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The 28th Legislature
First Session

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The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

First Session

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Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)
Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC),
Government Whip

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Progressive Conservative: 59 Wildrose: 17 Alberta Liberal: 5 New Democrat: 4 Independent: 2

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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

Amery	Eggen
Anderson	Kubinec
Casey	Sherman
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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: Vacant
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Forsyth	McDonald
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 31, 2013

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. O gracious God, as we begin our proceedings for another day, let us be reminded of the efforts put forward by those who came before us, and let us be ever mindful that the decisions we make today will bear impact on those who come tomorrow. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Let us begin with school groups and the hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 80 students from Father Lacombe high school, located in the beautiful constituency of Calgary-East. Father Lacombe high school is the most diverse school in the Calgary Catholic system. Father Lacombe high school houses students from 32 different countries and is home to about 37 different languages. You can call it the headquarters of the United Nations. The students are accompanied by Dr. Adriana Bejko, Mr. Matt Bouwmeester, Mrs. Joanne Smith, Catherine Taylor, and Ms Liesel Borisenko. They are seated in both galleries. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there other school groups?

Seeing none, let us proceed with the introduction of guests. Please be reminded to be as brief as we can because we have a number to do today. The Hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly a group of staff from the Alberta government Public Affairs Bureau. These particular PAB members will be touring our Legislature Building today. These are dedicated public servants who are contributing greatly to the building Alberta plan. I'm thrilled to welcome these individuals into the Legislature today. I'd ask them to rise as I call out their name: Mr. Alex Serafico, Ms Rhonda Lothammer, Mrs. Allison Hansen, Ms Holly Gray, Ms Jayn Villetard, Ms Mary-Lea Crawford, Ms Jennifer Dagsvik, Ms Jamie White, Ms Mindy Jacobs, Ms Sabra Mahmood Saleh. Welcome to you all.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to the rest of the House two wonderful community organizers of the Blueberry bluegrass festival: Norm Sliter, president of the Blueberry bluegrass festival; and Bill Donlevy, director of fundraising for the festival. It is truly a pleasure to have the festival in my constituency, as you know, and I urge all members to come out to the festival next summer. They are currently seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise now and receive the customary warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of International and Governmental Relations.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. George Dong. Mr. Dong has had a long and vibrant career in reporting and broadcasting with the CBC, BBC, and Omni TV. Through his coverage of Alberta for Radio Canada International's Chinese section, broadcast in Mandarin to China for over 10 years, he has helped share and promote Alberta's story abroad. He is also the co-author of the recently published novel about Morris Cohen, *General Two-Gun Ma Kun: Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Jewish Body Guard*. Cohen was an Edmontonian, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen is regarded as the father of modern China. George's book is adding a colourful chapter to the Alberta story. He is seated in the members' gallery today, and I would ask him to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly Dr. Charles Boulet from Lethbridge, Alberta. Dr. Boulet is an optometrist with a specialty practice in visual rehabilitation and development for children falling through the educational cracks due to visual impediments. Dr. Boulet supports the premise of Bill 204 and believes that we need to start paying attention to children's vision needs. He has defined a standard for comprehensive vision exams for children and believes, along with his research partners, that these exams should be mandatory as untreated visual impediments in children are costing millions each year to Education, Justice, Health, and social services. Dr. Boulet is in the members' gallery, and I would ask him to stand to receive the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and privilege for me to rise today to introduce to you and through you nine guests here in recognition of St. Michael's Health Group Millennium Pavilion's 25th anniversary. My guests represent the dedicated and caring management and staff as well as residents from Millennium Pavilion. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they please rise as I mention their name. We have with us this afternoon Ms Michelle Rose, manager, Millennium Pavilion; Mrs. Charlotte Tria, supervisor, Millennium Pavilion; Mrs. Janet Nichiporik, recreation activity convener; Mrs. Helen Guglich, resident; Mr. Con Popescul, resident; Mr. Roy Bruce, resident; Mrs. Lena Pukalo, resident; and Mrs. Caroline Onyskiw, resident. They had to have the handiwork of their driver, Ms Catherine Gallinger. Also, there were three that could not make it this afternoon to join us: Mrs. Mary Chrapko, Mr. James Rudnitski, and Mr. Andrew Archibald. I would now ask that the Assembly please join me in honouring them with a warm welcome.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Laurie Thiesen. Laurie is a lab technologist who I met the other day when we discussed the risks of privatizing laboratory testing. The experience of privatization of Alberta labs in the mid-90s compromised openness, accountability, and efficiency of lab

testing and at times put patients' lives at risk, not to mention costing Alberta millions of dollars. I'd like to thank Laurie for her service to Albertans and her courage in coming here to the Legislature to ask the Premier and cabinet not to make this decision. I'd ask her to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Dorward: Mr. Speaker, this is a big day in the life of Marjorie Thompson. It's indeed a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Miss Thompson, from my constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar, who has been selected as the winner of the individual leadership award, which was announced at the PDD provincial community leadership awards ceremony on October 16. Marjorie is a member of the Self Advocacy Federation and Albertans Advocating for Change Together. She works for the Gateway Association as a surveyor for the My Life Personal Outcomes Index and is a valued, committed, and adaptable employee who fosters great teamwork. Marjorie is joined here in the gallery by her fiancé, Kenneth. Kenneth and Marjorie, please stand and receive the welcome of the House.

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

1:40

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a very special visitor to introduce to you and through you today. My uncle Régis Deschênes is sitting in the members' gallery and is visiting from Ottawa to help me in arranging my mother's palliative care. I would like to thank him from the bottom of my heart for his assistance in helping to ensure that my mom remains comfortably at home. Please join me in offering him the customary warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you my guests Marie Renaud and Raymond Nkorerimana. They are both part of the Lo-Se-Ca Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides award-winning residential and day supports to adults with developmental disabilities. Their programs are in place for some of the most vulnerable citizens of our province, and they give them the support they need to live happy, healthy, and successful lives. Lo-Se-Ca was recently awarded the Prime Minister's award for the prairie region in the category of social innovation for their work. I'm very pleased to have them here as my guests.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, on a personal note that in the last year that I've come to know Marie Renaud, I have observed a strength of will and a courage of convictions which is rare and admirable. I can say that I've learned a great deal from her, and I believe that many in this House can, too.

I would ask them now to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions if I may. I, too, would like to welcome some incredibly special guests. I'm so pleased to introduce to you and through you Marie Renaud, François Busque, Raymond Nkorerimana, and Ron Bourret, who are all from the Lo-Se-Ca Foundation, as the Member for

Edmonton-Strathcona so articulately introduced. They are such a worthy organization that I wanted to just build on that remarkable introduction. The Lo-Se-Ca Foundation, under the leadership of Executive Director Marie Renaud, is an amazing organization from my constituency of St. Albert. As a group they work tirelessly to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, connecting them to the community while promoting involvement and independence. As a not-for-profit organization they help foster a thriving and inclusive and such an important part of our community in St. Albert. Lo-Se-Ca stands for love, service, and care. I've had the pleasure of spending a lot of time with Marie and her team, and I want to assure you that I've witnessed first-hand how they take this motto so very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I think Marie and Raymond are in the members' gallery, and François and Ron must be behind me. I'd like them to rise now and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Do you have a second introduction, hon. member?

Mr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased today to rise and introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the House two very special and remarkable ladies who it would be safe to say that I would be lost without. The first is Eileen Hofmann. Eileen is the constituency manager in my office in St. Albert. I'm only half joking when I say that over the past year and a half Eileen has been helping to train me to be a good MLA. Eileen is an exceptional resource for our entire community in St. Albert, and I'm grateful for her work and so very pleased to call her a colleague.

The next person, Mr. Speaker, is my other boss, the real boss, my wife, RaeLynn. She is the mother of my two children, the love of my life, and my best friend. The single greatest accomplishment of my life was convincing RaeLynn that she should marry me 21 years ago.

I'd ask both of my bosses now to rise and receive the warm welcome of my colleagues.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that I can follow that, but I do want to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly someone who will be very familiar to all members, I believe, Mr. Don Newman, CM, award-winning journalist and broadcaster, joined by his wife, Shannon Day, visiting us from Ottawa. Ms. Day some may remember. The Minister of Culture may have actually been here with her when she was a correspondence writer in Premier Lougheed's office. I'm pleased to welcome both Mr. Newman and Ms. Day to the Assembly today as they visit Alberta to promote Mr. Newman's memoir, *Welcome to the Broadcast*. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

St. Michael's Health Group Millennium Pavilion

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and privilege to rise today to help commemorate St. Michael's Health Group Millennium Pavilion on their 25 years of providing compassionate, supportive long-term care in Edmonton.

St. Michael's Health Group has a proud, agile, and visionary history, which began in 1976. It is coupled with strong stewardship, which encompasses people, programs, services, and facilities that continue to be valued as partners in our province's health care system.

Twenty-five years ago, Mr. Speaker, this organization responded to the ongoing realities of our aging population and with the support of the government opened Millennium Pavilion Seniors' Lodge, which offered independent apartment-style supportive housing for the elderly.

Over the years Millennium Pavilion has established a widely acknowledged culture of success, which is a determinant of an effective organization. Truly, they have a reputation for creating an environment of acceptance for all residents and their families, which honours their life history, supports their personal strengths and challenges, and maintains their dignity in a comfortable, safe, and homelike environment.

Features of their blueprint for success include taking the perspective of the residents by developing individualized and responsive health care plans and the provision of recreation programs that value independence and choice in an environment that promotes social involvement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations and sincere appreciation to all those from the past, present, and into the future who will and have contributed to the unparalleled success of St. Michael's Millennium Pavilion's 25 years of dedicated, loving care and exemplary service to their residents. Heartfelt thanks for adding immeasurably to our city, province, and country and very special best wishes in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another day, another ghastly performance by this Premier's Municipal Affairs minister. Just yesterday he was telling Albertans that the opposition was fear-mongering for raising the very valid concerns of municipalities across the province over Bill 28, concerns that it would strip away their autonomy and put them firmly under his thumb, under penalty of incarceration. He said that the language we used was frightening and that he needed to do work to undo the myths and rumours.

Well, it's beginning to look like the only frightening thing the Premier and her minister had to deal with last night was the furious backlash from mayors and reeves over this legislation. This morning the Premier announced that she will indeed consult with all municipalities and that local autonomy will be protected. Mr. Speaker, this is a victory for democracy, for local autonomy, and for all Albertans.

We can't help but notice, however, that this particular minister hasn't exactly endeared himself to his counterparts. He has all but torpedoed the province's relationship with Mayor Nenshi, and if the Premier hadn't stepped in this morning, he would have done the same with nearly everybody else. Here's a bit of free advice for the Premier: keep him away from Mayor Iveson. You want to preserve that relationship.

Mr. Speaker, this minister's erratic performance aside, I'd like to commend the Premier for coming around and doing the right thing. It is not often that common sense triumphs on the government benches, and we're all about credit where it's due. To the Premier: we are humbled and honoured that she has come around

to our way of thinking. It's a welcome change, and I hope we see more of it. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, I realize there has been a bit of a private joke that just occurred. Good for you. Let's hope that the rest of the day stays just as friendly.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Let us begin question period. The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Your first main set.

Regional Governance

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, at 1:30 in the morning today the Minister of Municipal Affairs arrogantly told us that we had to rush through Bill 28 or every good thing about regional co-operation would come to an untimely end. A few hours ago the Premier's caucus caused her to come to her senses and slow down this train wreck of a bill that destroys municipal autonomy. Now, after two days of trying to convince Albertans that the three opposition parties were wrong and that the mayors all loved this bill, the truth has won out. To the Premier: how is it that this train got so far off its track?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the only reason that this could be characterized that way, of course, is because of the comments made yesterday by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

I want to talk about a couple of real successes in this province, Mr. Speaker, things like the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission, the Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission, the Bow Valley Waste Management Commission. These are all examples of municipal leaders that have come together in partnership to ensure the viability of rural Alberta. I had the opportunity this summer throughout the province, in places like Vauxhall and Edson, to see other examples of this.

This legislation is an evolution with respect to how to ensure that we do better, Mr. Speaker. We're looking forward to working with the AUMA and the AAMD and C to continue to do just that. [interjections]

The Speaker: Please, no more interjections. I hate to interrupt.

Hon. leader, your first sup.

Ms Smith: That's precisely the problem, Mr. Speaker. This legislation fails to meet any of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties' seven principles on regional governance. It isn't voluntary, it doesn't allow the partners to define the region, it kills autonomy, it's hierarchical, it doesn't have voting equity, it doesn't use consensus, and it is not a user-pay approach to problems. Will the Premier assure this Assembly that this new bill will incorporate all of these principles?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the situation that I explained last night was why the bill was introduced without prior consultation about what the specifics of the bill were. Now that the bill has been introduced, we have the opportunity to consult with the AAMD and C and the AUMA and the other municipalities in order to ensure that they see line by line what the intention of the bill is. They will discover that their assertions that it doesn't meet the seven criteria are completely invalid and wrong. We'll make sure that everyone is onside when we pass this bill.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, this legislation also fails to accommodate the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's three principles of regional governance. It is not open, responsive, or accountable. It does not respect that the roles and responsibilities of municipal and provincial governments are different, and it does not envision a system where regional governance partners achieve a consensus of how things get paid for. To the Premier: will she assure this Assembly that the revised bill will accommodate these principles into the act?

Mr. Griffiths: Well, Mr. Speaker, we had a great debate about this last night. I actually went through and I read the legislation that covers how it's created and how it's accountable, and I compared it to the service commissions that currently exist in the MGA and demonstrated that it's the exact same wording. When we're done going through this consultation, it will represent everything that the AAMD and C, the AUMA, and this government stand for on planning, collaboration, and organization to make sure that we all, regardless of the level of government, serve Albertans to the best of our ability.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. Second main set of questions.

Severance Payments to Premier's Office Staff

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's silence on details about the severance package paid to her former chief of staff is deafening. He claims that after just six months on the job, he received \$130,000 in severance pay. We've asked the Premier to confirm this number. She won't, which is bizarre because if it's true, you'd kind of think that she would. I'd like to give her another chance. To the Premier: does the \$130,000 payment to her former chief of staff represent the total sum of compensation that he received upon leaving her office? Yes or no?

Ms Redford: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, we've made a commitment to put in place a policy for full transparency with respect to severance going past, currently, and in the future. I was very pleased today to see the Canadian Taxpayers Federation endorse that approach. We're going to keep our commitment.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, it's fitting that it's Halloween because the mystery continues. I will let Albertans come to their own conclusion based on that non answer.

But switching gears a little bit, to what extent was the Premier herself involved in negotiating the mysterious severance package that she keeps on hiding the details of?

Ms Redford: I wasn't.

The Speaker: The hon. leader. Final sup.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, she keeps saying that she's going to release the information. Albertans want to know when. Why not now? Why not come clean, end the confusion, answer the questions, and release the severance details today? I think we all know why: November 22. To the Premier: will she release the details of her former chief of staff's total severance package before her members render their verdict on her leadership on November 22?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is all really amusing, coming from the party whose idea of transparency

is *Extreme Makeover*, Wildrose edition. Lock them up in a room for a weekend, and they will make themselves over, put on a new set of makeup, and call themselves accountable, transparent, and equitable. That's not the way things work on this side of the House. We are developing Canadian leading strategies and policies to be the most transparent in all of our proceedings.

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep on asking until we get the answer.

Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Ms Smith: In May of this year I asked the Health minister about a medical test that helps determine if chemotherapy is the appropriate course of treatment for a breast cancer patient. It's called Oncotype DX. It has been reviewed and recommended by the Alberta breast cancer group and approved for funding in Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia but not in Alberta. I asked the minister why it wasn't available here. Now, the minister has had almost six months to review this file. Why has he not approved Oncotype DX for use in Alberta?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said in response when this question was asked before, we are going through the health technologies assessment process with respect to this test. As the hon. member should know if she doesn't know already, the simple existence of a new technology does not mean it is automatically appropriate for all patients. Unlike the opposition, we rely on the evidence and we rely on the advice of clinical experts to determine not only if we offer a specific test in our province but to whom and under what conditions it will be provided. That's a responsible way to operate a health care system, and that's the way we do it on this side of the House.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what the medical experts say. Up to 30 per cent of breast cancer patients get needless, expensive, and potentially damaging chemotherapy. This test could prevent that. In May I quoted a professor of medicine at the University of Calgary who stated: "We are beginning to despair at the inordinate time [it takes to make] decisions regarding the well-being of our patients." Well, it's six months later. Why can't this minister make a decision?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can quote all of the advocates she wants for this particular type of test. I'm sure any one of us in the House could think of other technologies and other drugs and services that are available. We have a formal health technology assessment process in this province. We cooperate with other provinces in reviewing the evidence. We are very close to completing the evaluation for this particular test, and we will make it available on the conditions that are appropriate for Albertans.

Ms Smith: It has already been recommended by the Alberta breast cancer group. I'll remind the minister that Ontario agreed to cover the cost of Oncotype DX for breast cancer patients more than three years ago, and they've reported a success rate of 97 per cent. Patients who have received the terrifying diagnosis of breast cancer need to know what is the best course of treatment. Doesn't the minister care that his foot-dragging is causing needless stress and suffering?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess we're into an area here of revisiting questions that have been asked and answered in the past. As the hon. member will know, there are rules and there are

procedures around the assessment of new tests, of new drugs, of other things that we offer in a publicly funded health care system. I think what people would like to know is: if this test is approved and if other technologies are approved in the future, how would they expect an opposition-led policy that would purport to remove \$5 billion from the budget of this province to pay for the very things they're advocating for for their own constituents?

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

Municipal Charters

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal Affairs says that he's disappointed with others who reference a big-city charter. Well, the Liberals have been talking about it since '08. The Premier clearly understands what a big-city charter is and why it's needed. The mayors of Edmonton and Calgary clearly understand what big-city charters are and why they're needed. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: why is it that everyone but the Minister of Municipal Affairs is clear about big-city charters' intent and necessity?

2:00

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, round and round we go. I have travelled all over this province, and I can tell you that everybody is interested in making sure that the province and the municipalities have the perfect relationship for the folks that we mean to govern. I just got off the phone, actually, and I can say that I talked to a mid-sized town mayor who expressed a lot of interest in what the charter would do and whether or not they could participate. Here we're focused on what the charter is and how it can govern the relationship between the municipalities and the province to serve our clients. They are strictly worried about the name, which is sorry for everybody else.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks. To the same minister. Can the minister explain why he keeps blaming the summer floods for putting him behind on big-city charters, but the timelines on the memorandum of understanding says that the enacting legislation was to have been presented to the Legislature by spring of 2013, well before the floods?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I have said many, many times before in this House – it's funny how they've asked six questions and four of them are about the name of the charter and not about anything with any content. The charter is a relationship between the municipalities and the province. It's funny how they want a charter but they want the province to dictate what it's going to be. This is a discussion between the municipalities, and I can't force it to come faster. It's going to be a good discussion. Then, of course, it didn't happen in the timelines we anticipated, and we did fall a few months behind, but we're close to being done, I anticipate. Even the mayor of Edmonton has asked for just a little more time to review what we've done so far so that we can carry on.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that Mayor Nenshi of Calgary says that the minister hasn't really been part of the conversation on big-city charters, can the minister tell us: did he get moved off the file? Yes or no?

Mr. Griffiths: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of files, and I know that we have quite a few people in the department who are policy

experts. My understanding is that there were policy experts from that city and policy experts from this city and policy experts from my department who worked on a lot of the details. I didn't work on it every day because I have a lot of files, including housing and the libraries and emergency management and all the rest of the municipalities, so I wasn't there every day. I doubt the other two mayors were either. We have experts that work on that and work on the day-to-day negotiations, and that's the simple fact.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the New Democrat Opposition.

Private Health Services Delivery

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday, when I asked about a plan to privatize lab services in Alberta, the Premier said this: "18 months ago this government, this Progressive Conservative government, said that... we believed in a public health care system... We do not change our minds from Monday to Friday." Yesterday the Premier mocked the NDP for our commitment to public health care, saying that her government would, "not... exclude any option," meaning, of course, privatization. To the Premier: why did you change your mind from Tuesday to Wednesday?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is committed to building Alberta, supporting families and communities, and supporting public health care. We are very proud of the fact that we had candidates in every constituency in the last election that were consistent with respect to that perspective. We are going to provide the best options possible in a public health care system for people to ensure patient safety. This is wordsmithing. It's word-spinning. It's not even worthy of the discussion that we need to have about how to create a better health care system for Albertans.

Mr. Mason: Well, I'm just quoting the words. They've already been smithed, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier claims to have been elected to protect public health care, but her government is doing the opposite. They're going ahead with an unprecedented privatization of home care, and they're planning to give \$3 billion of public money to a private lab services company. When the Premier says public, she means private. Black is white. It's also Harperesque. Why won't this Premier give Albertans a straight answer on her plans to privatize medical lab services in this province?

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear. There is only one plan, and that plan is to strengthen and broaden the scope of services that we offer Albertans as part of our publicly funded health care system. The hon. member is wordsmithing. If his argument is to hold any merit, he should be holding forth about physicians in this province. They are, in fact, private businesses. He should be talking to us about the 30 per cent of health care that's delivered in this country that is delivered through the private sector. This is about where the money comes from. It is not about the mechanism for the delivery of care.

Mr. Mason: Talk about wordsmithing, Mr. Speaker.

On Tuesday the Premier said that privatization of lab services isn't happening. On Wednesday she more or less admitted that it was. On Tuesday the Premier said that she was elected to protect public health care. On Wednesday she criticized the NDP for our commitment to fully funded public health care. Mr. Speaker, it's now Thursday. Will the real Alison Redford please stand up? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, as we all know, anyone from the front bench is eligible to rise and answer the question.

Give it your best shot, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Horne: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is, after all, Halloween.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to answer the question once again. Let's face facts. The hon. member's use of the term "privatization" apparently, in his world, means the use of any private provider to deliver any publicly funded health care service. The fact is that 30 per cent of health care services in this country are delivered with the assistance of private providers. We have many successful examples, and much capacity in our health care system, including surgery, is provided by private partners. Quality standards are the same for all.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, the first five spots reserved for leaders' questions have expired, and I would now appreciate little or no preamble to supplementary questions here on in.

Let's begin with Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Highway 63

Mr. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Highway and bridge construction through Fort McMurray is ongoing. One of the biggest irritants for my constituents in Wood Buffalo is the seemingly random timing by contractors. In the past month there have been repeated instances where contractors failed to provide proper notice to the public on lane closures, failed to provide adequate signage, and failed to meet deadlines. This is especially difficult during extended rush hours in the morning and evening and on shift-change days, Thursday and Sunday. The issue came to a head earlier this month when a maintenance crew closed one lane of highway 63 until 7 p.m. To the Minister of Transportation: have the contractors been penalized for these infractions? What is he doing to stop these massive delays?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right to talk about the frustrations of some residents of Wood Buffalo. Alberta Transportation has more than \$700 million in construction projects under way there. This means that there will be construction delays. We've clearly defined restrictions for our contractors in the area for when lane closures are not permitted, and the incident that the member refers to was a violation of these restrictions. We have and will continue to issue penalties to contractors who violate their contractual obligations. The short-term pains we hope will lead to long-term gains, but in the meantime I appreciate the hon. member bringing up those shortfalls.

The Speaker: Hon. member, first sup.

Mr. Allen: Thank you. To the same minister: what is the minister doing about the constant traffic nightmares on and around Confederation Way and Thickwood Boulevard and the interchanges as residents of my constituency are stuck in traffic for an hour or more waiting for these interchanges to be fully functional?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. We have made considerable progress in the hon. member's area, but I can tell you that a second lane on the eastbound and southbound ramps at both Thickwood and Confederation have opened. Just this morning we

opened a third northbound lane on 63, between Morrison Street and Thickwood Boulevard. I've already heard that this is helping. There are more lane openings planned in the upcoming weeks, and we've expanded the restricted hours for our contractors to stay away from those rush hours because that seems to be one of the biggest problems. So we'll keep listening, and we'll keep making improvements, and I appreciate the hon. member drawing these legitimate concerns to our attention.

Mr. Allen: To the same minister. As this is close to my heart, I'm curious to know how the Alberta government is progressing with the implementation of my report recommendations and its commitment to have the twinning of Highway 63 completed by 2016.

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that we're on track to finish highway 63 by the end of 2016, something that certainly the Official Opposition would never have funded. You know what? In June 2012 we had issued seven contracts covering 136 kilometres of work worth more than \$400 million. Construction will include safety rest areas, pullouts, passing and climbing lanes, and we've also taken many steps to make the road safer. This is a long journey. There's a lot of work to be done in the Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo area, but we understand it's needed. When people ask for it, it's legitimate, and this government will continue to build Alberta and get these and other projects completed.

2:10

Regional Governance

(continued)

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, at 2 a.m. our Wildrose caucus was tired but united. We knew we had to do all we could to delay Bill 28 until our elected municipal officials were given the opportunity to provide feedback on a very poorly drafted piece of legislation. Today, despite this Municipal Affairs minister yesterday calling us fearmongers and liars and all kinds of names, the Premier made an abrupt U-turn and has embarked on a process that I hope results in a much better piece of legislation. To the minister: can you please employ a more collaborative approach in the future when passing legislation affecting our municipalities.

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the puffball question. For the two years that I've been Minister of Municipal Affairs, I've been to every AUMA and every AAMD and C meeting, I've been to regional and zone meetings all around this province, I have gone from one end of the province to the other meeting with individual municipalities, and my door is always open. Our consultations don't just go on for a period before we introduce legislation; they go on before, they go on during, they go on after, they go on every single day so we can make sure it's always done right.

Mr. Anderson: Well, it wasn't this time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, given that at roughly 1:30 this morning this minister claimed that the Assembly had to push forward and pass this legislation within days in order to avoid losing the Capital Region Board and 18 related organizations and given that this is now relevant because the Premier has announced that passage of this bill will be delayed, will the minister immediately table the court order or other documentation that he relied upon when he said that we must pass this legislation within days, or these dire, awful consequences would result? We have a right as members to understand why you made that claim and if it was true or not.

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I suggested that the discussion was about whether or not there was consultation that preceded the introduction of the bill, which there wasn't because there was a court case going on, which is why it was introduced without consultation. We still await a court decision that could be a couple of weeks away and that could have some very serious consequences. But we're going to continue to proceed with consultation so that every single municipality gets their input and makes sure that they know that most of the stuff that they said is completely unfounded and inaccurate. Then they'll know that this is the right legislation with perhaps a few tweaks that they might suggest.

Mr. Anderson: Perhaps a few tweaks. Okay. All right.

To the minister. Given that Airdrie's elected municipal officials have made it clear, as have most other communities, that they want any participation in a regional planning board to be entirely voluntary, both on the way in and, if it doesn't work for them anymore, on the way out, will you commit today that when you bring back your revised, or tweaked, bill, it will protect local autonomy by making membership in regional boards absolutely voluntary? Yes or no?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I said several times last night that I have always said that I will work with municipalities to try and come up with a solution. I would not force them into something, but letting them not work together is not going to help make sure that we build strong regions to accomplish all of the growth and accommodate all of the growth that's coming into this province.

I find it very ironic, Mr. Speaker, that earlier in the week they criticized the Minister of Transportation for talking about legislation they had at the time. Now they criticize us because we didn't talk about it, and we're going to consult after. It must be awful to be the opposition and constantly be so depressed and critical of everything that you never get to see the light of day.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North, followed by Calgary-Shaw.

Vision Assessments for Schoolchildren

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, recently the University of Lethbridge detailed the impacts that visual impediments to learning have on a child's education. Dr. Boulet, here in the gallery today, points out in his report that less than 15 per cent of students have their vision tested comprehensively despite the fact that 80 per cent of learning is dependent on vision. Overlooked vision problems are often misdiagnosed as learning disabilities or behavioural problems. My first question is to the Minister of Education. What measures are currently in place within our school system to ensure that comprehensive visual testing is available for our children?

Mr. J. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first thing I'd like to say is that I want to commend this member about how passionate she's been on this particular subject and how she's raised the profile of the Irlen situation even though her bill may not have turned out exactly with the support she'd have liked.

I want to say that identifying students that have special needs with respect to education as early as possible is obviously very important. In our province the school boards have the responsibility and the flexibility to determine the most appropriate ways to provide students those supports. They come in a number of different ways. One of them is in the Eye See . . . Eye Learn program, which kindergarten students can access.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is for the hon. Minister of Health. Minister, given the low rate of student comprehensive vision testing, should the Eye See . . . Eye Learn initiative, just mentioned by our Minister of Education, be re-evaluated to ensure that testing is mandatory for children of school age?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, like my colleague the hon. Minister of Education, I also want to congratulate the Member for Red Deer-North for her advocacy in this area.

Mr. Speaker, those decisions, again, would be made on the basis of evidence. I think that in our government, under the leadership of our Premier, we have an excellent record of standing up for the importance of early screening, whether we're talking about hearing or vision or any other sensory function that is absolutely critical to learning. We always need to be looking for opportunities to expand our ability to identify children who are at risk and who are in need of support and to provide that as early as possible.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you. My third question, again to the hon. Minister of Health: do you see a need for a more comprehensive screening protocol to detect a wider range of vision problems, helping to manage vision, academic, and health outcomes and ultimately improving long-term costs in our health and education systems?

Mr. Horne: Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is a resounding yes. As I was just mentioning in response to the last question, things like the maternal child health initiative as part of our early childhood development strategy and other work under way in my ministry are aimed at exactly the objective that the hon. member is talking about. The way that a health care system helps support learning and other developmental opportunities for children and youth is through screening, is by identifying those issues early and then by tailoring programs and services to provide the necessary intervention to help that child.

I thank the hon. member for the question.

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

Women's Shelters

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This PC government ran on an agenda of strengthening families and communities. They even introduced a bill this week called the Building Families and Communities Act. It all sounds so nice. The reality is that we have a social system that fails thousands of women each year who are routinely turned away from emergency shelters. The Premier's response is to paper over the cracks and appoint a new minister. There is a shortage of beds for women fleeing violence, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. To the Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety: what is your ministry doing about it?

Ms Jansen: I would like to thank the member, Mr. Speaker, for that question, my first in the House as Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety. I think the very fact that I'm standing here as Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety shows our Premier's dedication to these important issues. I ask you to join with me. Any time you have suggestions or

thoughts on how to improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens in this province, pass them along to me.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wilson: Actions are louder than words, Mr. Speaker.

Considering that the WIN III shelter is merely days away from closing its doors permanently, services a unique demographic of women in a culturally sensitive fashion, is the only one of its kind in Alberta, and has a very high success rate, to the same minister: what further criteria would this shelter possibly need to meet in order to receive funding from your ministry?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the budget aspect actually is in Human Services because we all work together in that area. But I want to assure this hon. member and members of the House that when the federal grant for the WIN III shelter was cut in June, they approached us, and we've been working with them ever since. We lined them up with Homeward Trust to make an application for ongoing funding, and they received approval from Homeward Trust for that ongoing funding. They're working together now on the conditions of that funding. Why they determined that they should make a public announcement of closing their doors in the midst of that process is beyond me.

2:20

Mr. Wilson: Well, perhaps this minister can enlighten the House as to why the province only funds a limited number of beds at emergency shelters despite the fact that many shelters have the additional space and resources to assist women in need. Yet these brave women are turned away by the thousands every single year. Do you just not care?

Mr. Hancock: The hon. member knows that under the leadership of this Premier this government has provided a great deal of care and understanding, compassion, and resources for sexual violence issues, for protection of women escaping sexual violence, for the announcement of the family violence death review committee process. All of those things are in place so that we can reduce family violence, prevent family violence, and assist those people who are victims of family violence.

The hon. member will also know, because his party wants to cut \$5 billion from the budget, that the allocation of scarce resources is always the most difficult job in government. We try to do that to make sure that we make the most effective use of the public resources.

Disaster Recovery and Mitigation

Mr. Hehr: The recent flood is said to be the most costly natural disaster in Canadian history. Unfortunately, the government has provided no pragmatic solutions for funding future disaster events. Other jurisdictions the world over have moved on to solutions to not only minimize damage from future flooding but also protect the public purse at the same time. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I have heard many troubling stories from my constituents in navigating the DRP and the subsequent appeal process. Will the minister commit to making the appeal process transparent and accessible to all Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm incredibly proud of the DRP program that the province of Alberta has offered to those in need. It's one of the most progressive, one of the most

streamlined that the entire country has ever seen. In fact, I've heard other jurisdictions say that they would like to model theirs after ours.

Mr. Speaker, our appeal process is also very transparent. It's right on the website now. It allows those who feel like they have not got what is due them ample opportunity to file a very simple appeal and to have it evaluated through a quasi-judicial, independent third party like the Municipal Government Board so that we can make sure that everyone is getting exactly what is owed to them.

Mr. Hehr: To the Deputy Premier. I understand the government is currently compiling engineering reports and studies to prevent future flood damage. Once a consensus emerges as the best way forward, how does this government plan on funding upstream mitigation to protect Calgary and other jurisdictions from future flooding? Are you just going to add another billion to the debt column?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I have met with the federal government several times along with my other provincial counterparts, and we have constantly pushed the point that our disaster recovery programs are shared with the federal government when it becomes a large disaster. They could be eligible for up to 90 per cent of the cost as long as we make sure that we turn in all of our numbers appropriately. We've indicated to them that it's their and our responsibility along with municipalities to try to prevent these disasters. It's much more feasible to invest in prevention than it is to pick up after the disaster. They've indicated that they're working on a program. We're going to continue to put pressure on them across the country to make sure that we're working on mitigation together.

Mr. Hehr: Given the cost to the public purse for the flood recovery, estimates as high as \$6 billion, and given that Stephen Harper's Conservatives have no interest in national programs, will this government commit to what has emerged as international best practices and implement a provincial disaster insurance program to protect families and communities and the public purse at the same time as a result that there's going to be inevitable flooding and natural disasters occurring in the future?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, all of these questions are very good and very legitimate. I want to thank the member for them. We've discussed that same issue with our provincial counterparts and with the federal government. Every other jurisdiction out of the G-7 or the G-8 that has done that has done it at a national level. Frankly, most people who would be optional to buy flood insurance is a small group, which makes the cost astronomical. We have continued to talk to the federal government and encourage them to sit down at the table with us as partners to talk about what we could do for a national flood insurance program, and we await those continued discussions.

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

Pension Plans

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Consumer debt levels in Alberta are rising, and the majority of workers do not have income security after retirement. However, this PC government continues to oppose attempts to expand the Canada pension plan even when it's obvious that a stable pension plan for all Albertans is long overdue. To the Associate Minister of Finance: why is this

government resisting the security, value, and good old-fashioned common sense that an expanded Canada pension plan would afford, or is it still burdened by firewall sentiments that still lurk back somewhere in the PC government?

Mr. Dallas: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta government is committed to increasing retirement savings for all Albertans. That's why we passed the legislation this year that allowed for pooled registered pension plans as a way to help Albertans working in the private sector to access pension plans. There is dialogue happening in other provinces across this country that we're engaged in, and we'll continue to engage in those discussions regarding CPP.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, given that this government should lead by example by administering public service pensions so that other employers can follow, does the minister actually think that it's fair to change the rules in the middle of the game, making workers pay more, receive less pension, and work more years to access the retirement money which is actually theirs to begin with?

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, I know what Albertans expect, and what they expect is for us to participate in and administer a program that's sustainable for the long term. The generation of workers that will be coming to retirement have a right to expect that they will be able to receive a sustainable pension going into the future. Prudent action today means a sustainable future for Albertans, and that's the way we wrote it.

Mr. Eggen: Well, given that private pension schemes and RSPs have been paying diminishing returns for more than a decade now and that public pensions are now weakened by this government – not the supergenerous severance packages for senior bureaucrats, mind you – when will this government sober up, let down their firewall, and start living up to the pension responsibilities that they have as a government?

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, this government has met those responsibilities, will continue to meet those responsibilities, and continues to look towards the future.

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

Whistle-blower Protection for Health Professionals

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Doctors are seeking protection against a broken health care system. This time last year the Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation said that the new whistle-blower legislation will cover health care professionals and set a gold standard. Justice Vertes disagrees and has recommended expanding whistle-blower protection to include physicians. Will the minister explain when this government will bring forward legislation to protect doctors and front-line professionals from bullying and intimidation?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the whistle-blower legislation we brought forward. It does protect many classes of people. One of the difficulties I have when I listen to the questions from the opposition is that they do not read the legislation before they ask questions. I would encourage them to do that. They will find the answers in the legislation.

Mrs. Forsyth: Mr. Speaker, I'm speechless that this minister doesn't even know his own legislation. Totally speechless.

Given that this is just another good example of a government that doesn't listen, as this minister knew from the start that doctors

were not protected under his own gold standard whistle-blower legislation, can he please explain to Albertans why doctors, who are trying to protect our patients, were kept off the list?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, one of the difficulties whenever we're asked questions is that I don't think they've done their proper research. They need to start doing the research before they ask questions. There are medical professionals that are covered under the whistle-blower legislation. Our whistle-blower legislation permits any report to be made to the Public Interest Commissioner. I would encourage them not to present false accusations in this House, not to fearmonger but to do their research, look at the legislation, and then they're going to find their answers.

Mrs. Forsyth: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, this is embarrassing.

Given that Justice Vertes said in his report that advocating within the health care system for . . . patients is a basic function of a physician [and that] physicians also have a responsibility to "consider the well-being of society in matters affecting health,"

will the minister please commit today to bringing in further legislation in this fall session that protects doctors?

2:30

Mr. Scott: Just to assist the member, I'm going to read a couple of the sections of the act under schedule 2.

- (c) "Medical staff" means a physician appointed by a public entity designated under section 2 of Schedule 1, to admit, attend or treat, or who utilizes the resources of the public entity in respect of, patients;
- (d) "Professional staff" means a health practitioner, other than a physician, who is regulated under a health profession statute.

So they are covered. [interjections] They are covered. You need to start doing your research. Do your research before you ask questions in the House. [interjections]

The Speaker: Shall I just stand here for the remaining eight minutes? I could barely hear what that last answer really was and how it concluded, and while I'm inclined to give the associate minister the floor again to start over, I will move on today.

Let's go to Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Cypress-Medicine Hat. And, please, keep your interjections absolutely down.

School Class Sizes

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie has seen significant growth in the last year, with an average of four children per family. With this exponential growth we are seeing even larger school class sizes, where in some instances we have over 70 students and three teachers in one classroom. My questions are to the Minister of Education. Given that Alberta's population will continue to grow, what measures are in place to mitigate the foreseeable growth and address ballooning class sizes?

Mr. J. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, thanks to this Premier we're investing in communities and families in a number of different ways, and it's nice to hear this example from the member. I know we have infrastructure challenges, but it's great to see the innovative and collaborative approach that the teachers are taking, with three teachers team teaching in a class of 70.

Some of the things that we're doing, obviously, in the capital plan: the commitment to 50 new and 70 modernizations and the investment in modular classrooms that we've got. We've got a hundred of those rolling out, up from our typical 40 a year. Of the

54 additional ones that we're putting in the flood-affected zones, that we'll be able to use in subsequent years, we've got 400 students in those classrooms already.

The other thing that we've done is that we've listened to parents and Albertans and teachers who've told us: take as much money out of the system and the administrative and the corporate side as you can, and get it in the classroom. So we've actually increased the funding for inclusion and small class size initiatives and things like that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that we're seeing such large class sizes, what can your ministry do to ensure that quality of education is not compromised right across the province?

Mr. J. Johnson: It's a very good question, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, he noted one example. We have large class sizes across the province for different reasons, some because of the class or the way it's taught, some because of infrastructure, and some because we have a lot of students and pressures on enrolment that way. But it's really important to note that when we're looking at quality of education and the success of the student, the size of the class is not the most important thing to track or to try to affect. Obviously, the engagement of the parent is the most important, but second to that is the quality of teaching. We've got a task force out talking to teachers and Albertans about what we can do to make sure teachers have the supports they need and that we have the assurances that we need to have great teachers in the classroom.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given the fiscal realities we're currently facing, what can your ministry do to ease the heavy loads of teachers who feel very stressed out right now?

Mr. J. Johnson: Another good question, Mr. Speaker, and I know that as a former teacher it's close to this member's heart. That's one of the reasons why we wanted to make sure he was on the task force for teaching excellence. This is one of the things that we're asking them to talk to teachers about: are they getting the proper training and resources and supports they need?

Also, we're doing formal things. We've got some things in the teachers' agreement that are having us do actual formal studies with the ATA and school boards across the province. In addition to that, we're doing informal work with teachers, trying to find out with school boards what we can strip out of the tasks that they have today to make sure they're focused in the classroom on making our kids have the best learning experience possible.

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

Flood Mitigation

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've seen first-hand two Alberta floods in the last three years. I don't think any of us can truly empathize with a mom and dad who just lost the home they raised their kids in or the rooms where bedtime stories were read. The saddest pages in this real-life story are those that tell us that this tragedy was made so much worse by the lack of preparation of this government. The government has a crucial mandate to keep

Alberta families safe, and they botched it continually, ignoring a flood mitigation report. What does this government say to people who've lost their homes, knowing that billions of dollars of devastation could have been prevented with just a little foresight?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, you know what? We know that flood mitigation is the responsibility of municipalities, the province, and the federal government because it costs us all. It costs families the most, so we constantly work on that. The report the member refers to: every recommendation was done or in process except for two, and this legislation that we've introduced in the House this week is going to address those last two issues. It's very important that we keep in mind that we all do our best to try and prevent disasters, but we also have to expend resources when disasters occur. You can't prevent them all, but we continue to work invariably. I can tell you one thing: the \$5 billion they would cut out of the budget would mean no mitigation whatsoever for anybody.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in 2010 the PC MLA who chaired the flood mitigation committee and report said, quote, unfortunately, when the next one happens, which it will eventually, people are going to say, "What about the flood report? Why didn't we do anything?" how can the Minister of Municipal Affairs still continue to brush off taking responsibility for his lack of action?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, I take full responsibility for every bit of action we've done, including the \$82 million that we've invested in the last few years in flood mitigation, which several communities have said saved them. Now, we haven't spent the \$300 million that was recommended in the report, but we constantly have challenges between people who say that we need to spend money in health care, people who say that kids need schools. It's a constant challenge on where you're going to put resources, and we do our best.

But I'll guarantee you that the cuts that they suggest will do nothing to help build education or health care or do anything to protect people, to mitigate against the next flood. We will, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that constituents in southern Alberta are still waiting on flood claims from both 2013 and as far back as 2010 and their families are still facing financial hardships, what is this government going to do to ensure that the 2013 flood victims get their claims so they can stop relying on our local food banks?

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Speaker, from the 2010 claim, the member knows full well because he asked me in a written question, there were 2,433 claims from that flood. There are five outstanding residential claims. That means we're doing an exceptional job. Perhaps the member would want to consider that maybe there are exceptional circumstances. Our job is also to make sure that we do not have abuse of taxpayers' dollars, that people are paid the fair amount, not more and not less but the proper amount to help them rebuild. There are only five outstanding cases in over 2,400. To me, that speaks of excellence.

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

After School Programs

Ms Cusanelli: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Suburban constituencies built on the fringes of Calgary may envision new schools, hospitals, and state-of-the-art recreational facilities for young families. On the other hand, Calgary-Currie is an inner-city constituency whose neighbourhoods are mature and well-established. I have spent my time working hands on in Calgary-Currie, and I have learned a great deal about the area that I've been blessed to serve. My constituents are asking for assistance in building community hubs, complete with after school programs for their children. My question is to our Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. What is our province's position on the development of after school programs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. I'd like to acknowledge this hon. member's tireless advocacy on behalf of her constituents on this issue. We know that high-quality after school programs that are recreation based can have a positive impact on society, that they will build communities, and that they can actually help us to deal with a lot of our societal challenges, things like childhood obesity and the tendency for young people to get involved with high-risk activities like gangs and criminals. Our government is very much committed to developing and exploring a province-wide after school strategy for recreation.

2:40

Ms Cusanelli: Mr. Speaker, will the minister please inform the House exactly where we are currently in terms of responding to this commitment?

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, after school recreation is part of our overall investing in families and communities strategy, and it fits very well with the social policy framework as well as the Active Alberta policy, which was placed forward by my portfolio. Tourism, Parks and Recreation is continuing to work with stakeholder groups across the province. In fact, just this past weekend I met with stakeholders at a meeting of the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, and this coming weekend I'm going to be in Red Deer at the Alberta sport plan consultation, in which we will be working with community groups that deliver these programs in order to provide the kinds of benefits that we need in our society during the after school period.

Ms Cusanelli: Mr. Speaker, my last question to the same minister: in what way is your ministry demonstrating its commitment to program development and funding for after school programs to offer our children a positive outlet in their communities during those critical hours after school?

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, certainly, the after school programs that exist right now are excellent ones, and we want those to be expanded. We are continuing to work with the municipalities, with the community groups, with the provincial sport organizations that deliver these programs, and we acknowledge their benefit to the young people. We're continuing with our consultations as we move forward towards the development of a province-wide after school recreation strategy.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, that concludes question period. Your point of order, Member for Airdrie, at 2:37 p.m. has been noted. There were numerous attempts to not use preambles to supplementaries today, including Calgary-Currie who did a good job as well. I'll

just say thank you to all of you for allowing at least 15 times six, 90 questions and answers to be raised today.

In 30 seconds from now I will resume with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley, followed by Calgary-Varsity.

Official Opposition and Government Policies

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tonight children across our country and many other countries of the world will dress up in costumes, mask their true identities, and parade from door to door promising tricks unless they get their treats. Opposition chose to get into the Halloween spirit early, constructing a new disguise this past weekend to hide their true identity in hopes of scoring more support from Albertans.

This week my colleagues and I have proven our commitment to building Alberta through the introduction of several key pieces of legislation, protecting Albertan ideals that the opposition do not support despite their new mild-rose appearance. That legislation includes Protecting Alberta's Environment Act. This is important, Mr. Speaker, because we know and have known for years now that climate change and protecting our environment for future generations is a priority that all Albertans share. We accepted the facts of climate change years ago and have made significant progress in ensuring that our greenhouse gasses are reduced. Finally this weekend the opposition declared that they, too, now believe in climate change, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, even children at Halloween know that under the mask they wear today, they are still the same party they were yesterday. Every day we are working to keep our commitments to Albertans and lead a results-based government. Meanwhile the opposition is spending their time trying to fool Albertans by disguising themselves as Progressive Conservatives. Maybe next year they'll choose to dress up as Liberals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by Stony-Plain.

Natural Gas Production Review

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Until quite recently natural gas was the financial backbone of Alberta. It's a recent phenomenon that oil yields more income than gas for Albertans. Technical improvements and the acceleration of drilling activity in the United States and Canada have led to an oversupply of natural gas across the North American market. In 2012-13 natural gas and by-product revenue was \$954 million, or approximately 2.5 per cent, of government revenues here in Alberta.

To address these challenges, the all-party Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship, a quite wonderful committee, I might add, has undertaken a review of natural gas in Alberta specifically to ask the following the questions. What is a sensible, feasible way to encourage the operation of personal and commercial vehicles on natural gas? How can we encourage value-add of natural gas liquids in the province of Alberta? How can we encourage the use of natural gas for industrial use in Alberta, for cogen in the oil sands, to displace diesel in remote communities? What are the best strategies for Alberta's natural gas producers to access tidewater and the global LNG market?

Thus far we've explored the economic feasibility of enhancing Alberta's natural gas competitiveness with energy think tanks, engineers, and economists. We've learned about the real-world experience of Bison Transport and their partners Shell and Westport Innovations in implementing the first LNG green trucking corridor in Canada between Calgary and Edmonton. We've also heard from TransCanada Pipelines and Petronas, partners in one of the largest LNG projects here in western Canada. This week we heard from EnCana and MEG Energy.

We plan to hear many points of view over the next few months and to return to this Legislature with ideas about stewardship of one of Albertans' resources, natural gas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain, followed by Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Blueberry Bluegrass Festival

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the outstanding Blueberry bluegrass festival, one of the largest in Canada, which takes place every August in my constituency of Stony Plain. Since 1985 well-known bluegrass artists and enthusiasts have been gathering in Stony Plain to experience the best bluegrass from around the world. Although the music is what draws fans back to Stony Plain exhibition grounds every August, it is the local artisans, the on-site Myhre's Music store, and the availability of the musicians that make the festival truly unique. This year artists like Ricky Skaggs, the Whites, the Boxcars, and Junior Sisk & Ramblers Choice took the stage for the three-day festival.

I read a review that simply sums up, I think, what the bluegrass festival intends, and this I've taken from one of their postings.

This is the first time attending and I'm so glad that I did. I purchased tickets for my parents to attend as well, as they enjoyed the weekend as much as I did.

This event is not only relaxing and enjoyable but the entertainers . . . were outstanding. There was not one act that was disappointing at all. The best part was that everyone attending was friendly and there was no alcohol on site which meant that you did not have to put up with a bunch of rowdy drunks – everyone was there for the music.

I will definitely be attending again, and highly recommend others to attend as you won't be disappointed.

Mr. Speaker, it is the dedicated volunteers of all ages that make this bluegrass festival one of the largest in Canada, and I am thankful for their hard work year after year. It's truly the music and the volunteers that make this even better.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

War of 1812

Dr. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two hundred years ago an event of great significance was firmly embedded in the fabric of Canada's history. It came to be known as the War of 1812, and it lasted for three years, from 1812 to 1815. The Napoleonic Wars were raging in Europe, and Britain was forced to implement restrictive trade measures, including the imposition of quarantines on ships which traded with the French. Additionally, the impressment of British subjects on American ships by British naval forces was resented by the U.S.

On June 18, 1812, U.S. President James Madison signed a declaration of war against Britain, and the conflict began, bringing

the automatic involvement of British colonies, including Canada. The United States made plans to invade and conquer Canada, and President Madison was quoted as saying that the conquest of Canada would be a mere matter of marching. Little did he know. The War of 1812 showed the bravery, tenacity, and unwavering spirit of British and Canadian troops, anglophone and francophone, and First Nations allies, who, often outnumbered in battle, succeeded in staving off American invasion.

This Remembrance Day, November 11, 2013, marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Crysler's Farm, the decisive land battle of that war, where Anglo-Canadian troops and Mohawk warriors successfully thwarted an American attack which would have led to the capture of Montreal and likely the loss of Canada.

As a result of defeating the American invasion, our nation evolved into the proud, independent, and democratic nation-state of Canada, inheriting the unequaled model of British parliamentary government. Two hundred years on we Canadians continue to remember and to be inspired by the bravery and untiring dedication of those who came together to repel the invaders and who stood firmly in defence of the Crown and of Canada.

2:50

Speaker's Ruling Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, just before we go to Tabling Returns and Reports, I've received a few notes here, again regarding the latitudes and liberties we seem to allow each other and/or take when we're doing private members' statements. Now, I didn't hear some of the private members' statements as clearly as I would have liked to. I was engulfed with a flurry of notes. I will review the *Hansard*, however, very shortly. I'm going to remind all of you again to please use your private members' statements much more cautiously perhaps than has been the case in some that we've heard recently, including one today.

I do apologize to the members that I didn't hear closely enough what the issue was today, but I assure you I will review *Hansard*, and then we will definitely have to do something about it because it's a special privilege given, where we do not interrupt, and we do not allow points of order to be raised. So the only opportunity is for the Speaker to rise and make comment, and I am doing that now. I'm begging your indulgence to please proceed at a higher level of decorum with both your words, your gestures, your thoughts, and your actions during private members' statements, and that will elevate the overall debate and discussion in this House.

Thank you.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Let me go on to a tabling from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table more copies of a petition calling on this PC government to reverse their plans for cuts to the community access programs for persons with developmental disabilities and to properly support some of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens. Today I'm tabling 615 more signatures from the communities of Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, Lacombe, Camrose, Sherwood Park, Red Deer, Edmonton, and Calgary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the appropriate number of copies of a letter that was written by the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, asking 12 questions about their income-based seniors' pharmacare plan. We know that this government's plan to eliminate universal seniors' drug coverage is opposed by Alberta seniors and the NDP, so I'm hoping that these questions in the letter are answered in due course.

Thank you.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling today from Chris Ford, who actually addresses the Premier first and is writing of his disappointment about the relationship between the government and their unionized workers. He references the prison guards' situation from last summer. He makes the point that "the actions of all levels of government involved . . . dramatically undermine the security and safety of all workers in Alberta" and that they should be demonstrating, although they're not, that workers "have the right, responsibility, and legal requirement to refuse unsafe work."

Thank you.

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

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a constituent and a student of government, Miles Pavka, who has come up with what he thinks is a better way to designate voting areas. He asked me to share his suggestions with the government. I have the requisite copies of that.

In addition, I have Mr. Burnell Bennett, a farmer who farms in the MD of Taber. He owns the land of his farm, which is in the MD, but he lives in town. He feels that he should be able to vote in the MD where his farmland is, that he owns, and where he pays property taxes. I have copies of that.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others?

If not, hon. members, allow me to please make a tabling, with the requisite number of copies, of a letter from the Member for Calgary-Currie requesting early consideration of Bill 206, the Tobacco Reduction (Flavoured Tobacco Products) Amendment Act, 2012, at Committee of the Whole on Monday, November 4, 2013.

Hon. members, I have one point of order that was raised by the hon. Member for Airdrie. Would you like to proceed with your point of order or withdraw it? You're motioning to withdraw it? Go ahead.

Point of Order

Factual Accuracy

Mr. Anderson: I will. Sure. Why not? It's 23(h), (i), and (j) that I refer to, Mr. Speaker. The member across specifically said that we would cut \$5 billion out of their budget. Of course, this is not the case. Our capital budget, that we released, clearly says that the amount is \$4 billion that we would spend on infrastructure. The government is spending a little over \$5 billion. That is a difference of about a billion dollars. I know they just keep on saying these things, but it's just not accurate. I think it gives rise to – well, clearly, it casts aspersions and says that we have false motives,

and it makes accusations that are not true. Obviously, I understand that the other side will probably say that that's just a disagreement – fair enough – but I think it's important to get that on the record.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does someone wish to rise from the government side?

Mr. Fawcett: I just want to make a comment that it's kind of hard to tell over on this side as to how much money exactly they would cut out of the budget. I think they should clarify it because they've quite honestly said that had they been in government, they would limit spending to inflation plus population growth. If you look at that over the years and what that would be and where the budget would be, it would actually be way more than \$5 billion less in government spending today than it would be afterwards.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, this is clearly a dispute as to some facts and positions by the various caucuses. Both are now on record for I don't know how many times this now marks, at least half a dozen, I should think, if we look back at *Hansard*. Hopefully, we can get over and past this and move on.

As such, that concludes this point of order with no point of order.

Privilege

Obstructing a Member in Performance of Duty

The Speaker: While I have the floor, hon. members, I wish to comment on the point of privilege that was raised two days ago. I've given this matter considerable review, and I'm prepared to now rule on the purported question of privilege raised by the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills two days ago in this Assembly.

The purported question of privilege concerns information that was released about Bill 32, the Enhancing Safety on Alberta Roads Act, prior to its introduction in this Assembly and the advertising that occurred with respect to that same bill. In fact, the bill was on notice and was printed in the early Order Paper that was published last Friday. That notice, is what I'm saying, was printed. It was subsequently introduced in this Assembly during the afternoon session of October 29.

At the outset I wish to note that the parliamentary requirements found in Standing Order 15(2) for bringing this purported question of privilege were met since notice was received in my office at 11:24 a.m. on October 29, 2013. In short, this matter was raised at the earliest opportunity, and I was advised at least two hours prior to the commencement of that day's sitting.

Several points were outlined by the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills when he spoke on October 29 in this Assembly. Those points are in our recorded *Hansard* proceedings on page 2528, wherein he said, amongst many other things, the following:

We had seen a sign, obviously in the orange and blue colours, displayed publicly outlining Bill 32. We've seen press releases and public statements outlining the details of Bill 32. We know, of course, that Bill 32 was on the Order Paper yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and it was not yet introduced until earlier today.

During the item called Tabling Returns and Reports in our daily Routine, that same member tabled three documents related to his purported question of privilege, and they are listed as sessional papers 1001/2012-13, 1002/2012-13, and 1003/2012-13. The first document is an article from the October 29, 2013, *Sherwood Park News* entitled Bill for Playground Zones Announced. The second document is a picture of a coloured sign on what appears to be a

wire fence which contains the words Building Alberta: Enhancing Safety on Alberta Roads (Bill 32). The third document, entitled School and Playground Zones Could Soon Be Harmonized, appears to be an article of some sort, but no publication name and no source is immediately evident on the tabling. I have reviewed all of those documents very carefully.

3:00

In his notice of his purported question of privilege, which he read into the record two days ago in this Assembly and which is recorded at page 2528 of our *Alberta Hansard*, the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills alleged that “the government deliberately prevented the Members of the Legislative Assembly from fulfilling their duty and, as such, breached the rights of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and thereby committed a contempt.” The chair interprets this statement to suggest that this member’s ability to perform his duties was violated by the government’s actions with respect to what occurred surrounding Bill 32 prior to its introduction in this House.

The Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills and the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona both indicated that this matter could be characterized as a form of contempt. In a ruling that I made on May 29, 2012, about which I’ll say more shortly, I cited the definition of contempt as found on page 82 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. That definition, just to remind you all, reads as follows:

It is important to distinguish between a “breach of privilege” and “contempt of Parliament”. Any disregard of or attack on the rights, powers and immunities of the House and its Members, either by an outside person or body, or by a Member of the House, is referred to as a “breach of privilege” and is punishable by the House. There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its Members, or its officers.

Of course, much of the discussion two days ago focused on former Speaker Kowalski’s finding of March 5, 2003, wherein he did find a prima facie case of privilege when the government held a technical briefing on a bill that was on the Order Paper but had not yet been introduced. That ruling is found on pages 303, 304, and 305 of *Alberta Hansard* for that day. It was a ruling, I should add, that followed closely the ruling of Speaker Milliken in the Canadian House of Commons on March 19, 2001, concerning a detailed briefing on a bill which was on notice but had not yet been introduced in Parliament in Ottawa. Speaker Milliken found that there was a prima facie question of privilege in that case. Both of these aforementioned rulings were raised and commented on extensively by members in this Assembly two days ago. For everybody’s reference, Speaker Milliken’s ruling is discussed on page 85 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition.

Of course, as part of my review since Tuesday I also noted that no one mentioned a later ruling, made only 17 months ago in this Assembly, concerning the same subject. In fact, it was my first ruling on a question of privilege, and it was delivered here on May 29, 2012. It can be found on pages 58 and 59 of *Alberta Hansard* for that day. In that case the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona raised a similar purported question of privilege concerning Bill 1. She alleged that information about that bill was provided to the

media prior to the bill’s introduction in this Assembly, thereby constituting, in her opinion, a contempt of the Assembly. An added element in that application was that opposition staff were denied entry to the press conference at which the information was provided.

At that time and after a very thorough review of the facts and evidence available I concluded that there was not a prima facie question of privilege. However, I also stressed “the importance of ensuring that members are the first to see proposed legislation in its final form before a bill is disclosed to outside parties.” That quote appears on page 58 of *Alberta Hansard* from May 29, 2012, and the key point there is “in its final form.” At that time and as also with the case before us today there was no factual basis to actually conclude that explicit and verbatim details or provisions of the bill were disclosed. Accordingly, it was held that the member’s ability to perform her functions in that instance had not been impeded.

I would like to point out that not every statement about a bill that is on notice will automatically lead to and qualify for a prima facie case of privilege. In fact, Speaker Milliken came to this same conclusion in a November 5, 2009, ruling concerning comments made by a federal minister at a press conference. In that particular case, it was held and noted that the minister had not disclosed details of a bill yet to be introduced since he had only discussed in broad terms the policy initiative proposed in the bill. Similarly, Speaker Milliken found that there was no impact on a member’s ability to perform his or her duty in a parliamentary ruling that he made on March 22, 2011, which can be found at page 9113 of *House of Commons Debates* for that day.

Turning to the case before us today, there is no allegation and, indeed, there is no proof that the actual bill, Bill 32, in its final form was provided to the media or to any outside entity prior to its introduction in this Assembly two days ago, and neither was any evidence found in that respect.

Now, with respect to the advertising aspect of this situation it is difficult to conclude on the basis of a picture of one sign that the government had disregarded the Assembly’s role in passing legislation. The fact that the sign refers to Bill 32 rather than the specific name of the act could be taken as a further indication that the minister was not treating the proposals as a fait accompli. The Minister of Transportation did note that the news release issued by the government was prefaced with the words “if passed.” However, that news release was not tabled.

Accordingly, the chair does not find that there is a sufficient factual basis to find that the actions of the minister constitute a contempt of this Assembly. In other words, the physical letter of the law has not been broken, but, I submit, the spirit of the law has been negatively affected. In the chair’s view, this matter should not have even arisen in the first place. The rulings of previous Speakers as well as my own ruling regarding similar matters clearly stand for the proposition that the Assembly is entitled to be the first to know the detailed contents of a bill in its final form after it has been placed on notice.

Although the activities of the government in this case did not amount to a prima facie question of privilege, I want to caution all members to remember this. If there are future briefings when a bill is on notice in this Assembly, it will likely not be long before a different result and a different ruling ensues. Furthermore, in my view, any prior advertising about the nature of a bill must be undertaken very, very cautiously, if it is undertaken at all, so as to not create any impression that the contents of the bill are already law when the Assembly has not even seen the bill yet, much less debated it and passed it. In this respect, members may wish to examine the decision of the Ontario Speaker in 1997 when the

government of the day advertised a certain bill as if it had already been passed. In this respect, please visit Ontario *Hansard* of January 22, 1997, at pages 6441 through 6443.

3:10

Finally, I would ask that ministers, in particular, review the commitments made in previous years, notably in 2003 and last year on May 28, about not disclosing the final-form contents of bills on notice, about embargoed briefings, and about ensuring that opposition caucuses are briefed.

The chair does not want to create an impression that the restriction on providing information about bills on notice has been reduced. I merely wish to note that, whether by design or accident, the information provided by the member raising the question of privilege did not meet the standard necessary for a finding of a prima facie question of privilege in the case before us today.

Your Speaker and this entire Assembly would no doubt be highly comforted if the Government House Leader or someone on the government side was able to provide even greater assurance that the role and authorities of this Assembly will continue to be strictly respected and that the priority of members to be the first to learn of the final contents of any bills when they are placed on notice will also be respected.

By following this expectation, members will not be put in the awkward position of feeling that they were being denied information that has been provided to others. If one is wondering about which principles apply to a situation like this in the future, one can look to former Speaker Kowalski's March 5, 2003, ruling at page 304 of *Alberta Hansard*, where he quotes Speaker Milliken's 2001 ruling in relation to the federal context, which should not be too hard to translate into the Alberta context.

The convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only so that members themselves may be well informed, but also because of the pre-eminent role which the House plays and must play in the legislative affairs of the nation.

The chair sincerely hopes that we will not have to visit or revisit this issue again in the near future. This case is now closed.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 31

Protecting Alberta's Environment Act

[Adjourned debate October 29: Mr. Eggen]

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I presume, then, that I still have some time left to speak. I think that my adjournment and the time sort of corresponded to each other. I think I timed it so well.

The Speaker: Hon. member, forgive me. I've just been given notice by the table that your time has actually expired for this bill. My apologies for not having noted that.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak to this bill? Hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Coming from rural Alberta, just 80 minutes from the beautiful Waterton park, I have to tell you how much I love nature and love the environment that we live in. We live in a beautiful province, a beautiful part of the world, and we're very blessed. Of course, with blessings comes

noblesse oblige, an obligation to be good stewards, to use what we have in an appropriate way and to take care of it not just for ourselves to enjoy but also to make sure that it's there for future generations.

When I read the title of this bill, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act, I was excited. I want to protect the environment, and I want to do all that I can on behalf of my constituents to see that they and their families and children and children's children will be able to enjoy it, too. As I read the bill, I became concerned. I'm not sure that it's going to do what the title gives us hope might happen. A few points, not in any specific order, I don't suppose. I want to know how the bill is arm's length if the government and the cabinet are doing the appointing of the various members, the chair, the science advisory board. I don't see any mention in there about what the qualifications or the requirements will be for people who might be considered to serve on there.

Being somewhat cynical after all these years of living, I wonder if one of the qualifications might be: is he or she a card-carrying PC party member? Have they met the donation threshold? Are they members of the PC family? Are they failed incumbents? Are they retired MLAs or persons with other embarrassing photos or recordings of people in positions to make decisions? Tongue in cheek there. What about screening? Will they be screened with regard to voting records, bank balances, donation history, party campaign workers? I don't know; it doesn't say.

But you can understand, given past performance, why I might tend to be a little suspicious. When it comes to recruiting staff to man, to person, I suppose – to be PC – this new agency, will current department employees be given the opportunity to apply? What will be the cost of transferring those benefits? Will they be transferred? Will these employees be exposed to any sort of loss, a loss of security, a loss of benefits? That's been raised to me, so I share it here today. Will the agency charge for its services, and how will those charges be determined? Will they be mandated or given the requirement to raise revenue to sustain themselves? Where will the money come from to pay for this agency? How will its performance be measured?

All people in business and dealing with others realize how important it is to have clear expectations when it comes to hiring somebody or when it comes to creating a new agency like this. Will there be mutually agreed upon desired results? When I say mutually agreed upon desired results, I mean the government will have expectations, the citizens will have expectations of what this new agency might be able to do to protect the environment. Certainly, our trading partners have expectations. I believe that it's the very existence and the higher profile that these expectations have now taken over the last year or two that is prompting the development of the Protecting Alberta's Environment Act.

I think by name we would expect and we would probably hope that our trading partners, the citizens would expect that it's going to do just that, protect the environment. But we need to have clear targets. We need to understand what our trading partners expect of us in clear terms and what we're going to then be able to do to meet those expectations, because we need the pipelines. We're landlocked. We're dependent upon an ability to get our resources and our goods to market, and those who are purchasing them or contemplating purchasing them want to know that these resources are being developed and being commercialized in an environmentally friendly way.

What targets will there be? Will the stakeholders have some say in the development of these targets? What bonuses will be paid to these new employees in this new bureaucracy for reaching 40 per cent of their targets? Will it be 95,000 bucks? What will the consequences be for failure to meet targets? A raise? How will

this new agency improve current behaviour by each stakeholder group?

The citizens: we each have an obligation to be good stewards in that little area that we can impact. Businesses and industry, those that are often accused of being the biggest polluters or rapers of the environment or whatever you want to call it: what standards will they be expected to achieve? We have standards now, and it seems part of the problem may be that those standards aren't being enforced when violations are identified.

3:20

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I think the reality is that we know that we have to demonstrate actual reductions in genuine, real, man-made causes of climate change. Our customers and our nation and customer nations demand it. We can't afford another costly example of industry-subsidized spin like Shell Oil, for example, a company with more money than God, receiving over \$700 million of taxpayer money to use unproven technology in an attempt to give the appearance that we are doing something about greenhouse gases. Seven hundred million is over twice what it would have cost to do all the Groeneveld recommendations, an act, had those things been done, that would have saved lives and several billion taxpayer dollars for remediation. In fact, if you're wondering where we might come up with the \$5 billion that we would cut, well, there's \$4.7 million right there. We would have spent \$300 million and saved perhaps \$5 billion. Seems like a pretty good return on investment.

We must be good stewards of our government. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to future generations and to meet existing and prospective customers' expectations, as I've said. We can do it. I just don't see how this agency will actually help.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Dr. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner – he's indicating that he didn't think the use of funds was entirely appropriate for the carbon capture and storage. I wonder if he could make a comment regarding the efficacy, as he sees it, on the program which the Alberta government undertakes with respect to agricultural producers. I understand the hon. member has some experience in that field, and I wondered about the, you know, zero-till and the min-till rebates that we're giving for carbon reduction. Can you comment on whether or not you think that is a good approach to reducing carbon dioxide emissions?

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

Mr. Bikman: Thank you. Thank you for the question. I'm not sure that I'm fully capable to answer it, but that's never stopped the other side, so I'll give it a shot, too. I know from some research that we have done within our caucus that some of the sale of carbon whatever-it's-called hasn't actually taken place, that some of those companies that have sold those credits haven't actually been able to deliver on them, so that's certainly money that's been wasted. There hasn't been a reciprocating or a matching benefit for the money that was spent, so I don't think that's been a good use, but certainly things that encourage more efficient use of the resources and the consuming of fewer hydrocarbons, for example, would be beneficial.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: I'd like to direct my questions also to the hon. member here. It talks in here about the agency being governed by a board of directors consisting of five to 10 appointed by cabinet. With your life experiences, hon. member, I'd like to see if you have concerns in that regard.

Also, it talks about the creation of a science advisory panel but no credentials that may be accrued to those appointees. I was wondering if you could just expound on your feelings in that regard.

Mr. Bikman: Thank you for that question, too. Of course, anything that increases the size of bureaucracy is a cause for concern. In terms of the credentialing that might be required of those that would sit on the science advisory board, we would hope that they would have some sort of scientific background or experience. I would certainly hope that we're not going to appoint and pay for 10 advisory board members who are then going to have to commission a study done by scientists. I think that would be dysfunctional. That's a concern. Maybe that will evolve if we have the faith to pass this, but at this point it would have to be an act of faith, and I'm not prepared to grant that.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. In the hon. member's remarks he suggested – he said, “tongue in cheek.” Nonetheless, he suggested that some people that get appointed to provincial committees might have done so through having pictures suggesting extortion or blackmail, and I'm wondering whether the hon. member would like to apologize to those Albertans that might feel besmirched by those remarks.

Mr. Anderson: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie has raised a point of order. Citation, hon. member?

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Anderson: The citation is 23 (h), (i), and (j): “imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member.” This member never said what this minister has suggested. He gave a little tongue in cheek on the issue, but he never made the accusation that that member's talking about. The member needs to maybe take himself a little less seriously. I think that would probably be a good start. I know he's terrified of losing his seat in the next election, but he should just tone it down a little bit.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, you seem to be looking for clarification. Maybe the Minister of Transportation might offer one.

Mr. McIver: Well, no. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I stand by what I said. I was asking a question. I don't have the Blues in front of me because it's too soon. He did actually make remarks about people being appointed to provincial committees, and he did actually say that one of the reasons might be something to effect of – I'm sure I don't have the exact words – that they might have a picture of someone. I will let those words stand by themselves, and I ask the hon. member whether he feels like he maybe owes an apology to

some of those people that have been appointed to committees after suggesting that that might be the reason they got appointed.

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

Mr. Bikman: Certainly. I certainly didn't use the words that you ascribed to me, nor did I intend to. To any of those who haven't been appointed because of photos and recordings, I apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, I think I've heard an apology based on a clarification from the minister. I think we've dealt with this matter enough, and I would just ask you to be careful with your language. It is Thursday afternoon. I know we're anxious to get home, but certainly in the heat of this debate I would ask you to be careful with your language.

Debate Continued

The Deputy Speaker: With that, under 29(2)(a) we still have some time left. Is there anyone else under 29(2)(a)?

Hon. minister, did you get an answer to your question regardless of the points that were raised earlier?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, I did. I think, as you said, it was an apology, and if the hon. member . . .

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

The Deputy Speaker: You have another point of order?

Point of Order Clarification

Mr. Anderson: I'm sorry, but he already asked his question, which was answered, so it therefore goes to another member who has a question under 29(2)(a). Those are the rules of this House.

The Deputy Speaker: With all due respect, hon. member, you raised a point of order in the middle of his question. The member responded to that, and I didn't hear the full amount of his question. I wondered if he had a complete answer to his question. If he has, he would say so. If he hasn't, I'm expecting that he's going to indicate that. Do you have a citation for your point of order?

Mr. Anderson: Standing Order 13(2), point of clarification. You've clarified. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. minister, you were trying to get an answer to another point.

Mr. McIver: No. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the further remarks that the member made, and if that's what qualifies as an apology after the previous remarks and the hon. member wants to leave it on the permanent record in *Hansard*, then I think that speaks for itself, and it speaks for the hon. member all by itself.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Debate Continued

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others under 29(2)(a)? We still have some time left. The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mr. Anderson: I'd like to ask the member: what are some of the things that he would think would be more successful methods for reducing greenhouse gases in our province, ways that would possibly help our population to be more energy efficient, to save more money personally, and also have the corollary effect of reducing greenhouse gases other than this carbon capture and storage scheme that the government has put forward?

3:30

Mr. Bikman: Thank you. An excellent question worth answering.

An Hon. Member: Take your time.

Mr. Bikman: I will indeed. In fact, I'll speak slowly and loudly.

There is a management principle that says that you don't inspect in quality; you design it in. You don't measure a system until you've got a system in place.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for that response, hon. member.

Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, did I catch your eye that you wanted to speak?

Mr. Bilous: I'm happy to speak after this hon. member.

The Deputy Speaker: You hope to speak after this member. Then I will recognize the Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will watch my tongue. I rise today to speak to Bill 31, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act. I have not yet made up my mind if I will oppose or support this bill. I do have some questions that I would like clarified as we go through this process. I guess the biggest one is about the name of the bill, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act. When I look through the bill, you know, it says that the purposes of the agency are to obtain credible and relevant scientific data and other information and, in carrying out these purposes, to co-ordinate and conduct environmental monitoring, to collect, store, analyze, and evaluate environmental monitoring data, to report, and to make the data and related evaluations publicly available. It goes on and on, explaining not so much about protection but just about data relevant to our environment.

I don't think there's anybody in this House that will say that the environment isn't important. Personally, around my house and our ranch we do everything we possibly can to protect the environment. You know, we recycle all of our papers and plastics and bottles. We have our diesel tanks and our gas tanks, and we make sure that we're very careful not to spill anything. I have irrigation. When we're putting out cattle oilers, we make sure that they're not too close to the drainage canal so that nothing will get in the water. I have lots of friends who are actually fencing off dugouts so that their cattle don't go in the dugout and contaminate the water with their excretions. Everybody, from urban people to rural people, is very concerned about the environment.

We look at the automobile industry – you know, they're going to greener vehicles – and everything that industry is doing also.

You know, when I was a drilling consultant, we would take 10 days from spud to release to drill a well at the start of this project. Three to four years later we were doing spud to release in four days. That has a huge impact on the environment. We're burning less fuel. We're emitting less fumes out of our stacks. We're drilling more efficiently. We're completing wells more efficiently. We're working with other service companies to make sure that they're more efficient.

In the Resource Stewardship Committee we met with EnCana, who has natural gas vehicles, and they're talking about moving

their whole fleet to natural gas as much as they can. Different trucking companies are moving their whole fleets. It's costing them a lot of money right now to change their big diesel engines in their semis over to natural gas burning engines. You know, that's a commitment that they're doing to try to help the environment.

With the bill there's not a lot of talk about protection. You know, who's going to enforce the laws on the environment? We need to know who's going to call the shots. Who's going to ensure that when this data comes out, it's going to be enforced? Now I guess it'll be the Energy Regulator for anything to do with the energy industry.

I'm not just a drilling consultant and a rancher and an MLA. I'm actually a scientist myself. I went to SAIT and got a diploma in chemical technology and worked at MagChem in the chemistry lab there also. We took some heat from Alberta Environment. You know, the process that we were doing . . .

Mr. Anderson: There's more to you than meets the eye.

Mr. Hale: There is more to me than meets the eye.

You know, we had the big reactors. We were taking magnesite, and that was mined. They'd bring it in, and the whole process would turn it to magnesium, which was supposed to be better for the environment. Anywhere aluminum was used, they were going to use magnesium. Engine blocks, pop can lids: those were all going to be magnesium. But in the process we had some huge environmental concerns. We had these reactors with smoke stacks that were coming out. Every day they would bring us bags of the emissions, and we would test them in the morning, and we would test them at night to make sure that they were within those regulations. So there was monitoring going on. Alberta Environment at that time did the enforcing. We had to make sure we were within those limits. Any of the byproducts that were produced they'd bring into our lab, and we'd test them. We did find some stuff that was a little bit scary that we were producing. There have been checks and balances all along that have made sure that everybody puts the concerns of the environment first.

With the creation of this new board, I just have some concerns about who's going to be monitoring the board. Who's going to ensure that all this data that comes out is going to be looked at and enforced?

Another concern is the payment. Right now we know that, you know, there is, I believe, \$50 million that's getting paid through the oil sands project. When that runs out in 2015, then who pays for it? Does it go to all of the industry? Does it come out of the taxpayers? What's going to be added on to us as Albertans to cover the cost of this?

When talking about the cost, it talks about the powers of the agency. "If a Chief Executive Officer is appointed, the board shall determine the compensation to be paid to the Chief Executive Officer." Well, who's going to be the watchdog on what this board is paying out to the CEOs? What are they going to get for pensions and severances, and who's going to govern what they're getting paid?

It talks about the powers of the agency.

The Agency may, if authorized by a resolution of the board, borrow money

(a) by credit card, overdraft or unsecured line of credit.

Again, who regulates the amount that they can spend? You know, are they going to get total free rein: if you think you need it, go ahead and buy it? That's a huge concern to me. Now, the Auditor General, I'm sure, would be one of the watchdogs, but his reports

come out after the fact. It takes a while till he does his audits, and we need someone to hold this group accountable.

Employees. Will the environment minister's office now and all the employees at Alberta Environment be transitioned over to this? Will they be sent to work for this new board, that can hire employees as its needs to? Will they get paid to go to the board and then not get paid through Alberta Environment, or is Alberta Environment paying, and then any expense that they incur for working for this board they would be reimbursed for also? Are they going to be getting paid from two different directions?

I guess it just comes down a lot to accountability. Will Alberta Environment be holding them to account? Will the new regulator be holding them to account? How are they going to split those duties of what they're monitoring? Are they going to be monitoring the watersheds? Are they going to be monitoring the cities, with their environmental impacts? They're going to be monitoring the oilfields – we know that for sure – the oil sands, all the natural gas facilities.

3:40

There's not a lot of clarification there about who's going to be looking after what and who's going to be enforcing what. That's something that I would really have liked to have seen in this legislation. I know we heard it. When we were debating Bill 2, the Energy minister assured me. He said: trust me that that will be put in the regulations. Well, I guess we're waiting for the regulations to come out to see how everything is going to be split up and what the duties and the tasks are for each division. We think the catchphrase now in the energy industry, as we try to access new markets and ship our products outside of Alberta, is social licence. My concern is that this is just a way of fulfilling that social licence without any meaning. Knowing the hon. environment minister, I'm sure that she does have a plan. I hope she has a plan.

Is this just all about catering to acquire our social licence, to get our products to new markets, to get these pipelines built? If we had more substantial information in this bill, it would allow us to draw our conclusions and see, you know, what exactly we are doing. Who's going to be regulating this? Who's going to be protecting it, not just monitoring and providing data? We need significant answers.

I'll reiterate that everybody is, you know, worried about the environment. We see in our small town of Bassano, where I'm from, that they've gone to the recycled garbage containers that people pull out to their front yards now. We see collaboration between two of those small towns. Instead of each little town having its own garbage truck burning lots of fuel, they go together, and they can buy one more fuel-efficient truck and service both communities. So there is co-operation.

I know the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs has mentioned the regional co-operation. I do know that he knows my area, Strathmore-Brooks, and that they co-operate fully. There's some good co-operation going on down there.

Getting back to the environmental part, you know, there are just some questions I would like answered, as we carry this on, so I can fully understand the mandate of this bill and who's going to be doing the enforcement and keeping tabs on the people that are hired here. I look forward to having further discussions with the hon. minister of the environment.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How interesting: a mad scientist from Strathmore-Brooks. When you were talking about that, when you were working as a scientist, were you self-monitoring, or was that something that you were doing under regulation of the government, or was that something that the company did on its own, something that the company thought was important?

Mr. Hale: Actually, they mentioned self-medicating. I can tell you and I was going to say that we did make our own alcohol. It was the purest form that you could make. It was a lab procedure. We had to do it.

Mr. Anderson: You had no choice.

Mr. Hale: We had no choice. It was something we had to do.

Mr. Anderson: I didn't say that you had to drink it, though.

Mr. Hale: No. We just had to make it.

Getting back to the hon. member's question, we were regulated by Alberta Environment. We had to send in our data of what we found all the time. Specifically with the air monitoring, we would take our samples from the stacks out of our six big reactors, and we would test it. I, as someone that was testing it, would run it through our machines, and if it came back with levels that were too high – there was a lot of chlorine. We did use chlorine in the process. When we would take the magnesite, they would heat it up, and they would mix it with chlorine. They would kind of melt it, and then the magnesium would float, you know, separate, from the unwanted materials. So there was a lot of exhaust coming out of it.

Our job was to ensure that the exhaust that came out of it wasn't over these limits. We would report our findings to Alberta Environment. I wasn't part of that reporting procedure. I would just give the gentlemen or the ladies the data, and then they would take that data and do with it what they would. But I do know that we did get shut down a couple of times by Alberta Environment because our emissions weren't what they were supposed to be, so we would have to shut down, and then we'd go through the process and make sure that we were putting in the right amount of chlorine and that the whole reaction was taking place in the most environmentally responsible way.

When I talked about some of the discharge that we got out of our system that they would bring to us that they weren't quite sure about, that too was something that we had to report. Anything out of the norm: report to Alberta Environment. We had storage water sites that were onsite there. Any of our coolant water would go into these storage ponds. All that had to be retested before we could pump it down the disposal wells.

The interesting fact – and I did ask my boss this question one day. I said: "Well, if we're mining this magnesite out" – I believe it was in the Banff-Canmore area, somewhere out there – "and then trucking it in, why are we trucking it to the facility? Why didn't we build the facility closer to the product?" The answer is that our disposal wells, where we would pump the water down after it was tested and met all of Alberta Environment's requirements – we pumped it down into a saline water source way down in the ground like a disposal well. That's where the water that was coming out of this whole process best fit, to that water source in the ground. Instead of trucking all the water that was going to be disposed of, the brackish water that went into that same water, it was easier to truck the raw material to the facility. Then we would make sure that all of our tests were completed.

It was a process that started over in England, actually. They started with one small reactor and had the process working great, and then they brought it over to Alberta, and we set it up and went from one small reactor to six big reactors. If you walked into that facility, there were pipes. It was an engineer's nightmare. I mean, there were pipes all over. It was quite the process, I'll tell you. It was quite the process, but we learned a lot. We learned that maybe going from one small reactor to six huge ones wasn't the best step to take, and it was a government-funded project. There were some partners in it, and it was looking real good for industry.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Bilous: That was 29(2)(a), I believe.

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, 29(2)(a) is over, hon. member.

Mr. Bilous: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill 31, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act. You know, this is a very interesting bill. I think that at the outset I'd like to say that Alberta's NDP has been calling for legislated monitoring to occur, so I'm pleased to see to an extent that the environment minister and this government are finally coming to their senses and listening to the Alberta NDP in this regard. But I'll temper my congratulations a little bit because of some questions that I have and how I'm a little cautious of the bill as it's written now.

To start, Mr. Speaker, Alberta definitely needs scientifically sound, independent data about our environment to make the right decisions to balance the resource production with the long-term health and sustainability of this province. On that point, I think we're in sync with the government there, and again we're glad they finally caught up with us.

3:50

We have a few suggestions for this bill, and there are a couple of concerns that I have, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we've been calling for an independent body, a body that's arm's length from the government, to be able to make decisions that are completely free from political interference or any kind of interference. The challenge with this bill at the moment, with the way it's written, is that it's not going to be an independent, arm's-length body making these decisions. We're relying on the minister to appoint people to this process or to this agency who will then select the scientists to participate. The secondary challenge with that is: based on which credentials are these scientists going to be selected? How can Albertans be certain that they are independent, free thinking, and not influenced whatsoever by the very board that selected them?

This speaks to the problem of appointments, to begin with, in any capacity. When you don't have an independent arm's length, a distance between government and a body that they're selecting, questions arise, questions about judgment. Again, if we're trying to put forward legislation that will in fact monitor and protect our environment, then we need some distance. There are some examples I'll give.

Look at the government's recent handling of Alberta Health Services. If this government isn't forced to colour between the lines, then they appoint the wrong people for the job. The caution here is that the bill provides authority to the minister to appoint board members, and we want to make sure that the people that are on this board represent all Albertans and not simply PC interests or friends or friends of friends.

Again, we have an example here. Back in 2011, when a PC appointment was made to review this very topic, he had to resign in disgrace for unethical lobbying. This government has a track record of making some judgment errors. If we want to put the environment at the top of the list as a priority, then we need to put safeguards in place. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if you had the opportunity to pick the person that gives your workplace evaluation. Is that completely free from bias? I'm not so sure.

A few questions. Let's say, for example, that the government did hypothetically appoint the right people. Where's the commitment from this government to properly fund this agency? If this board goes to the minister and says, "We need more money to do our job," what will the response be? Will they be given the dollars? Why are we entering into a debate on this legislation without a clear picture of what the funding model will be for this agency? The truth is that the devil is always in the details, and this is the place where it should be debated, in front of all Albertans, with all 87 members so that we have the opportunity to truly represent our constituents and reflect their interests, concerns, and ideas.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation mentions cost recovery. Is this government considering a carbon tax on Albertans, as reports leading up to the bill recommend? These are answers that need to be in place before we move forward with legislation.

The other cause for concern is that the minister will be controlling and wants to control how often the agency gets to report to the public. Again, you know, they talk about raw data and public access and transparency. I mean, there's no guarantee that that's going to happen and that we're going to get the answers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we have a chance here to be real leaders in environmental monitoring and to be first class and put Alberta at the forefront, so I really hope that the minister will be open to amendments that not only our party but the opposition parties are going to put forward to improve this bill to ensure that there is accountability, that we are making the best decisions on behalf of Albertans, that disclosure comes to Albertans in the public before it's filtered through the ministry, and I look forward to the dialogue that we're going to have in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to table a reasonable amendment to this bill.

Mr. Eggen: Reasoned. Both reasoned and reasonable.

Mr. Bilous: Well, it is. It is reasonable and reasoned.

I'm moving this on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 31 . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, would you please send the original to the table if you haven't already done so?

Mr. Bilous: The original is with . . .

The Deputy Speaker: So it's coming?

Mr. Bilous: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Wonderful. Thank you.

Mr. Bilous: Shall I continue?

The Deputy Speaker: No. Just pause, and let that be distributed. Hon. member, please proceed.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm moving this on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 31, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 31, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act, be not now read a second time because the Legislative Assembly believes that the bill fails to provide for unbiased, effective, and accountable independent monitoring in a comprehensive manner, which includes consultation with the full range of affected groups.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Speaking to the motion, is there a response from the government side? No? Okay.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We reflected on Bill 31, Protecting Alberta's Environment Act, and you've heard our critic and myself and now the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview make some comments on this. We thought long and hard about this bill, and certainly, as I said from the outset, the intention of the bill as described by the minister of environment when she introduced this is certainly honourable and looking down the same path that we might aspire to as well.

But there are just a couple of issues around, I think, independence and effectiveness of this potential act. We think we should take it back and just sort out a couple of things and then bring it back forward with these changes.

4:00

The first issue that I question is the effectiveness of the environmental monitoring as a whole and the new agency in particular without plans for adequate or stable funding. How can this agency conduct its operations, Mr. Speaker, and its plan for the future without that provision for public money to continue on?

It is not an inexpensive endeavour to start this agency, nor do we expect it to be, but we certainly don't want it to become some sort of corporate adjunct to the energy industry. The essence of and not just the actual independence of this agency is key, but also the perception of that independence I think is really important, too. If it's not there, like I said the other night, then we lose not just the effectiveness of the agency but that perception that we want to cultivate, both in North America and around the world, that we are dealing with our environmental issues here in Alberta in an effective and just sort of manner. Right? That's very important. I think that if we pulled back a bit and fixed that, that would be a good idea.

Second of all, we know that industry really wants this agency. We've heard from industry and we've heard from the government as well on this issue. This idea of partly funding it through the corporations: how could that be really independent, right? I think that, yes, they can indirectly fund it. They can indirectly fund it by paying the corporate taxes and the individual taxes for those highest earners, that are long overdue through our revenue system, just like everybody else pays their dues. Yes, I'm paying a little bit, too. The hon. members for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview and Edmonton-Centre will pay a bit, too. We'll all chip in through our taxes to pay for an independent agency that doesn't have those corporate ties. Sounds like a good idea to me. That's how we run lots of other things. For example, our justice system runs like that. That's pretty basic. If we could parallel this agency with our justice system, I think we'd be all the better for it.

Further to this independence and transparency of the agency, the agency being seemingly still dependent on ESRD and government for allocating funding based on some unknown plan

or formula: really, again, how could they, Mr. Speaker, be seen as moving forward? As well, no legislative requirements for how or when this data will be released to the public: I have a big problem with that. I mean, they could pump out all the good data in the world, but if it's filtered through the minister's office, as judicious and, you know, impartial as she might be, then still there is that perception. Folks, part of the currency we're dealing with here with this agency is the perception of independence. It's very important.

This legislation as well contains no qualifications for appointment to the board or the science advisory panel and does not even contain any guarantees of representation from certain groups such as First Nations and scientific experts, you know, or the nature of what or who the scientific experts on this board will be. We've heard this many times already before. I won't elaborate on that, but it's patently obvious, Mr. Speaker, that if you're not getting the best and representative people from affected areas, then you're undermining your credibility. How representative or comprehensive can this panel be when there are no requirements for appointment?

This PC government has a pattern of biased decision-making, Mr. Speaker, and murky reporting, I think, and without proper standards, qualifications, and safeguards very specifically registered in this legislation, this agency will just go down in confusion, as we have seen from a long history in the past. We've talked about the Marceau decision. That was embarrassing; it really was. It didn't seem as though the government even blinked on their decision to ignore that judicial decision in regard to excluding the Pembina Institute. I just really found that to be quite beyond the pale.

Another issue that I would just like to bring forward, then, please, is that I think it's really important for the scope of this agency to be commensurate with resources that are allocated to it. So, once again, commit to providing that stable funding. I think that above all else, this successful monitoring agency cannot subvert its purpose within the IRMS in pursuit of its function. Basically, it's saying that this is a public relations exercise, I think, more than anything. I don't know. I don't want it to be, nor do I want to believe that it would be so, but if this new agency is amenable in its place within IRMS rather than actually serving the function and gathering the reporting of the environmental data, then, Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder: what level of effectiveness are we really looking at here?

Another noted purpose, according to what I've heard here, is that this new agency is to manage the perception that the government's role as owner, manager, regulator, and developer and as the main beneficiary leads to conflicts of interest; in other words, public relations rather than actually monitoring.

You know, we are the owners of this resource, and we are the regulator, too. It's incumbent upon us to provide this agency, certainly – I've said that from the outset – but if it's not providing that independent function, then we're only shortchanging ourselves. It's like you're an enabler for bad behaviour – right? – or for potentially questionable results coming out monitoring the very land, air, water, and energy resource and the humans that live in that area and then shortchanging that monitoring process. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but when you're trying to fool yourself – right? – or set up a process by which you can fool yourself, then that's just, you know, aberrant. It's unacceptable behaviour.

I think another concern that we had from our briefing on this bill that is fairly important is the independence of this agency. The report is also talking about: support from other agencies and industry will depend on the agency publishing more good news than bad. Again, what's the function here? Public relations

overfunction and PCs appointing PCs and regulating PC activity and so forth and on and on?

I think a reasoned amendment is perfectly acceptable at this point. I'm glad that we decided to do this. It's not as though we're taking down the very sort of essence or the larger purpose in having an independent environmental agency through some sort of bill, but with this particular one here, I think, there are just too many bumpy problems along the way to read it further here at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion, and I would hope the hon. members across the way would at least give it consideration. As I stated earlier, I think the intent of this bill was good, but the bill itself is hollow. It doesn't even live up to the title. It doesn't protect the environment or add any more protection to the environment. Even the announcement. The Premier was very proud of making the announcement: we are going to upload data on reporting. Well, that sounds all well and good, but that's what the oil sands monitoring group was supposed to do when we made that announcement just a couple of years ago. How far along has that happened? It hasn't happened at all.

What we're missing in this bill is substance. It's just not there. It does create this agency, but beyond that, we know very little in the sense of: what are the various aspects? That needs to be determined to have good legislation. How is this going to work? How is it going to be funded? The problem with the bill is that it says: environmental protection. What I was hoping for was that there would be not just monitoring but some sort of teeth to our environmental protection so that we can actually say that we're doing something.

4:10

I want to just highlight some examples of what we're not doing or that what we're doing doesn't follow what we're saying. This government claims to have reduced greenhouse gases, but that does not correlate to or even support what independent findings have found, that our greenhouse gases have actually increased significantly.

Now, I know where the ministry gets its figures from when it says that it's reduced, but that's playing with the numbers. If you look at the totality of what we've done as a province, it is not something to be proud of. It is something that says that we need a lot of work. When employees of Alberta Environment say, "We have good environmental laws," there's substance to that. If you have a good speed limit, but nobody is enforcing it, how good are these speed limits? The enforcement part of our environmental laws is lacking, and it's lacking significantly. I'll make some examples of that.

The Bilozer family, who is located in the minister's own riding, is a classic example of lack of enforcement. We have a situation where Imperial Oil actually polluted their land. It's not being questioned. Imperial Oil basically admits it. There have been either three or four enforcement orders over the last 20 years issued to tell Imperial Oil to clean it up, to settle this issue, and that has not been done. That's a case of just lack of justice, in many ways, on an environmental scale.

What we were hoping for in bringing this forward is that, yes, we're going to do some monitoring, but we still haven't seen the substance of the monitoring in the bill as far as how these

regulations will be. It's full of promises, but beyond the promises there are no real technical details connecting the dots on how we're going to get the job done. Even with the reporting, there's no time frame for how the reporting is going to be done. I commend the minister for the passion for monitoring and collecting the data – that is important – but what good is the data if we don't act upon that, or what good is the data if we manipulate the data to show something that is sort of contrary to what the raw data is proving? There needs to be not just independence, but there needs to be credibility to this system that we're going to create.

I want to draw your attention to something called the carbon credits or the carbon offset system because that's a classic example of where we've gone wrong with our legislation. You start off with a program that looks good, that sounds good, that you take out to the international market and say, "Hey, lookit, we are doing this," but when you get into the substance of it, you find out that we're not doing it. When you look at the auditing of the system, it's not transparent, and the lack of transparency equates to lack of credibility. We have the whole system of bioplants for biofuel, and we find out from even the Auditor General that it appears that it's increasing greenhouse gases, not reducing greenhouse gases. Well, that's \$160 million going in the wrong direction.

Now, on the other side, the agricultural carbon offset system: we can't get credible evidence to find out if it's working. What we can find out is that on Alberta Agriculture's website it says: farmers, please don't do business with this company. But on Alberta Environment's website it says that they're doing business as usual. Here we have a contradiction in government, and that was still there the last time I looked. That hasn't been removed. We get the same businesspeople starting up these carbon credit offset companies, going out to sort of offset what we believe are greenhouse gases, but what we find out is that we can't measure it because that information is not available. Here we have a government that says that it wants to make the information available, but its actions are the complete contradiction of what it's proposing or claiming to say that it does. Time and time again we find these contradictions.

The hon. minister talks about groundwater mapping. Wow. That's long overdue. That is long overdue. We've been crying for groundwater mapping for a long, long time, and it has yet to happen. We hear that it is happening, but we don't see the data, and that's really important. It is extremely important that we understand whether our aquifers are regenerating the way they're supposed to. Are they not regenerating? You know, what is the status? What is the baseline data? Even though we can map, if we map without baseline data, we don't know what we're doing or where we're going. It's the baseline data that serves as the compass, and we don't have that.

Again, we have the contradiction with what's now ESRD in that it proclaims to have good rules and regulations – and for the most part I could agree with many of the employees that it does – but if we don't enforce these rules or make these regulations live in the sense that we're actually going to bring those to force, then what good is it? That's the problem.

I'll give you a couple of examples where we've really gone wrong. We have the Guide to the Mine Financial Security Program, where what we estimate is that it's going to cost about \$75,000 per hectare to reclaim land. We know, because this is readily available from the provincial records, that the ministry claims there's about 50,000 hectares of land in this province that are subject to reclamation at some point in time. Now, companies are supposed

to put security aside to make sure that we can do that. You know as well as I do and all the members over here know as well as I do that if a company goes out of business and we don't take that security, we don't have that security. We're not likely to get that money if they're gone.

So what do we have? Well, if it's going to cost about \$75,000 per hectare, what we look at is what the government is currently holding, which is about \$18,000 per hectare. That's \$56,000 per hectare short of what we need. And given the fact that it's 51,000 hectares that we're talking about, we're looking at basically, you know, a little under half a billion dollars short to do our reclamation. That's what we should probably have in security. We don't have that.

The security of that is akin to what we're dealing with with carbon credits. We're claiming that we're incorporating practices that actually help us reduce greenhouse gases. What we find is that we have audits, but we're not allowed, even as an opposition never mind as the public, to see what these reverification audits are. I have been asking for that information for over six months, and I've still not gotten that information. And I don't understand why.

We don't want to know any propriety information. We want to know who's done what as far as the protocols and what the audits have told us. Everything is audited, so we want to know if these protocols, these deals actually did what they said they were going to do. That's all we want to know. There's a lot of grey area in there and a whole lot of questions, but what we don't have is any transparency, and what we don't have is any credibility to the system, so much so that internationally, the California market being one, they do not want to even explore the opportunities for carbon credits in the province of Alberta. That is a huge statement.

One of the big things about this monitoring program that is supposed to be the highlight of this bill is to improve our international credibility. That's the key. That is the key. If we don't improve that, we're not going to be able to convince these markets that we're doing what we say we're going to do. It doesn't matter what the members over there say. The fact is that you have to convince the markets. Those are the people. The markets are the ones that tell us whether or not we're credible. They're holding up our pipelines. They're holding up other projects as a result of our reputation. We're getting a black eye, left and right. What we're saying is that we're doing great things, but meanwhile up at Primrose we still have bitumen bubbling out of the ground, burping out of the ground. Geologists have basically come forward and said: this is not something we didn't expect.

4:20

Now, they don't come out publicly. They can't. They have jobs that they are afraid to lose if they come out publicly. But we have reports from as far back as 2009 that said that that was a highly risky project, and it's a shame for Alberta Environment to move along on that knowing that. We should have looked at this a little bit further on the caprock to make sure that if they did these types of projects, we wouldn't have these types of accidents. Those are the preventative measures that Alberta Environment can bring to the table, and there's nothing in this bill that says that we're going to be able to do this.

So if we have the monitoring of our environment, as this proclaims to have, what I see here is that we're going to have a board with no criteria or qualifications for who can be on it, even on the scientific board. It doesn't lay out any criteria on how to create this scientific board, some sort of checks and balances. It creates an arm's-length agency that's not going to be arm's length,

because the minister will have the control at various points within the legislation to make sure that the minister can do what the minister needs to do politically.

Now, I don't say that as a criticism. I say that as: that's exactly how the bill is reading. It is not arm's length; it's going to give the appearance. And I'm sure the minister or the government will state that it will be arm's length, but as you read the bill, the minister will have the power to interject at any point in time. It is, in effect, an AHS of environment. The AHS has not worked out well for Alberta Health either, so I'm not sure that this is going to work out very well for Alberta Environment. So calling it arm's length is a little bit deceptive.

There are things in here – and I was hoping the Justice minister might comment on it. I had asked if the hon. member would, and maybe he will at some point in time because it is significant. We have an indemnification clause where there's a notwithstanding clause, and that is very common for all boards, that when they act in good faith, they are protected. That's something that we put in legislation. That's something that we put in many different nonprofit organizations. It's always there.

But in this act it brings forth an indemnification against criminal activity. That doesn't make sense to me. It talks about it in good faith. Someone needs to explain to me a criminal activity that has been committed in good faith because I don't know of one that's been committed in good faith. You know, I'm sorry. But if you need money for health care, you're not allowed to rob a bank, although that might be considered good faith. You can't commit a crime because of ignorance. The law just doesn't allow for that. So how the heck do we have an indemnification clause for a criminal activity? I don't get that. I'm happy to have someone explain that, but it just doesn't make sense to me.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity for six minutes. Thank you very much to the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview for bringing forward the reasoned amendment. It's worthwhile at this point in the debate on this bill to pause and see the context that this bill is in and if we really want to pursue it. According to the amendment the bill "fails to provide for unbiased, effective, and accountable independent monitoring in a comprehensive manner, which includes consultation with the full range of affected groups."

What I see happening is that we have a gap, a big question mark around this legislation for three things: credibility of this government on environmental issues; action that's been taken on environmental issues; and trust, which is essentially credibility going forward. Do we actually believe that in the future the government is going to follow through on something? I think this is where this government is in serious trouble.

We know that we have a bad reputation outside of the province and even, increasingly, inside of the province and particularly overseas. Having been fortunate enough to be able to travel to Europe almost annually now in the last half-dozen years, I guess six or seven years, boy, it's a different world over there. Totally different attitude towards things. They just don't buy it. They

don't buy the lovely language that this government has learned to use and the spin. They don't buy it. They have serious questions. In Germany, in particular, their population is committed to reducing, conserving. You know, a whole different way of doing things.

When I look at credibility issues here, I think there are a number of places where there's a lack of credibility. One is around monitoring, period. I had the minister of the environment stand in this House repeatedly – not the current one; the previous one – and tell me that oh, yes, we had the best monitoring in the world, and blah, blah, blah. This went on for years, and then eventually government said, when it was proven enough times that they were not monitoring adequately, that, yes, although bitumen did appear – it came seeping out into the Athabasca River – that was not the cause of the pollution in northern Alberta; it was, in fact, what was being produced as a result of production in the oil sands.

It created a lack of credibility there, and the government did have to admit that, yes, they weren't very good at monitoring. Then what we got was: "We're going to be better. We promise you we're going to come out with some good stuff." So this is the good stuff. Well, is it good enough? Is this what we really want as Albertans as the big step forward from this government on environmental protection issues?

Well, you know, we had RAMP. That got completely discredited mostly because the industrial participants, who were mostly paid workers, overwhelmed the volunteer-based First Nations and aboriginal representation and NGO representation on the committee, so it was discredited. We've had a lot of self-monitoring in this province, which again ends up being discredited, although I think in some cases that's not, in fact, fair to the industry, who was trying to do a good job. We also have a lot of voluntary measures that are in place. Well, yeah. If it was voluntary, sure, we could have 50 per cent representation in this House for women. Well, that's not happening. You know, sometimes you have to have mandatory requirements, and I think we're way past that in Alberta.

We need baselines. This government still has not accelerated baseline groundwater mapping. You know, we've got a long way to go on credibility. The metrics that the government uses often measure the wrong thing in the wrong place at the wrong time, and then turn around and say to people in Turner Valley who are looking at the Sheep River: "Nope. Sorry. No problem here." Well, the Turner Valley gas plant was so polluted that they had to tell women who were pregnant not to step off the sidewalks because they couldn't walk on the soil. Yet somehow this is not getting into the river that is right next to it. Come on. I mean, that's a lack of credibility.

We've got things like board appointments where – I mean, just the Alberta regulator. Hmm. Yes. Okay. But he came from CAPP. How are we supposed to believe he's independent.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I know you're waxing eloquently, but it is 4:30, and the House does stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m. to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to October 31, 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 Sitings.

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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 cE-7.5]

- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013; SA 2013 c9]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 cP-18.5]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013; SA 2013 c8]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 c7]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013; cA-1.2]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013, with exceptions; SA 2013 c11]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013, with exceptions; SA 2013 c10]

- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 cC-12.5]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013; SA 2013 cA-44.8]
- 27** **Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 2495 (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2549-50 (Oct. 29, 2013 eve.), 2584-94 (Oct. 30, 2013 aft., adjourned)
- 28** **Modernizing Regional Governance Act (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 2495 (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2550 (Oct. 29, 2013 eve.), 2594-601 (Oct. 30, 2013 aft.), 2603-641 (Oct. 30, 2013 eve., passed)
- 29** **Pharmacy and Drug Amendment Act, 2013 (Horne)**
First Reading -- 2495-6 (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2534 (Oct. 29, 2013 aft.), 2550-60 (Oct. 29, 2013 eve., passed)
- 30** **Building Families and Communities Act (\$) (Hancock)**
First Reading -- 2581 (Oct. 30, 2013 aft., passed)
- 31** **Protecting Alberta's Environment Act (\$) (McQueen)**
First Reading -- 2496 (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2544-7 (Oct. 29, 2013 aft.), 2560-6 (Oct. 29, 2013 eve.), 2657-65 (Oct. 31, 2013 aft., adjourned)
- 32** **Enhancing Safety on Alberta Roads Act (McIver)**
First Reading -- 2526 (Oct. 29, 2013 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 2583-4 (Oct. 30, 2013 aft., adjourned)
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2013 c6]
- 204** **Irlen Syndrome Testing Act (Jablonski)**
First Reading -- 968 (Nov. 22, 2012 aft., passed), 1912 (Apr. 22, 2013 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Families and Communities), (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., motion to concur in report, adjourned)
- 205** **Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2012 (Calahasen)**
First Reading -- 1117 (Nov. 28, 2012 aft., passed), 1913 (Apr. 22, 2013 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship), (Oct. 28, 2013 aft., motion to concur in report, adjourned)

- 206 Tobacco Reduction (Flavoured Tobacco Products) Amendment Act, 2012 (Cusanelli)**
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), 2375 (May 13, 2013 eve., moved to Government Bills and Orders)
Second Reading -- 2395-403 (May 14, 2013 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2534-44 (Oct. 29, 2013 aft.), 2566-8 (Oct. 29, 2013 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- (Oct. 29, 2013 eve., 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013]
- 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)
Royal Assent -- (May 27, 2013 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 27, 2013]

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