floor between the party in power and the opposition parties. That didn't happen.

Then, of course, section 9 of the bill. Many of the First Nations that showed up here just didn't like the wording, that the minister's decisions are "final and binding," and there's no appeal there in their eyes. Now, I'm not going to argue the legal necessities of how to appeal and how not to appeal. The point is that they had problems with that wording. You did not have buy-in as a government from these First Nations that came here. That's the issue that you need to take a look at.

This motion that I brought, Mr. Speaker, just gives time to the hon. minister to do exactly as he says he intends to do, which is to go back out and to meet and to discuss. As I stated earlier, I don't see the rush. I've not heard an argument why this has to be now at this point in time, so I see no problem in going back and meeting with First Nations. Maybe the bill comes back exactly as it is written – that's a possibility – but with First Nations' buy-in. That, to me, would then – certainly, I think it would; I will not presume to speak for any member of my party – get some support over here. We would like to see that buy-in from First Nations.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and let others speak to the motion. I hope they support it.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I have Lesser Slave Lake next on the list, followed by Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my first opportunity to speak on this bill, and I want to make a few points, which I think are very important from a number of perspectives.

First of all, I have 11 First Nations in my constituency, with approximately 15 reserves. A lot of industrial activity has occurred in the backyard of these First Nations and reserves with no involvement, no dollars, nothing going to the communities for many years.

I just want to give a little history. When I was first elected, the elders from Loon River and Woodland Cree called me as their MLA to come and talk to them. They said to me, "We need you to address the concerns with all the activity that has been happening in our area with little or no respect for our culture or our lifestyle. The industry is running over our traplines" and, in their words, "raping and pillaging our land." They told me, Mr. Speaker, that they said: "We have to honour the treaties and what they stand for. They were put in place to protect the food, medicines, water, and way of life." We must do what we can to ensure those promises are protected for future generations. They said: "If they can only come and consult with us, that will provide us a way for our people to move into the future for all people's sake."

Mr. Speaker, these elders were not as eloquent as some of the people on the other side nor on this side, but they knew what they wanted. They knew that if they didn't get what needed to be done in terms of respect for their lifestyle and their livelihood, from that day forward they would never see a future for their people. They wanted to be consulted where it affected their lives, their lifestyle, and their treaties. That had not been done, and they prayed we'd do something. These were elders, far different from elected officials but with the same intent in terms of wanting something.

When I became the Minister of Aboriginal Relations in 1999, not only were there court challenges being brought to my attention to address the Supreme Court decisions, mostly the Haida, Taku, but the elders and the First Nation leaders pushed to have a consultation process. That consultation was developed. Did we do it right? Sometimes we did. Sometimes we missed the mark, but in most cases, Mr. Speaker, we wanted to do something that not only

the elders were talking about in terms of their lifestyle, but we wanted to do something so that they could also benefit from what was happening in this province. They wanted to be part of the Alberta advantage, and that, to me, was the most important part of making sure that our children can also have a future and a bright future in this province.

We thought it was co-operation with First Nations. However, we also experienced the same issue the minister is facing today. Not all First Nations agree with what consultation means, and there are a lot of different views in terms of what that could be. Some people believe that there are different types of consultation: the good neighbour consultation, the good government consultation, and, of course, the legal consultation. When you do all three and achieve what you want to achieve, which is to make it better for the people of the First Nations communities, sometimes those three don't really mesh together, nor do all First Nations agree that a process needs to be developed for collecting dollars or on how they are to be distributed.

I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker. When I was asked at the time by the then Premier, Premier Klein, to be the chairperson of negotiating a First Nations gaming policy, that was also a huge concern because they also wanted to be part of what was happening in this province. We negotiated a position, and that has provided the First Nations with many dollars to be able to see their economic position become better.

Like those elders, Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to do something. We cannot sit around and do nothing because the same thing that happened prior to 1999 will continue to be. We need to see some movement in some areas. Yes, we're not perfect, and nothing is perfect. However, I believe – I strongly believe – we have to trust something in order for us to be able to see the lives of people get better.

So respect for the aboriginal people, or, as I call them, the original peoples, of this country. Their lifestyle and their treaties should be recognized and respected. Of course, in my constituency I have some First Nations who are deeply concerned about not being consulted, and I have been on visits to my constituency with the minister. He's visited a lot of First Nations communities. Yes, he spoke of consultation. He spoke of economic possibilities. Yes, he spoke of this issue as well. Yes, most want to have some ongoing dollars coming into their coffers because as the opposition leader indicated, there are many, many First Nations that do not have the ability to survive and to help their people have a good quality of life.

5:30

We still have a lot of work to do, and I know it never finishes. However, this bill will provide First Nations with some ability to have dollars to improve First Nations lives and quality of life. I trust this minister, and I trust that he will do the right thing, that he will ensure that First Nations have the dollars to be viable and to also have the same quality of life that all of us enjoy here. I am sure – and I trust this minister – that he will do the right thing to ensure continued dialogue with First Nations because without continued dialogue, Mr. Speaker, nothing will happen. I know that this minister will continue to do that.

I trust and I know that this minister will do the right thing to ensure that my elders' dreams of being part of this community, part of this province, of making sure that their rights are not trampled upon will continue to be carried out by this minister. I know that this bill will give us this opportunity to be able to ensure that they can access the funds so that they, too, can enjoy gasification, so that they can enjoy paving on their roads, so that they can have schools that their children can be educated in, so

that they will be able to see all sorts of wonderful things happen that my elders have asked for in the past.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there any other speakers to the amendment? Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that I appreciate the Member for Lesser Slave Lake standing up to speak on this bill. No one is disputing the intention of the bill to increase and ensure that all First Nations have the capacity for consultation with industry. Ensuring that different First Nations have the capacity and resources for consultation with industry I think is very important. However, the number one concern with this bill and why I'm supporting the motion to throw this bill out and part of what makes this so ironic is that the First Nations were not consulted on a bill to develop a consultation levy. That is one of the largest problems with this bill.

The other part, as I've outlined before, Mr. Speaker, I'll outline again. I'm going to keep my comments brief. I think it's important to speak about this hoist in this last reading and to talk about the consultation policy because this is not just the last opportunity to speak to this piece of legislation; it's also the only opportunity that members are going to have in this House to talk about the First Nations consultation policy, that the minister is planning on creating without debate from this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the government is creating a consultation office that will conduct and assess the adequacy of all consultations in the future. It's establishing arbitrary timelines that have not been developed in collaboration with First Nations and has refused to incorporate the recommendations that First Nations have made in written documents going back at least three years. Consultation policies cannot simply be created by one order of government that thinks it's in charge. They must be negotiated collectively, collaboratively until consensus is reached.

You know, a comment for the minister. Some chiefs have been waiting for three years to hear a response from the minister regarding their submissions on consultation. Mr. Speaker, this government decided a long time ago what it wanted to do and is now forcing its intentions upon First Nations.

This government had a choice to make and made it. It could have worked collaboratively. It could have chosen to sit down with First Nations at the onset of the drafting of this bill but chose not to. It chose to proceed in a manner which many First Nations have identified as disrespectful, offensive, and paternalistic. It has broken its promises to First Nations peoples, and it has fundamentally broken its promise to First Nations governments.

Mr. Speaker, in contrast to what this government has done, an NDP government would immediately recognize the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and ensure that all government policies comply with the declaration. We would recognize that this province is founded on traditional lands and that a meaningful relationship between Alberta and First Nations requires a true government-to-government relationship with all chiefs and councils. We'd recognize that meaningful consultation requires accommodation, and we would take meaningful steps to ensure that Alberta's wealth benefits the very people whose traditional rights are most affected by resource development.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore impossible for me and my colleagues in the NDP caucus to support this bill. We do support this motion to throw this bill out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Hai, hai.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.
Are there any other speakers, then?

Hon. Members: Question.

The Speaker: Question has been called.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on the amendment to third reading lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:37 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anglin	Eggen	Saskiw
Barnes	McAllister	Smith
Bikman	Notley	Swann
Bilous	Pedersen	Towle
Donovan	Rowe	Wilson

5:40

Against the motion:

Amery	Fraser	McDonald
Bhardwaj	Fritz	McIver
Bhullar	Goudreau	Oberle
Brown	Horne	Pastoor
Calahasen	Jansen	Quadri
Campbell	Johnson, J.	Quest
Cao	Johnson, L.	Sarich
Casey	Kennedy-Glans	Scott
Cusanelli	Khan	VanderBurg
Dorward	Klimchuk	Webber
Fawcett	Lemke	Woo-Paw
Fenske	Luan	Xiao

Totals: For – 15 Against – 36

[Motion on amendment to third reading of Bill 22 lost]

The Speaker: Hon. members, in accordance with tradition we now are compelled to move directly to the vote on third reading of Bill 22.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:43 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Fraser	McDonald
Bhardwaj	Fritz	McIver
Bhullar	Goudreau	Oberle
Brown	Horne	Pastoor
Calahasen	Jansen	Quadri
Campbell	Johnson, J.	Quest
Cao	Johnson, L.	Sarich
Casey	Kennedy-Glans	Scott
Cusanelli	Khan	VanderBurg
Dorward	Klimchuk	Webber
Fawcett	Lemke	Woo-Paw
Fenske	Luan	Xiao

Against the motion:

Anglin	Eggen	Saskiw
Barnes	McAllister	Smith
Bikman	Notley	Swann
Bilous	Pedersen	Towle
Donovan	Rowe	Wilson
Totals:	For – 36	Against – 15

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a third time]

Private Bills
Third Reading
Bill Pr. 1
Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints in Canada Act

Mr. Dorward: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill Pr. 1, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Canada Act.

The Speaker: Are there any other speakers to this bill?

Mr. Bikman: I'm happy to rise in support of the bill.

The Speaker: I guess that says it all.

Are there any other speakers?

The hon. member to close debate?

Mr. Dorward: Question.

The Speaker: The question has been called.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill Pr. 1 read a third time]

Bill Pr. 2
Wild Rose Agricultural Producers
Amendment Act, 2013

Mr. McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill Pr. 2, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers Amendment Act, 2013.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, I just want to put on the record a bit of reservation about this bill. I do feel like our party is in some way responsible for the fact that this organization may be wishing to change its name. I know that when CBC had the *Wild Rose*

Country noon hour show, one of the reasons they changed to CBC at noon was because they didn't want anybody being confused by the Wildrose name. I see that there's a danger of a potential trend here. I know that there's a Wild Rose Foundation. There are the Wildrose Liquor stores. We actually appreciate the extra advertising. We certainly wouldn't want this to be the slippery slope towards the government changing the licence plates from Wild Rose Country or changing all of the signs coming into Alberta that say Wild Rose Country. So while I do support this act, I do want to just put on the record my reservation and hope that this isn't the beginning of a much broader trend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there other speakers?

Seeing none, Grande Prairie-Smoky to close debate. You do not wish to?

Hon. Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question has been called.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill Pr. 2 read a third time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

5:50

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to advise the House that with the government business for the spring session now being completed, we stand adjourned pursuant to Government Motion 32.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Government Motion 32, agreed to on May 8, 2013, and the sessional calendar published in January of this year, the House will now stand adjourned until Monday, October 28, 2013, unless circumstances require otherwise.

Might I just say on behalf of myself and the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chair of Committees that it has been a very interesting spring session. To those of you who extended as much co-operation as you possibly could, we are very grateful, and I want to say thank you.

Finally, it's the best time of the year in Alberta. Let's get out there and enjoy it to the fullest. We'll see you in October.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:51 p.m. pursuant to Government Motion 32]

Bill Status Report for the 28th Legislature - 1st Session (2012-2013)

Activity to May 15, 2013

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 199 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 200 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

*An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at (780) 427-2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter numbers until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

1* Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012 (Redford)

First Reading -- 8 (May 24, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 177 (Oct. 23, 2012 eve.), 193-96 (Oct. 23, 2012 eve.), 233 (Oct. 24, 2012 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 336-39 (Oct. 29, 2012 eve.), 354-71 (Oct. 30, 2012 aft.), 373-80 (Oct. 30, 2012 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading -- 476-84 (Nov. 1, 2012 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 10, 2012; SA 2012 c8]

2* Responsible Energy Development Act (Hughes)

First Reading -- 207 (Oct. 24, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 263 (Oct. 25, 2012 aft.), 424-43 (Oct. 31, 2012 aft.), 445-57 (Oct. 31, 2012 eve.), 526-46 (Nov. 5, 2012 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 563-71 (Nov. 6, 2012 aft.), 593 (Nov. 6, 2012 eve.), 644-48 (Nov. 7, 2012 aft.), 649-69 (Nov. 7, 2012 eve.), 731-53 (Nov. 19, 2012 eve.), 777-94 (Nov. 20, 2012 aft.), 795-853 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve.), 902-05 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve., passed on division, with amendments)

Third Reading -- 921-41 (Nov. 21, 2012 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2012 cR-17.3]

3* Education Act (J. Johnson)

First Reading -- 155 (Oct. 23, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 219-31 (Oct. 24, 2012 aft.), 238 (Oct. 24, 2012 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 380-407 (Oct. 30, 2012 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading -- 669 (Nov. 7, 2012 eve.), 688-94 (Nov. 8, 2012 aft.), 753-63 (Nov. 19, 2012 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2012 cE-0.3]

4 Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act (Scott)

First Reading -- 352-53 (Oct. 30, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 423-24 (Oct. 31, 2012 aft.), 593-614 (Nov. 6, 2012 eve.), 627-44 (Nov. 7, 2012 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole -- 975-80 (Nov. 22, 2012 aft.), 1057-74 (Nov. 27, 2012 aft.), 1075-101 (Nov. 27, 2012 eve.), 1127-137 (Nov. 28, 2012 aft.), 1139-161 (Nov. 28, 2012 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 1161-166 (Nov. 28, 2012 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2012 cP-39.5]

5 New Home Buyer Protection Act (Griffiths)

First Reading -- 261 (Oct. 25, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 354 (Oct. 30, 2012 aft.), 457-59 (Oct. 31, 2012 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 546-49 (Nov. 5, 2012 eve.), 571-83 (Nov. 6, 2012 aft.), 585-93 (Nov. 6, 2012 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 853-55 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2012 cN-3.2]

6 Protection and Compliance Statutes Amendment Act, 2012 (Jeneroux)

First Reading -- 155 (Oct. 23, 2012 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 209 (Oct. 24, 2012 aft.), 264 (Oct. 25, 2012 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 459-62 (Oct. 31, 2012 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 855-56 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2012 c7]

- 7*** **Election Accountability Amendment Act, 2012 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 774 (Nov. 20, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 972-75 (Nov. 22, 2012 aft.), 1015-41 (Nov. 26, 2012 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1166-167 (Nov. 28, 2012 eve.), 1191-92 (Nov. 29, 2012 aft.), 1221-43 (Dec. 3, 2012 eve.), 1261-79 (Dec. 4, 2012 aft.), 1281-1300 (Dec. 4, 2012 eve., passed, with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1315-37 (Dec. 5, 2012 aft., passed on division)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2012 c5]
- 8** **Electric Utilities Amendment Act, 2012 (Hughes)**
First Reading -- 156 (Oct. 23, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 233 (Oct. 24, 2012 eve.), 316-36 (Oct. 29, 2012 eve, passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 857-902 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve.), 943-53 (Nov. 21, 2012 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 953-56 (Nov. 21, 2012 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 10, 2012; SA 2012 c6]
- 9** **Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2012 (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 156 (Oct. 23, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 209-10 (Oct. 24, 2012 aft.), 272 (Oct. 25, 2012 aft.), 311-16 (Oct. 29, 2012 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 462 (Oct. 31, 2012 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 856-57 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates, SA 2012 c4]
- 10** **Employment Pension Plans Act (Kennedy-Glans)**
First Reading -- 261 (Oct. 25, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 521-26 (Nov. 5, 2012 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 668-69 (Nov. 7, 2012 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 857 (Nov. 20, 2012 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 10, 2012 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2012 cE-8.1]
- 11** **Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2013 (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 1424 (Mar. 6, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1480-86 (Mar. 11, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1534-41 (Mar. 12, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1583 (Mar. 13, 2013 aft.), 1559-60 (Mar. 13, 2013 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 21, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 21, 2013; SA 2013 c2]
- 12** **Fiscal Management Act (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 1438 (Mar. 7, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1479-80 (Mar. 11, 2013 eve.), 1560-78 (Mar. 13, 2013 aft.), 1579-83 (Mar. 13, 2013 eve.), 1785-90 (Apr. 11, 2013 aft.), 1877-85 (Apr. 18, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1967-78 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve), 1981-86 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve, passed), 2007-15 (Apr. 24, 2013 aft.)
Third Reading -- 2027-35 (Apr. 24, 2013 eve., passed on division)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 29, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 29, 2013; SA 2013 cF-14.5]
- 13** **Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2013 (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 1456 (Mar. 11, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1527-34 (Mar. 12, 2013 eve.), 1556 (Mar. 13, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1583 (Mar. 13, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1695-1700 (Mar. 21, 2013 aft.), 1695-1700 (Mar. 21, 2013 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 21, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 21, 2013; SA 2013 c1]
- 14** **RCMP Health Coverage Statutes Amendment Act, 2013 (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 1690 (Mar. 21, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1875 (Apr. 18, 2013 aft.), 1925-27 (Apr. 22, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1966-67 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1986 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 29, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 1, 2013; SA 2013 c4]
- 15** **Emergency 911 Act (\$) (Weadick)**
First Reading -- 1762 (Apr. 10, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1875-76 (Apr. 18, 2013 aft.), 1953-58 (Apr. 23, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2040 (Apr. 24, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2130-31 (May 6, 2013 eve., passed)

- 16 Victims Statutes Amendment Act, 2013 (\$)** **(Denis)**
First Reading -- 1762-63 (Apr. 10, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1958-61 (Apr. 23, 2013 aft.), 1963-67 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2040 (Apr. 24, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2063-65 (Apr. 25, 2013 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 29, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 c5]
- 17 Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2013** **(Kubinec)**
First Reading -- 1779 (Apr. 11, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2123-25 (May 6, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2161-64 (May 7, 2013 aft.), 2172-76 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2176 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
- 18 Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act** **(Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 1873 (Apr. 18, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2125-30 (May 6, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2151-57 (May 7, 2013 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2169-71 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
- 19 Metis Settlements Amendment Act, 2013** **(Campbell)**
First Reading -- 1803 (Apr. 15, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1876-77 (Apr. 18, 2013 aft.), 2021-27 (Apr. 24, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2101-23 (May 6, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2131-32 (May 6, 2013 eve., passed)
- 20 Appropriation Act, 2013 (\$)** **(Horner)**
First Reading -- 1925 (Apr. 22, 2013 eve., passed)
Second Reading -- 1943-52 (Apr. 23, 2013 aft.), 1978-81 (Apr. 23, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2015-19 (Apr. 24, 2013 aft.), 2035-39 (Apr. 24, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2057-63 (Apr. 25, 2013 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 29, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 29, 2013; SA 2013 c3]
- 21 Environmental Protection and Enhancement Amendment Act, 2013** **(Jansen)**
First Reading -- 2055 (Apr. 25, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2123 (May 6, 2013 eve.), 2157-61 (May 7, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2165-68 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2229-34 (May 8, 2013 eve.), 2238-55 (May 8, 2013 eve., passed)
- 22 Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act (\$)** **(Campbell)**
First Reading -- 2191-92 (May 8, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2275-83 (May 9, 2013 aft.), 2321-342 (May 13, 2013 eve, passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2413-442 (May 14, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2468-478 (May 15, 2013 aft., passed)
- 23 Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2013** **(Horner)**
First Reading -- 2080 (May 6, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2150 (May 7, 2013 aft.), 2165 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2168 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2172 (May 7, 2013 eve., passed)
- 24 Statutes Amendment Act, 2013** **(Bhullar)**
First Reading -- 2080 (May 6, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2150-51 (May 7, 2013 aft.), 2171-72 (May 7, 2013 eve.), 2157-61 (May 7, 2013 eve.), 2234-38 (May 8, 2013 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2255-58 (May 8, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2273-75 (May 9, 2013 aft., passed)
- 25*** **Children First Act (\$)** **(Hancock)**
First Reading -- 2145 (May 7, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2194-2212 (May 8, 2013 aft.), 2213-29 (May 8, 2013 eve., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 2342-375 (May 13, 2013 eve, passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 2408-410 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)

- 26 Assurance for Students Act (J. Johnson)**
First Reading -- 2394 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2403-408 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2442-444 (May 14, 2013 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2464-468 (May 15, 2013 aft., passed)
- 201* Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 92 (May 30, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 291-301 (Oct. 29, 2012 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 716-22 (Nov. 19, 2012 aft.), 1725-26 (Apr. 8, 2013 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1726-27 (Apr. 8, 2013 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 29, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 cS-3.5]
- 202 Public Lands (Grasslands Preservation) Amendment Act, 2012 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 130 (May 31, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 501-13 (Nov. 5, 2012 aft.), 1723-25 (Apr. 8, 2013 aft., defeated on division)
- 203 Employment Standards (Compassionate Care Leave) Amendment Act, 2012 (Jeneroux)**
First Reading -- 473 (Nov. 1, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1900 (Apr. 22, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2298-303 (May 13, 2013 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2303 (May 13, 2013 aft., passed)
- 204 Irlen Syndrome Testing Act (Jablonski)**
First Reading -- 968 (Nov. 22, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1912 (Apr. 22, 2013 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Families and Communities)
- 205 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2012 (Calahasen)**
First Reading -- 1117 (Nov. 28, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 1913 (Apr. 22, 2013 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship)
- 206 Tobacco Reduction (Flavoured Tobacco Products) Amendment Act, 2012 (Fraser)**
First Reading -- 1350-51 (Dec. 6, 2012 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2303-312 (May 13, 2013 aft., passed)
- 207 Human Tissue and Organ Donation Amendment Act, 2013 (Webber)**
First Reading -- 1690 (Mar. 21, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2395-403 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)
- 208 Seniors' Advocate Act (Towle)**
First Reading -- 1315 (Dec. 5, 2012 aft., passed)
- Pr1* Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Canada Act (Dorward)**
First Reading -- 1999 (Apr. 24, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2410-411 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2445-446 (May 14, 2013 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 2478 (May 15, 2013 aft., passed)
- Pr2* Wild Rose Agricultural Producers Amendment Act, 2013 (McDonald)**
First Reading -- 1999 (Apr. 24, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2413 (May 14, 2013 eve, passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2445 (May 14, 2013 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 2478 (May 15, 2013 aft., passed)

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