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The 28th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

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The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

Second Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 1 Savings Management Act

[Adjourned debate March 12: Mr. Campbell]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is my second opportunity to speak to this bill, which continues to raise more questions than it answers. For a government in such financial difficulty the first question, of course, that it raises is: why are they downloading financial responsibilities for social programs onto the private sector? Well, the answer is too clear. This has come up at this time in our history when in spite of tremendous revenue from our oil resources, our gas resources, our gambling revenues this government is now going to try something out of the pages of other countries' books, many of which not only fail to provide the necessary human services, that they're designed to do, but in some cases show harmful effects because they are inadequately supervised, inadequately evaluated, and obviously the conflict of interest between profit and people becomes too onerous to deal with.

It's clear to many of us on this side of the House that a government that doesn't plan for the long term, that doesn't manage its finances in a stable and responsible way is destined for a crash, and not only will it bring down its own success in the future, electoral success; it will bring down tremendous suffering on the people. If this extends into, for example, paid monitors of the environment, this too will suffer.

There are examples, as I have indicated earlier, in the nonprofit sector where private funds and philanthropic funds have enabled nonprofits such as the YWCA and Women in Need and the Vecova society in Calgary to develop some entrepreneurial sidelines, for example fitness facilities and technology, that in the case of women in need help them to market some of their donations to many people in the city, that allow them to have more resources to work with women in need and their families.

The devil is in the details, I should say, Mr. Speaker. Just as in the case of P3s, where we see in some instances that there may have been some benefit to the public in private-public partnerships, there is a tremendous temptation and, if there is no due diligence on the part of government in negotiating these P3s, a tremendous opportunity for misuse of public funds for private purposes and a failure to achieve the ends that were in fact designed to be achieved. There are a number of publications out showing that there have been more failures in P3s, for example. The devil is in the details. If we don't do our diligence in setting up these contracts, if we don't allow members of this Legislature to see the contracts, if we don't allow public scrutiny, it opens the door to, again, a real loss of public interest and a loss of public trust, and the whole political process comes into disrepute.

While there may be some interesting opportunities in agriculture for the kind of innovations and new technology that's been at least mused about in Bill 1 and there may be some opportunities in some other technology, that we could see benefit the long-term interests of Albertans, the real questions revolve around whether this government is competent to manage these in a way that would ensure that the public interest in served for the long term. For many of us that's a real stretch after seeing the way we have managed some of our contracts. One that comes to mind, of course, is the Health Resource Centre in the Grace hospital in Calgary, that went bankrupt under this kind of privatization and public-private partnership that was attempted but without the competence to deal with it in a sustainable and responsible way.

There's no question in my mind that we have to look at all creative options. We have to examine the contribution that the private sector can make in public services and research and innovation. We do not have to sell out the public interest in that context. In fact, Albertans are looking to us to be very careful, critical, thoughtful stewards of the public interest and ensure that not only do we get the best value for the public dollars but that if private interests and philanthropy are moving into the areas of our human services, where our most vulnerable are – and I'm thinking in terms of the homeless initiatives that are being talked about, psychological services, mental health issues, even some of the community outreach and recreation opportunities – we are fastidious about ensuring that we allow the individuals themselves to play a big role in setting the outcomes, the goals of these particular activities and in no way assume that the measurements that are being taken of these particular activities necessarily reflect the reality on the ground.

That's a big question for many of these evaluations and outcome measures. Who's measuring, and how valid are the measures? Do they reflect the outcomes and goals of the individuals involved in these particular services? It's so clear that professionals and organizations, first and foremost, naturally see their own interests, and those interests get reflected in the goal-setting and the measurements and the reporting. Unfortunately, there needs to be, if we're going to go down this route, some independent monitoring of what's happening with these funds, what's happening with the programs, and the extent to which they're actually doing what they say that they're doing.

While these are attempts by this government to look like they're innovative – they're trying new things. They're combining, hopefully, responsible private investment donations and looking for a public good. There may be some cases where that is the case, but this is fraught with peril. I think that, especially in a government that has so clearly mismanaged our long-term public interest and our resources, it's fraught with distrust by many, and this government is going to have a real challenge to convince Albertans as well as, I think, the professionals who work in the field that these investments are going to result in improvements.

It doesn't sound like there's a lot of interest in this debate across the floor. There's lots else to talk about, I guess. Perhaps it's *House of Cards* that's being talked about actively over there and some of the dark side of politics, but I don't see anybody ready to jump up and challenge me on anything that I've said, so I have to assume . . .

Mr. Eggen: I think it's *Game of Thrones* more likely.

Dr. Swann: Or a game of thrones that they're involved with.

I have to assume that they're either agreeing with everything I say, or what is more apparent is that they have other interests. Bill 1, their primary bill, their bill that is supposed to be so important

that the Premier makes it number one, is clearly not of that much interest on the other side and of not much enthusiasm.

So I'll take my seat and recognize that we will not be supporting this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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

Seeing none, the next speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to just make a few more comments in regard to Bill 1 here this evening. Yesterday I was talking about my issue and problems around the social impact bonds, but this evening I would like to point out other issues that I think are deficient in this bill. You know, it's this whole idea of funding for social programs, right? Again, with the Alberta New Democrats, our issue is not that we don't give social services proper funding models; it's that the government underfunds them or doesn't fund them, period. This whole idea of endowments and so forth is a very, I would say, primitive way to actually move forward on financing essential government services, for which this government is responsible.

7:40

Many of our social programs currently can point directly to things that have been proven to save the government money down the road – right? – but in fact this PC government refuses to invest in them. Using schools as community hubs is a good example of this, a program that remains unfunded this year but was able to point to savings of more than \$4 per dollar invested by increasing high school graduation rates and improving employment opportunities for parents through increased social programming.

My question is why this government feels the need to step outside our publicly funded model into something that will actually cost us more and pay investors a profit that's to be taken from our social programs. There's simply no need when we already have so many underfunded social services at present. If, you know, we were to simply try to cut this bill, I think it doesn't even float then, so really it's just a nonstarter.

As I said before, the social impact bond issue just does not provide innovative social services; government investment in social programs and university research is what actually does. Somehow, this is some strange thing, a growth, I could say, an appendage on core social programs, and I just don't think it's an experiment that we have the luxury to afford ourselves here, at this juncture or really any juncture, Mr. Speaker.

I find it strange because, you know, this government does not have to have an aversion to risk. We can take measured risk and progressively step forward, and we do have room to do so, right? When we do feel risk averse, like an investor we can play it safe and invest in many proven social programs, that this government has left gaps in. Simply put, there's no need to look to the private sector for this kind of innovation in social services because this model that's been put forward in Bill 1 just isn't there.

We see some sort of odd, as I say, obtuse sort of experiments in places like New York City, with jails, and, you know, in England and so forth. In other places, like Massachusetts, it was firmly rejected. The innovative social programs that they talk about, like counselling for inmates and so forth – I mean, this whole idea of investing in those things just doesn't seem logical. It seems vaguely distasteful as well, Mr. Speaker. We don't need to go that way. I know there are people that are actively lobbying for this kind of thing, this kind of structure – maybe that's what was going on tonight; I don't know – but ultimately I don't think that

Albertans really need this framework that would suggest that social impact bonds could come forward and be anything useful.

There are so many questions around this, right? You know, how can we be sure that the funds will be paid out appropriately and that endowments aren't just some sort of subsidy in some way? It seems as though we've created this Bill 1 as a way to talk about things that need to be invested and talk about spending public money for essential services but without necessarily having to do anything because it's contingent on the heritage trust fund. The whole idea of sort of mixing in the heritage trust fund with this, again, I find not only vaguely illogical but not a little bit distasteful as well.

Why can't government, as I said, just fund these ministries and programs – right? – in the first place so that we don't have to rely on endowment funds and layers of bureaucracy coming from different sources? I mean, this whole idea of endowments has this taste of, you know, Yale or Harvard or something like that, where you put this money away and might bestow it on the poor or something like that. It has this kind of a feel that just doesn't belong here, really. It obfuscates the fact that this is public money anyway. This is not like something that we store away and, you know, maybe save up in some secret little fund to build something cool or whatever that quote was. Again, just way out there. In fact, this is public money, right? And the public expects that we pay for these social services and we pay for public education. Yes, we pay for social innovation, too, but we don't need someone to bet on it through the stock market, to see how it's going to go and then pay out a 10 per cent return on it. I mean, it's not like we're playing the horses here. These are human beings.

Again, the difficulty in finding people that actually are willing to bid on P3s, I think, is an indicator of the market right now and the changing view on these things, that they're not such a great investment anyway, right? You know, the P3 model only makes sense – and I could extend it to the social impact bond endowment sort of scheme – if you are transferring risk over to the investor, I guess. I mean, I don't really like it anyway, but if you're not transferring that risk over, then it's even more illogical and even more nonsensical. It's the same if you don't have multiple bidders for something. If you run a P3 or a social impact bond or whatever and it's just one person, then, in fact, it turns it upside down and becomes a negative, really. That's what we're seeing here with the sort of bumpy ride that P3s have been getting in the investment world over these last few months.

Again, for all of these reasons I certainly don't see the point here. I mean, it'd be nice to have a flagship bill that perhaps is a bit more inspiring instead of, number one, sort of confusing and, number two, just sort of diverting the obvious debate, which is for us to ensure that we provide the best delivery of public services to ensure the maximum return and benefit for the safety and security and health and edification of all Albertans. That's what our job is here, and I don't see that Bill 1 really fits into that ultimate purpose for us here at the Legislature.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Dr. Swann: Well, I'd be interested to hear the member's opinion of this use of the heritage fund and how it does or does not serve the long-term interests of our children.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thanks, hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View. You know, we all watch with interest the heritage trust fund. In fact, I'm on the committee that oversees part of the heritage trust fund. It's been sort of sitting there dormant and

stagnant for so many years. I think that we've used some of the money there over the years. In the initial conception and execution of the heritage trust fund I think it had a real, tangible value, right? We helped to invest in structures and in programs and science and grain cars and so forth that, really, not only helped the diversification of our economy but had demonstrable results for Albertans to see.

This idea now of somehow tying the, I guess, expenditure parts of the heritage fund through an endowment program, again, just confuses. If you try to follow the money or follow the logic and then the execution of that money, you know, it just seems to make it that much more convoluted – right? – hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain. I just really don't see that. You know, I think that with our capacity to not use renewable resources to pay for operations of this government but, rather, to build a royalty structure and a corporate tax structure and a personal tax structure that are in keeping with the rest of the modern industrialized world, then you put the money into that heritage trust fund, and you can just leave it there for longer terms. You can get interest off that and use that.

You know, it's the principle. I'm thinking of other trust funds around the world where they just leave the money there. It's serving the double duty of stabilizing the economy, making it bulletproof to the vagaries of the energy market from whence it came, but you're also stabilizing your economy, right? If the Norwegians didn't put all of those billions of dollars to one side, then they would be at risk of distorting and making the diversity of their economy less possible.

I mean, a good heritage fund serves a lot of purposes, and building this gateway to the money to access that heritage fund, I think, is irresponsible. Thank you.

7:50

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board on 29(2)(a).

Mr. Horner: Yeah. I just wanted to ask the hon. member – he has obviously got a dislike for endowments – whether he thought that the Alberta heritage trust fund for medical research had served any useful purpose at all over the last number of years and whether or not that endowment should ever have happened, I guess.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks for that. Certainly, it's been a useful enterprise, right? But, I think that, you know, it's not necessarily a model by which we can have a successful extension of that to these other areas. I think that, as I say, when you make an investment through the heritage trust fund, you seek to find places to make investments in medical research, as you say, or actual physical structure or infrastructure or so forth. You don't necessarily have to tie a limit or paint a fence around that. Those are choices we can make here in the Legislature or choices that you can make as a government.

You know, the endowment model, let's say, with medical research over time – certainly, the idea of investing in medical research has been most useful, and certainly we've created good programs around that, but the physical structure of disseminating that money, I think, is not necessarily best represented or executed through endowments. That's my feeling on that. I mean, let's face it. I think everyone here would like to make sure that we do save for the future more and have ways by which we can make longer term investments. I'm just not so excited about the idea of using the endowments to do so.

I mean, it's not a question of how you spend on that thing, like when you're talking about medical investment or, let's say, social services or rehabilitation of prisoners. Those are all obvious things

which we should be responsible for, but it's the physical structure of how we do fund those, whether we use endowments or not, that I find less than . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there other speakers to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to close debate on behalf of the hon. Premier.

Mr. Horner: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I rose on 29(2)(a) to ask the hon. member about the heritage trust fund for medical research because, you know, I was going through a lot of *Hansard* records from 1976, Premier Lougheed, actually, when the heritage savings trust fund was established and again later when the Alberta heritage trust fund for medical research was established by Premier Lougheed as well. He is also the one that was responsible for establishing, as I understand it, the Alberta heritage scholarship fund.

You know, Premier Klein was the one that did the ingenuity fund. We called it the ingenuity fund, but it was the engineering and science research development fund. In fact, Premier Klein was the one that did the access to the future fund, Mr. Speaker.

These are all endowments that were created so that the money could be set aside and the principal held so that the endowment could kick out a stable amount of money every year for the specific purpose of research, of scholarships for our young people. I heard the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education the other day talking about how Alberta has more scholarships and bursaries for their students than any other province, as I understand it. That's made possible because we have an endowment, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when you think about the \$86 million a year that is kicked out from the heritage savings trust fund for medical research, Edmonton has benefited from that fund in a huge way when you look at the University of Alberta, when you look at MacEwan. Calgary has benefited from that in a huge way, Mr. Speaker. The medical devices that are being developed at the U of C, the virology institute and the research that's being done over at the U of A: much of that has been possible because of a stable funding flow from an endowment not subject to the operational ups and downs of the operating budgets of the government.

Premier Lougheed recognized that Albertans wanted to set money aside, but he also recognized that they wanted it to work for them. Premier Klein knew that Albertans wanted us to continue to set money aside. But he, too, also recognized that it should work for them and it should do things that were directed for the future value of Albertans together.

I guess that the hon. members who spoke this evening opposed to the endowments would have voted against endowments back then, too, and that would have been a shame, Mr. Speaker. It would have been a shame to lose that type of forward-thinking vision, and that's what Bill 1 is all about. It's a forward-thinking, visionary bill that sets up three new endowments being created within the heritage savings trust fund as well as the augmentation of the heritage scholarship fund to support the trades. I mean, we hear this every day. We need to have more support for the trades through scholarships as well as stable long-term sources of funding for strategic investments to help complex social problems. They don't have to be social impact bonds. It could be a whole raft of other things.

I'll tell you, the not-for-profit sector is quite excited about this, Mr. Speaker. They're excited to see where this is going to go and what it could possibly be doing. In the coming months Human Services officials are going to be working with stakeholders and

leaders in the field of social innovation to identify those priority areas and the projects with the most potential as well as developing a governance structure, application procedures, eligibility criteria, et cetera, for the new endowments. They're excited about what could be, not concerned about what might not be. They're excited about the future of this province, and we all should be here, too. This is what Bill 1 is all about.

There's been some concern expressed about: my God, you're putting money aside, but now you're spending it all. That's just patently untrue. The total value of Alberta's major savings accounts is projected to grow by almost \$3 billion over the next three years, to \$26 billion by the end of this current three-year fiscal plan. In the final year, when these three endowments are really cooking, \$54 million would be transferred out of the heritage fund in respect to those new endowments. Fifty-four million, Mr. Speaker. By comparison, the heritage fund is expected to generate \$1.3 billion in that year. That's \$1.3 billion. The \$54 million transfer represents only about 4 per cent of the heritage fund's projected net investment income in 2016-17.

So we're balancing what Albertans told us: yes, you've got to save for the future and you've got to set it aside and it can't be touched, portions of it, and you have to tell us what you're saving it for. Make it work for us. Make it be something that people in the future will go, "That was a very, very wise thing to do," just as we can stand here today and we can say that Premier Lougheed did a very wise thing when he established the heritage fund for medical research, when he established the scholarship fund; just as we can stand here today and we can say that Premier Klein did a very wise thing when he established the access to the future fund, when he established what we now call the ingenuity fund, because they were for the future of this province, Mr. Speaker; just as we can say today and they will say 10 years from now that the Premier in 2014 did a very wise thing with Bill 1. That's why we should support this bill.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time]

Bill 2 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2014

[Adjourned debate March 12: Mr. Horner]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any speakers?

Hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question has been called for Bill 2.

[Motion carried; Bill 2 read a third time]

8:00

Bill 3 Securities Amendment Act, 2014

[Adjourned debate March 12: Mr. Horner]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a speaker? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say a couple of words in regard to Bill 3. This seems to be a means by which to modernize and streamline the security laws for these over-the-counter derivatives, known as OTCs, and to harmonize derivatives in general. I guess one of the issues that this brings to mind for me

is just, I think, the importance of us looking for a national regulator for these things and to work with. There is a co-operative framework going in with B.C. and Ontario and the federal government. You know, it just really illustrates the desire and the need to have a national regulator.

I know that we've resisted that here in Alberta in the past, but every time one of these things comes up, the need to regulate derivatives and so forth, we're ultimately going to just be kind of duplicating something that's happening elsewhere anyway, right? The larger benefits of having a national regulator in Alberta participating in the national regulatory system I think just far outweigh any reason that seems to come up every so often here why we resist that. You know, we are one of the leading sort of engines of our national economy here, too, so we have an increasing responsibility on that national stage to set standards and participate in these sorts of things, so it would be nice if we might consider that in the future. I always will bring it up every time this kind of thing is coming forward.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there other speakers?

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a third time]

Consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Kubinec moved, seconded by Mr. McDonald, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To His Honour the Honourable Colonel (Retired) Donald S. Ethell, OC, OMM, AOE, MSC, CD, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate March 11: Mr. Denis]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there anyone that wishes to speak who hasn't spoken before? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and respond formally to the Speech from the Throne His Honour presented last week. It's important that Albertans hear from the Premier and the government in the new year and understand that this sets the tone for the legislative session and potentially the year of activity in the Legislature but also reflects on, hopefully, beyond that year into the distant future. It should entail a clear vision, a sense of values and principles. It should engender enthusiasm and inspiration in the members here seated, and in the population it should set out some concrete goals and steps in getting toward and achieving that vision. Finally, Mr. Speaker, it should be consistent with the past year or two in office and recognize what has been accomplished and what is yet to be accomplished.

Unfortunately, this speech did none of those things, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think it achieved any level of trust with the Legislature. The faces of the government clearly showed very little enthusiasm, very little inspiration around this speech. There wasn't nearly the exuberance that we've heard in the past, and

there was a real sense of déjà vu and I would say ennui, or boredom, in much of the rehashed platitudes.

Again, the throne speech really lacked a sense of foresight, a clear look into the future and some of the challenges we're facing in this country and in this world and a willingness to embrace it with humility; the tremendous need for a trust-building engagement process that would be credible and really show an adaptive leadership that is recognizing the new evidence that is before us; longer term investments in people, in the environment, in energy, and a recognition that people within government as well as in our society are demoralized – they're anxious. They see real problems ahead with a government that has continued to have a fairly monolithic view of what this province is all about as a resource-based economy and doesn't yet see the longer term implications of this gross dependency on one product, one resource.

"Adaptive management" is a term that I have learned, and it's used increasingly to distinguish short-term economic focus from longer term global horizons of caring and responsibility. Programs called Leadership Calgary and Leadership Edmonton may be familiar to people. Ken Low initiated it in Calgary, and he has had a tremendous impact on hundreds of young professionals who are seriously interested in looking at the roots of error and ignorance and waste and identifying within themselves and within their culture some of the conditioning that has resulted in poor long-term planning, limited commitment to evidence, and a lack of real foresight and self-critical diligence in planning for a wiser use of resources and capacity building in our population.

Albertans, especially young people, are rightly concerned where this 43-year-old government is going with respect to their future. Where is any indication of a sustainable economy, a diverse and responsible energy future, and an environment that is so prized that it will be independently and scientifically monitored at the highest standards and enforced with rigour and real consequences? More and more of our population, especially young people, recognize that the debts are mounting in this province. Especially the young people are going to be paying those debts in the future, not only in real-dollar terms, where their education and cost of living is acutely being felt, but that there are going to be significantly increased resources needed for seniors' care and new Canadians and the challenges that our environmental liabilities increasingly are going to put upon future generations.

And what of climate change, Mr. Speaker? Nary a mention. The largest challenge facing this generation and perhaps the largest challenge facing the planet in our history, it got no mention at all. What does this mean? It's like we're living in a bubble here in Alberta and dragged into the 21st century only reluctantly, with scientists almost to a man and a woman saying: take this issue seriously. This is not only going to affect us; it is going to affect the most vulnerable around the world, and our children are going to pay a huge price by ignoring this most fundamental threat to survival.

Instead, we see a government countering any criticism of our fossil fuel obsession with more strident and more costly communications. How can people, especially our young people, have trust in a government that still doesn't acknowledge that our groundwater has been contaminated by the oil and gas industry? Not a single water well in this province has the department of environment acknowledged as contaminated by the oil and gas industry.

8:10

What does this say about a government that says that it's acting in the public interest and wants and believes in the best of science and evidence? It's an abomination, Mr. Speaker, and it speaks to a

very fearful and duplicitous government that does not want to know the truth about what we've been doing in the last hundred years in this province with over 300,000 wells.

Climate change gets mentioned in the same sentence as our pathetic carbon levy, which amounts to about \$2.50 a tonne, really, as an intensity target based on a company reducing its emissions per barrel by 12 per cent, not on reducing absolute emissions. Yet the environment minister continues to argue, as she did over the past four years, that we are making progress on carbon reductions.

Another area of loss of trust is in our markets, Mr. Speaker, and that's speaking loudly to this government, if they're willing to hear, about a world that's embracing alternatives and energy conservation and renewable energy alternatives in a serious way. There's not only an economic boon but also a moral commitment to a better future on the planet.

Trust is a reason to vote for a government, and trust will be the reason why Albertans get actively involved in the next election and throw out this tired old government: distrust over wasteful spending, shocking salaries and severances, and the growing inequality of our people, especially our aboriginal people, who continue to be marginalized, neglected, and, unfortunately, continue to be abused and discriminated against in a society that has not yet embraced the reconciliation and real openness of a caring and responsible society.

They continue to languish in squalid conditions, in limbo between federal and provincial jurisdictions, as I heard from the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples last night in their very moving presentations around off-reserve First Nations people struggling to get their lives together in our cities and towns, doubly wounded by the failure of our human services to learn and work from a cultural sensitivity perspective around the deep wounds in a people that have been only nominally consulted as their lands and their livelihoods flee to large development interests and short-term financial gain.

We are blessed with tremendous renewable energy assets and yet continue to increasingly flare gases into the atmosphere and allow countless numbers of old and even newer oil and gas wells to leak methane into our environment, adding to our tremendous carbon emissions in this province, the highest per capita in the world, which many people don't necessarily realize. It's a shock to realize that Alberta has the highest per capita carbon emissions on the planet. Yes, we have a smaller population, but with our science and our amazing opportunity here we need to show leadership in these many areas that demonstrate negligence and actually further damage our primary industry.

If Keystone fails to go through, this government has to take primary responsibility for it, for failing to act on all of the threats in our environment but especially on the very slow and inadequate response to climate change. Positive communications cannot undo these failings, nor can all the visits to Washington or to British Columbia or to Ottawa. Higher standards and honest, independent monitoring and enforcement alone can restore public and international trust and respect.

Young people are awakening to this massive debt – environmental, social, and financial – as they are going to be facing it and somehow managing it. If I were a young person today, I would be anxious about my future.

Lougheed's advice, often touted and recently touted by the Finance minister here, is largely ignored. He talked very passionately about the oil sands, about managing the pace and

scale of development there, about ensuring cleanup before you extend the oil sands. No small reflection in this government of an intent to do that.

This throne speech reflects no vision but adherence to the status quo. It gives little assurance that anything has been learned from the gold rush mentality that has dominated Alberta for the past 20 years.

There's been no indication of better management of the scale and pace of development of the oil sands, as I indicated, and the environmental liabilities that mount by the day in the face of lame laments that we can't keep up with population growth. Well, what did we expect when we predicted 3 million barrels a day by 2025? Did we not expect that the population would grow? Where was the money to come from? No plan.

Other countries like Norway are capable of living off the interest of their nonrenewable resource wealth. We don't even approach anything like the leadership that Norway has shown in the public interest. Long-term public interest: that's what we're here for, and that's what we see very little evidence of in this government.

Our crucial human services and education and municipal infrastructure must live with oil price changes instead of assured, stable funding based on a stable revenue stream. We live at the whim of oil prices. What does it say about responsible leadership

in the public interest when our most vulnerable, when our hospitals, when our education system depend on the price of oil?

This province continues to plan from election to election. Let us stop resorting to black-white, simplistic thinking on the question of whether this is a government that has a spending problem or a revenue problem. This is a management problem.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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

Are there any other speakers?

Hon. Government House Leader, you're moving to adjourn debate?

Mr. Campbell: To adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Campbell: Let's call it a night, and we'll meet tomorrow at 1:30.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 8:19 p.m. to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

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