



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday, March 12, 2015

Issue 19a

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

Third Session

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Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC)
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Vacant, Spruce Grove-St. Albert

Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 70 Wildrose: 5 Alberta Liberal: 5 New Democrat: 4 Independent: 1 Vacant: 2

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Eggen	Rogers
Fox	Rowe
Hehr	Sarich
Kennedy-Glans	Towle
Luan	

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

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Amery	Mason
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Fox	Strankman
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Leskiw	Weadick
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Fraser	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 12, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, help us to be mindful shepherds of this great province in a manner that protects and preserves it for generations ahead of us, as was done by those generations who preceded us. Amen.

Please be seated.

Statement by the Speaker

14th Anniversary of Elected Members

The Speaker: Hon. members, just before we go to Introduction of Visitors, may I take a moment to bring to your attention that we are celebrating a special 14-year anniversary of members who were elected 14 years ago to this Assembly. After I've read all four names, could we join in a thunderous round of accolade to each and every one of them: the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, the hon. Member for Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, and the hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. Would you, all four, please rise so we can thank you for your service.

Introduction of Visitors

Ms Woo-Paw: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly the delegation from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: His Excellency To Anh Dung, ambassador from Vietnam; Her Excellency Petronila Garcia, ambassador from the Philippines; His Excellency Dr. Teuku Faizasyah, ambassador from Indonesia, and his spouse, Mrs. Faizasyah; His Excellency Vijavat Isarabhakdi, ambassador from Thailand to Canada; and Mr. Sukri Sharbini, Acting High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam.

The ambassadors and members of the delegation here today are committed to strengthening the ties between Alberta and Southeast Asia. They are here to meet with various ministers and institutions as well as to have a tour of the Industrial Heartland tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the 10 countries that make up ASEAN represent one of the most dynamic and fast growing areas of the world, with a combined GDP of \$2.5 trillion and a population of 600 million, with a rich culture and tremendous economic potential. This is a relationship that Albertans value, and the ambassadors' visit is a great opportunity to strengthen our existing ties while exploring new opportunities together.

Our esteemed guests are in your gallery, and I now ask all of my colleagues in the Assembly to give them the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome to all of you. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism, you have some special guests here in the gallery as well. Please proceed.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to the members of

this Assembly representatives from Alberta's francophone community who are here today in celebration of the 17th annual Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. Events like today are supported by members of Alberta's French-speaking community, which includes l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and la Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta.

In the Speaker's gallery today are representatives from those organizations: representing the French Canadian Association of Alberta, Mr. Jean Johnson, president of l'ACFA, and Ms Isabelle Laurin, executive director; representing the Federation of Francophone Parents, Ms Claudine Lajoie, president. With them are some of the staff members from my ministry, the Francophone Secretariat, which continues to support Alberta's French-speaking community: Mrs. Denise Lavallée and Mrs. Julie Lussier, community liaison officers. Best wishes for a wonderful celebration. I ask all of them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Merci beaucoup, et bienvenue à tous.

Let us move on to other important groups, starting with school groups, Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Strathcona Sherwood Park.

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great delight that I introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the students from Nellie McClung school. This vibrant community school in Calgary-Glenmore has students who, besides doing their classroom work, write their own plays, and some of them have even interviewed me about the Calgary southwest ring road. They are joined today by their helpers and teachers: Ms Carla Samuelson, Jaelyn Schmitz, Joanna Yu, Gord Hamby, and Rich Baverstock. I ask the students to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, followed by Red Deer-South.

Mr. Quest: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this Assembly 61 of Strathcona county's brightest and best grade 6 students from the Fultonvale school. They're accompanied today by their teachers Ms Cindy Jackson and Mr. Jason Jefferies and a number of parent helpers: Mrs. Bonnie Stiegelman, Mrs. Twyla LaLonde, Mrs. Rachelle McElheran, Mrs. Laura Mihailides, Ms Tianna Mapstone, and Mrs. Marnie Veltri. If I could get you all to rise, please – they're seated in the public gallery – and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a group of students, parents, and teachers from Westpark middle school in Red Deer. Unfortunately, they're not in the gallery right at this moment. They're participating in a guided tour of the Legislature, and they'll have an opportunity to observe the members of this House at 2 p.m. today. I really hope that these students are enjoying their Legislature experience. I'd like to thank the teachers and parent helpers here today and would like to acknowledge them: Mr. Norm Howes, Mrs. Laurie Shapka Thiel, Mrs. Kimberly Streit, Mr. Corey Hunter, and Barb Wooff. If you'd please join me in welcoming them here to the Legislature.

The Speaker: Are there other school groups?

Seeing no one indicating that there are, let us proceed with other important guests, starting with the Minister of Environment and

Sustainable Resource Development, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Your guests are not here yet?

Let us move on, then, to Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Calgary-Lougheed.

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Nick Chrapko, Mrs. Ruby Kassian, and Li Giebelhaus. These individuals are from Vegreville, right in the heart of my constituency. They are here today to advocate for a petition to end daylight saving time that I will be tabling later in this House, and it's the most appropriate week, of course, to put this petition forward. This group is led and inspired by Ruby and was developed because of concerns about the detriment that it can have on people. I would ask that they all rise and that they would be greeted with the traditional warm greeting of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to introduce three inspirational Albertans representing 1835 House, Recovery Acres Society, in Calgary. I first visited 1835 House a decade ago as chair of AADAC and last year as Associate Minister of Wellness, so I've seen first-hand the miracles that these fine people work every day. Gerry Melsted became the executive director of 1835 House last October, after serving for well over a decade on the society's board. Rob Laird is the director of fund development, a former RCMP officer, a champion of those struggling with addiction and homelessness and other social issues. Rob was instrumental in the start-up of the Calgary Dream Centre and the Calgary drug treatment court and has travelled internationally to speak to youth about the perils of addiction.

1:40

And, finally, everyone will recognize Jamie Salé, 2001 world champion, 2002 Olympic gold medalist, and inductee into the Skate Canada and the Canadian Olympic halls of fame. Jamie and her husband, Craig Simpson, enjoy supporting the work of many Alberta charities, lending their star power, including to 1835 House. Mr. Speaker, our guests are indeed in the members' gallery, and I ask them now to stand to receive the traditional thunderous ovation of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let us move on to the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, leader of the Liberal opposition, followed by Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and all the Legislative Assembly a very extraordinary Edmontonian, Mr. Harpreet Gill. Harpreet is a 28-year-old professional, a graduate in business administration, an advocate for his community, cofounder of a community magazine. He is an active volunteer on social, humanitarian, and political issues. He has organized fundraisers for humanitarian causes and supports progressive public representatives. He is fluent in five languages and is a committed Liberal. He has served as Edmonton regional chair for the Alberta Liberal Party and is still serving as Edmonton regional chair for the Liberal Party of Canada. Now he is the Alberta Liberal Party candidate for your seat, Mr. Speaker, Edmonton-Mill Creek. Please give him a warm welcome.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two gentlemen with the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association who are here today to show the support of the irrigation community for Bill 13, an amendment to the Fisheries (Alberta) Act. Invasive aquatic species, if they were to get into our irrigation system, would cause untold damage to both the infrastructure and the well-being of Albertans, to agriculture, and to our quality of life.

Mr. Ronald McMullin from Lethbridge is the executive director of the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association and has served agriculture for more than 20 years, working to strengthen Alberta's irrigation community and ensure that Alberta water sources are used wisely. With him today is no stranger to many of you long-serving members, Mr. Jim Dau, who, among the many hats he wears, is the project manager of AIPA's thanks-to-irrigation program. Jim worked here in the Legislature for many years as a communications director for the late Premier Ralph Klein. Ron and Jim are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them now to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Ms Tammy Burke, councillor for the town of Rocky Mountain House. I've had the pleasure to know Ms Burke for some time, and we caught up again this morning at the AUMA's MLA breakfast. Rocky Mountain House is fortunate to have such a hard-working and passionate representative. I ask the members of the Assembly today to give the traditional warm welcome to Ms Burke.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Quadri: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two exceptional members of the community, very accomplished gentlemen, and this is their first time watching the QP. I will introduce to you Mr. Mansoor Hussain, who is a petroleum engineer and working in Dubai, accompanied by his father and my dear friend, Dr. Naqvi. I would ask you to please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley, as with everyone else, will be given two minutes for his statement, and I believe there is a translation on your desks. Please proceed.

Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie

Mr. Goudreau: Merci, M. le Président. Chaque année, au mois de mars, nous en profitons pour mettre en évidence l'un des peuples fondateurs et l'un des groupes linguistiques les plus importants de notre province, la communauté francophone. Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie est une célébration de deux semaines qui reconnaît et célèbre notre patrimoine francophone, qui fait partie de notre province depuis les premiers jours de la colonisation jusqu'à aujourd'hui, où la population de la langue française est l'un des groupes les plus dynamiques en Alberta.

Cette célébration a débuté le 6 mars avec des cérémonies du lever du drapeau dans toute la province et culminera le 20 mars lors de la

Journée internationale de la Francophonie, célébrée dans plus de 70 pays à travers le monde. M. le Président, les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie est une occasion de rassembler les gens pour célébrer la francophonie albertaine par la musique, les festivals et d'autres événements culturels. Les francophones et nonfrancophones albertaines peuvent participer à un grand nombre d'événements à travers la province. De Bonnyville à Grande Prairie, de Lac La Biche à Lethbridge, et partout ailleurs dans la province il y a une communauté francophone fière qui célébrera la joie de vivre.

Compte tenu les plus de 238,000 Albertains qui parlent le français et les plus de 390,000 Albertains d'origine française, il ne fait aucun doute que la culture francophone est une partie vivante et intégrale de notre province. Au fur et à mesure que l'Alberta continue de croître, il est important de se rappeler que notre province est un merveilleux endroit pour vivre, travailler et élever une famille. C'est un endroit qui accueille et célèbre la diversité culturelle et linguistique qui enrichit notre qualité de vie et contribue à développer des collectivités dynamiques et inclusives.

M. le Président, mes remerciements à vous et aux membres de cette Assemblée pour leur soutien continu de cette célébration annuelle de nos communautés francophones.

Merci.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, every year in March we take the opportunity to highlight one of the founding peoples and one of the important linguistic groups in our province, the francophone community. The Rendez-vous de la Francophonie is a two-week long celebration that honours our francophone heritage, which has been a part of our province since the earliest days of settlement to today, where the French-speaking population is one of the fastest growing groups in Alberta.

This celebration kicked off on March 6 with flag-raising ceremonies taking place throughout the province and will culminate on March 20, which is la Journée internationale de la Francophonie, International Francophonie Day, celebrated in more than 70 countries around the world. The Rendez-vous is an opportunity to bring people together to celebrate Alberta's Francophonie through music, festivals, and other cultural events. Francophone and non-Francophone Albertans can participate in a number of events across the province. From Bonnyville to Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche to Lethbridge, and every town and city in between there is a proud francophone community that will be celebrating the joie de vivre, the act of joyful living that enhances our lives.

With more than 238,000 Albertans who speak French and over 390,000 Albertans of French descent, there is no doubt that francophone culture is a vibrant and integral part of our province. As Alberta continues to grow, it is important for us to remember that our province is a wonderful place to work, live, and to raise a family. It is a place that embraces and celebrates the cultural and linguistic diversity that enriches our quality of life and contributes to vibrant and inclusive communities.

Mr. Speaker, my thanks to you and all the members of this Assembly for their continued support for this annual celebration of our francophone communities. [As submitted]

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. leader of the Liberal Party.

Martha and Henry's Children and Grandchildren

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Decades ago Premier Ralph Klein introduced us to Martha and Henry. This session the Alberta Liberals will focus on Martha and Henry's kids

and grandkids. Their priorities are our priorities. As we enter into what will be one of the most important legislative sessions in decades, Alberta Liberals will be talking about Martha and Henry's kids and their grandkids, the generation that has grown up since. They are the people who are now suffering due to the recurring financial crisis in Alberta. This, of course, has been brought on by a failed financial policy that has spent all of Alberta's wealth in one generation. These are my kids and yours. They are parents working hard to look after their families. In this legislative session Alberta Liberals will still provide trusted leadership, standing up for these families.

As I go out and around the province, this generation, Martha and Henry's kids and their grandkids, are struggling, and they're worried. They've worked hard in good times and bad and in some cases have succeeded despite the PCs' poor policies. But many others are suffering, with limited resources and deficient social supports. They're disappointed with a government that does not reflect their progressive values, that ignores the communities by not building the schools and repairing the hospitals, that is failing them, their parents, and their children. Alberta Liberals will stand up for progressive values of equality and human rights, that have defined this generation. Women should not be paid only 63 per cent of what men make for work of the same value. Young parents and mothers, in particular, deserve choice and access to child care and early childhood development opportunities. We will talk about the need for an aggressive urban agenda. A big-city charter is needed now.

Martha and Henry's kids have watched their children's class sizes grow larger, school fees skyrocket, access to postsecondary education go down, and hospitals in our communities crumble. Alberta Liberals . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Let us move on to Lesser Slave Lake. I think we can squeeze in one more before the time.

Adolph and Mary Huculak 65th Anniversary

Ms Calahasen: Thank you. How many of us in this House can say that we've seen 65 years of age? Maybe a few. But to be married 65 years is a long time, in my view, but truly inspiring. I'm so lucky to have the pleasure of knowing two wonderful people who have been married that long and are still together, Adolph and Mary Huculak.

Their exciting story goes back to February 11, 1950, when they got married and professed their undying love for one another at St. Alphonsus church here in Edmonton. By June 5, 1951, they had moved to Kinuso, where Mary, a registered nurse, dedicated her life to working with First Nations peoples and to the children of the Jousard mission. Adolph spent many years working for the Chapel of Memories funeral home in High Prairie. They had seven children. On top of this immense shared labour of love, they managed to thrive as a farming family, in fact cultivating land up to 2013, when they moved to High Prairie.

1:50

They have shared plenty of exciting moments together, a few they wanted me to share with Albertans, like in 1984, when Mary received the Serving Sisters of St. John award from the Governor General, Mme Jeanne Sauvé. That same year Adolph shook hands with Pope John Paul II in Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories.

These once-in-a-lifetime experiences and accomplishments are just indicative of the remarkable life Mary and Adolph are continuing to share together. They're a unit that Albertans everywhere can take inspiration from because Alberta's strength

grows out of the fortitude of the families that call this province home. The Huculaks enshrine this perfectly as it is encapsulated in their 65 years together.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I extend my most heartfelt congratulations to Mary and Adolph Huculak, and I would encourage all hon. members to do the same.

Thank you.

Statement by the Speaker

Timers in Question Period

The Speaker: Hon. members, we'll start the question period in 30 seconds. However, I want to just tell you that the clock and the computer at the Clerk's table were malfunctioning on Tuesday and partly on Wednesday, and that led to some serious time violations of our 35-second rule. It also prevented us from getting the Blues when we wanted them, just so you're aware. Yesterday we did much better. There were just about 10 or so that went a couple of seconds over, but on Tuesday some had gone 10, 15 seconds longer. So we all bear some responsibility for the clock and the computer. However, they have been fixed, so let's see if we can do better today.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Let us start, then, with the recognition of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition leader. First main set of questions.

Mrs. Forsyth: I'll try, Mr. Speaker.

Health Facility Infrastructure

Mrs. Forsyth: Every year Alberta Health Services puts together an objective list of infrastructure priorities that it submits to the government, and every year ministers of Health have ignored most of these high-priority requests. Now, it seems that this Minister of Health, under a Premier who promised to do things differently, is making health care decisions in the exact same way. Cardston, Strathmore, Wainwright, Red Deer, Fort McMurray: those are all the places that AHS says are a priority. Minister, why are they being ignored by your government if not for purely political reasons?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, this government is investing throughout the province. We're investing money in the South Health Campus, in the Kaye Edmonton clinic, in Fort McMurray, in Lethbridge, in Medicine Hat, everywhere. We're investing money to improve health care for our residents throughout Alberta. That's a passion for this Premier and for this minister.

Mrs. Forsyth: Now, Mr. Speaker, we're obviously getting close to campaign time, and I say this because a sure sign of an election is the precampaign promises to the people of Whitecourt again for a new hospital. It happens every four years, going back as far as 1993. That promise was repeated again by the Minister of Health just a few weeks ago. Now, what I find curious, Minister, is why you would make that commitment when, according to AHS, Whitecourt is not a priority. Can you please explain to me the disconnect?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, priorities are set by Alberta Health Services, by Alberta Health, but also by the residents of this province and the needs that they have. Whitecourt has been in need of a hospital for a long time, and we'll work with that community to build one.

Thank you.

Mrs. Forsyth: No, Minister. No, Minister, and I'll share the FOIP with you that clearly lists the priorities.

Yesterday the Minister of Education claimed that he never played politics with schools, and today the Minister of Health says that he's never played politics with health. The Ethics Commissioner says that the Education minister did play politics with schools. Now we see the government making health care promises to areas where it needs to curry favours. Meanwhile mould at the Foothills is ignored, the Misericordia is falling apart, and sewage issues in Wainwright threaten the entire facility. Minister, are you really going to stand here and tell . . .

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, this government is investing about \$200 million over a three-year period to invest in the rehabilitation of hospitals. Yes, I say that there are issues we need to fix, but we are fixing them. We're working hard across the province to invest in the future of Albertans and our health care system.

The Speaker: Second main set of questions. The hon. opposition leader.

School Construction

Mrs. Forsyth: The Education minister said in an interview yesterday that construction is a big word. You see, construction, to the minister, can include just about anything outside of actually putting shovels in the ground, having concrete poured, or walls being framed. You have to excuse Albertans for not connecting empty fields and \$10,000 signs with construction. Minister, you've seen the photos of the 38 schools you said are being built. The vast majority are empty fields. Can the minister explain to Albertans how you define construction?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have chosen to use a very transparent process to allow the public to see where our various school projects are at. Once a contract is awarded, for the purposes of our recordkeeping that is in construction phase. I can assure the member opposite and all Albertans that once a contract is signed, it's the responsibility of the construction companies to move forward and to start digging in a very short period of time. The vast majority of these schools will be worked on . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's move on to the supplemental.

Mrs. Forsyth: Minister, Albertans know what construction is. It's not planning studies, it's not engineering reports, and it's not asking for permits. That's the planning and tendering phase. When the minister was asked if the schools will be ready in 2016, he said that he's committed to timelines while school boards are saying: we'll be lucky to have students move in by 2017. Minister, will you be honest with Albertans and tell them that you will not be able to make those timelines?

Mr. Bhullar: Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that the phase 1 school projects were announced in 2011, and they opened in 2014, when they were supposed to. The phase 2 projects were announced in 2013, and they will open, the vast majority of them, as described from day one, in 2016 as planned. It's that simple. The members opposite can go and ensure that these projects are moving. I have construction start dates. For example, Archbishop O'Leary school . . .

The Speaker: We'll hear more examples later if you like. Meanwhile I have to recognize the hon. member for her second supplemental.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you. This minister has been at the centre of playing politics with our schools since he got the job. He's the man who was scolded by the Ethics Commissioner for his blatant political opportunism, buying a seat before putting the needs of families first. I've been around a long time, and I've seen this play before: promise everything to everyone before an election, only to not keep your promises. There is no doubt you're behind schedule on almost all of these schools. Why won't you do the honest thing, come out and admit it?

Mr. Bhullar: Mr. Speaker, I really don't know where the member opposite gets those facts from. I just am glad that they don't have the ability to construct a budget because with those types of loose figures, I don't think they would really serve the people of Alberta very well.

The fact remains that 108 schools will be open in 2016 as committed to. The members opposite can see the progress. We have had an unprecedented level of transparency in allowing the public to see when something is contracted and moving forward.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's move on to the third main set of questions. Livingstone-Macleod.

Flood Mitigation

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like many others, I was shocked to read the Auditor General's report yesterday. More than two years after the floods of 2013 this report says that this tired PC government has no real plan in place for effective flood mitigation. Among other things, the AG chastised this government for not having up-to-date flood maps, not having adequate risk assessment processes, and not having systems to assess the cumulative effects of mitigation projects. In short, an overall lack of due diligence is taking place. To the minister: why aren't you taking the proper steps . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's hear from the minister.

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, this government has acted quite swiftly in the aftermath of the floods to undertake important risk-mitigation strategies such as building flood mitigation. This government has invested well over a hundred million dollars in the flood erosion control program. We've announced a program, and you will see money in the budget for the Alberta community resiliency program, and we've continued to work with affected stakeholders along the Elbow rivershed and the Highwood rivershed on large flood mitigation projects.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

2:00

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, last year in High River this government paid for two costly engineering reports on diversion plans, spent \$30 million on flood mitigation projects, and now realizes that these original reports are in fact not acceptable. This stems, actually, from a third report from a company called Deltares, which has now been accepted as a preferred solution. Now, we all know we need to get to the right result here, but thorough, proven planning is part of that process. To the minister:

has all this wasted time and money in High River due to apparent poor planning put this community at any added risk for this upcoming flood season?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, there have been hundreds of millions of dollars invested by this government working with the town of High River on the berms and dikes in High River to protect that community. That is action. The majority of that money was in place for last year's flood season, and we are continuing to enhance this. These are very complex issues that include impacts on upstream and downstream landowners and communities, of which there are also serious environmental impacts. We need to make sure we get this right. But we have moved, and we have seen action on this item.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Stier: Yeah, well, the same government recently proposed another theoretical diversion project in Springbank. When this plan goes forward, it will render acres and acres of rich farmland, prime development property, to a point of sterilization and leave Bragg Creek actually unprotected. We all want to protect our communities, but the Auditor General's report is clear. Not only does this government not have a plan; it doesn't even have the tools and capacity to make a plan. To the minister: what different steps are you taking to ensure that this Springbank project won't end up like the costly projects in High River that are now being replaced?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, first this member is arguing that we aren't taking action, and then he's arguing that we shouldn't be taking on action for a project that makes the most sense based on all the studies and materials that we've been able to gather up to this point. This Premier has been very clear. It's time for action. All of the studies and feasibility studies and environmental assessments that have been done suggest the best plan to protect the communities in Calgary from flooding is the development of the Springbank reservoir, and we're moving forward with that project.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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

Gay-straight Alliances in Schools

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. The Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta's new LIFE Framework document references section 11.1 of the Alberta Human Rights Act. Now, this section was repealed by Bill 10, but the same wording is essentially found and repeated in both the School Act and the Education Act. Can the Minister of Education confirm that the notice and opt-out only apply to instructional materials, programs, and courses of study, not to student groups, including GSAs, held outside of class?

Mr. Dirks: The member opposite is correct.

Ms Blakeman: You know how much I love that.

All right. Back to the same minister. The concern is that the parental opt-out clause is written into this LIFE Framework, so if a GSA student group was requested or a student wanted to join, the parent would be notified. For some kids home is not a safe place, and now they would have been outed by the school to their parents. What is the Minister of Education's strategy to make sure that we don't end up with more homeless LGBT kids that have been kicked out or left their homes?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Dirks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. Bill 10 is a bill that we all supported because we very much want to see children provided with a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive environment. Under Bill 10 there is no requirement for parental notification or consent for a student to participate in a GSA. These are voluntary student organizations.

Ms Blakeman: Good.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I believe that most people will obey the new law, but a few will try to get around it. What strategy does the Minister of Education have in place if school administrations lean on or, let's say, use very strong persuasion to students so that they won't start a GSA or call it a GSA? What's in place?

Mr. Dirks: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Of course, we expect that our professional staff in schools will act professionally, in the best interest of children. They have the duty of care for those children, and I would anticipate that they would follow that duty-of-care expectation.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. leader of the ND opposition.

Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it has been reported that in two separate statutory declarations allegations have been made about the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, which include involvement in a \$10,000 bribe. Now, while none of these allegations have been proven, this behavior could amount to a breach of the Criminal Code. My question is to the Premier. Given the serious nature of these allegations, will he ask the associate minister of his cabinet to step aside until . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I don't know where you're going with this, but if this is something to do with internal party matters, then it ought not be raised here. I don't know what it is.

Is there anyone on the front bench that wishes to comment? The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the fourth party has talked about some very serious allegations, but they are just that, allegations that have not been proven. It's not appropriate to be commenting based on speculation.

The Speaker: First supplemental, I guess.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, as the Solicitor General rightly notes, these allegations have not been proven, but they are very serious, and they're not at all dissimilar from allegations which are under investigation by the police in Ontario. As a result, good leadership would suggest that one not duck and dodge but, rather, that one take a cautious, judicious approach which recognizes the potential conflict of interest between a member of the cabinet and the best interests of the Alberta public. As such, will the Premier ask that member to step aside from cabinet?

The Speaker: I'm not sure where you're going with this, hon. member, but if it turns out that this is an internal party matter, then we'll have to have a discussion.

In the meantime is there someone who wishes to try and answer to whatever this allegation is? Try and connect it to government policy or government programs or government services if you would.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, there is no connection apparent here, and I would say the same answer from the first exchange.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I ask. Statutory declarations have been made that allege criminal behavior. Will the Solicitor General appoint a special prosecutor to be seized of this matter as it progresses and as resolution of these allegations progress?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, once again, I'm not aware of any investigation by any law enforcement agency, but even if there was, it would be improper for me to comment on a live investigation.

The Speaker: Neither am I.

Let us move on. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Sherwood Park.

Childhood Immunization

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday both the Education and Health ministers agreed that vaccines save lives. They're in good company because the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the chief medical officer of Alberta all agree. Clearly, there's no problem with the science, but when pressed to show real, progressive leadership, all this government said was that more consultation is needed. If the science is so clear, who exactly does the Minister of Education need to consult?

Mr. Dirks: Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that there are no regulations or other requirements that Education imposes on school boards relating to compulsory vaccinations. The administration of vaccinations in schools is between Alberta Health in co-ordination with school boards.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Dr. Swann: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. My next question is to the Health minister. It sounds to me like the PCs just want to kick the can down the road, perhaps until after an election, but we have an opportunity to require this now. The only thing lacking is real, progressive leadership for Martha and Henry's grandchildren. Will the minister assure us that our kids and grandkids will be protected by implementing a mandatory vaccination before school resumes in the fall?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. We urge parents to immunize their children. We think it's very important. Immunizations save lives. Again, it's very important. It protects our children, our communities, reduces the burden on our health system. But, again, we're not going to mandate it.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that children with compromised immune systems and others may be risking their lives by attending school, by visiting the park, or going elsewhere because the cadre of children is not vaccinated, how long will you allow unimmunized children to attend school before there's a public health crisis?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, I just recently said how important we believe vaccinations are, how we encourage parents to do it, how the school board encourages parents to do it, but again it is a parental decision.

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

2:10 Education Funding

Ms Olesen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents in Sherwood Park, especially parents with school-aged children, are concerned about the impact of the current fiscal situation on students. After all, despite the current fiscal challenge, a well-funded K to 12 education system is vital to ensuring the long-term success of our province and young Albertans. To the Minister of Education: what assurances can this government give to my constituents to show the commitment to ensuring our education system remains well funded in light of the current fiscal situation?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Dirks: I thank the member for the question and thank you, Mr. Speaker. We take our responsibility for supporting our students very seriously, and we're committed to funding education services in a fiscally prudent manner. In the 2014-15 school year we have invested nearly \$38 million every day for students who are in our schools. In light of the current economic situation, obviously, difficult choices will have to be made by school boards and by government.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Olesen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: how will this government address the need for our school boards to receive stable and predictable funding?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Dirks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of this government's top priorities is education, of course, and preparing our children for the future. We will continue to invest in schools and in school facilities in a fiscally prudent manner. I have been tasked with implementing a plan for long-term, stable, predictable funding. School authorities have asked for stable funding, and we will do our best to deliver, of course, within available resources.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Olesen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what steps is government taking to ensure that funding for education reaches those that matter the most, our students?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Dirks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe that school authorities, our school boards, are in the best position to allocate resources based on the student needs and local priorities. In fact, I don't know if members are aware of this, but almost 98 per cent of the current Education budget goes directly to school authorities, to school boards, to ensure that local priorities and student needs are being met.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, I understand you are going next in place of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by Lethbridge-East.

Tailings Pond Dam Safety

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Auditor General issued a scathing report on dam safety in our province, telling us that the majority of coal mine tailings ponds have not been inspected by ESRD since the '90s and others not since the '80s. We also found out recently that the Obed mine dam

that failed, spilling billions of litres of coal slurry from a pond of toxic sludge containing arsenic, mercury, and lead into the Athabasca River, wasn't even monitored or included on the registry of dams. If it looks like a dam, holds water like a dam, and has the risks of a dam . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Now let's hear the answer from the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, Albertans can be confident that their dams in this province are built, maintained, and operated in a safe manner that is aligned with international and national standards. I can tell you that Albertans can have confidence in the public safety of Alberta's dams; however, we know, in accordance with the Auditor General's report, that we must improve the transparency through more effective record keeping and reporting.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, thank heavens for the Auditor General. That's all I can say.

When we raised this matter in the House at the time to the minister, now the Minister of Municipal Affairs, she failed to disclose that this tailings pond's dam was not even on the department's registry and that there is no evidence of an inspection whatsoever. Given that this is either deception by omission or gross incompetence, will the minister tell us which it is?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member doesn't want to take my word for just how safe our dams are, I'd like to read a quote from an internationally recognized professor at the University of Alberta, Norbert Morgenstern, who is a geotechnical engineer. He has said in documents that he's produced that it's the view of the writer that "dam safety systems applied to the Alberta oil sands industry are the best in the world." And I'll table . . .

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, if the dams in Alberta are as safe as the minister is claiming, why did the Obed mine break, spilling billions of tonnes of toxic sludge into the Athabasca River and killing millions of fish? If they're so safe, Minister, why did that disaster occur?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, again, I will say that all of the dams in our province are kept to the highest national and international standards. The Auditor General certainly identified some areas where we can improve in reporting and monitoring these dams. But what I want to say with respect to this particular incident is that this is still under investigation by the Alberta Energy Regulator, and when the Alberta Energy Regulator is ready to put out the findings from its investigation, that will be made public.

The Speaker: Thank you.

AltaLink Transmission Line Consultation

Ms Pastoor: Mr. Speaker, Albertans live in or visit our pristine landscapes, some of the finest on this planet. These landscapes are invaluable for tourism dollars, particularly the eastern Livingstone Range, which is actually featured in Alberta's Remember to Breathe ads. The people at AltaLink, owned by Warren Buffett, have proposed 500 kV power lines from Pincher Creek to Crowsnest Pass. AltaLink has conducted consultations with some

residents. Citizens north and south of highway 3 in that area are very upset . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

We'll have to hear from the appropriate minister to conclude this. I don't know whom that might be. Is it the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development?

Mr. Fawcett: Yes. You know, certainly, Mr. Speaker, AltaLink has requested information regarding the importance of our natural landscapes in this area, and we expect them to use this information in consideration of their selection. I want to remind all members of this Assembly that the actual siting of this facility is done by the Alberta Utilities Commission, and they will be the one that finalizes this decision.

The Speaker: The hon. member. First supplemental.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There might be something wrong with your thing again. I timed myself.

Anyway, to the Minister of ESRD: is your ministry aware of these consultations and the resulting issues?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, we're certainly aware of it, and all of the advice that our department has provided AltaLink is to make sure that what they're doing is consistent with the south Saskatchewan regional plan. This is why we have this plan in place. We've informed them of all of the key environmental goals such as protecting wildlife corridors and conservation areas such as the Livingstone Range wildland provincial park and maintaining extensive native grasslands and habitats. Again, Mr. Speaker, the AUC has jurisdiction, and they will be the ones that will make the final decision with AltaLink.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Culture and Tourism: if this abomination goes through, how will this development impact our ability to market our province's natural, untouched beauty as an attraction for millions of visitors?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Southwestern Alberta's breathtaking landscape draws many visitors, and it's important not only for our visitors but for our tourism industry and culture as well, as there's much filming going on there. AltaLink has contacted my ministry as a part of their consultation activities, and we will be providing feedback on this project. Stakeholders, including commercial trail rides and horse outfitting operations, are important to tourism. In this area we're encouraging them to work with AltaLink with regard to this project. The uncluttered . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

We will check the clock and make sure it's working.

Let's move on to Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Full-day Kindergarten

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final report of the early childhood mapping project concluded that more than half of Martha and Henry's grandchildren are lagging behind on at least one developmental milestone. There have been six recommendations, and this PC government has committed to following none of them. As I educated the minister on Tuesday, full-day kindergarten is a

proven way to spur development. To the Minister of Education: why are you passing the buck on to school boards for the lack of full-day kindergarten when you know it was your government that promised the funding and has never delivered?

Mr. Dirks: Mr. Speaker, we take very seriously this matter of early childhood developmental needs. That's why the early childhood mapping program is something that we supported, and I'm working with my minister colleague directly beside me on this particular matter to ensure that we're going to be able to continue that important early childhood mapping program. It provides us with a very important wealth of detail that helps us understand what the developmental needs of children in Alberta are.

2:20

Dr. Swann: Well, of course. We're understanding the developmental needs. We're just not acting on them, Mr. Minister.

Given that the mapping spent five years and \$16 million gathering and analyzing data from 87,000 kindergarten-aged children, why is the minister shutting down the program at the end of the year and not acting on these issues? These are our grandkids.

Mr. Dirks: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not shutting down anything. In fact, as I indicated earlier, almost 98 per cent of our around \$7 billion budget goes out directly to local school authorities. Those are school boards. They make the determinations about what the priority needs are in their particular areas. That amount of money I believe amounts to something like \$38 million each day for local school boards to allocate in the way that is going to be in the best interests of those children.

Dr. Swann: Let me put it another way, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Education minister isn't funding full-day kindergarten or implementing the report's recommendation, why is this government giving back \$11.6 billion more in tax breaks than any other province in the country instead of helping Martha and Henry's grandkids? What's the answer?

Mr. Campbell: Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest advantages of Alberta is our low tax regime. Albertans are hard-working individuals, and we don't think we should tax them to death like other provinces do. We are very proud of the tax system we have. We're about investment. We're about keeping Albertans working. In today's economic times the last thing we want to do is raise taxes on hard-working Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, followed by Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Landowner Property Rights

Mr. Rowe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we are all aware, property rights are a very important issue to rural Albertans. It is one of the most important issues in my own constituency. This government has made progress with the Respecting Property Rights Act. However, many Albertans are still troubled by the Land Stewardship Act. This question is to the Minister of ESRD. Will this bill be repealed?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, property rights is an important issue to all Albertans, and Albertans also understand that our population is on the rise and our land is not getting any bigger to accommodate this. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act is an important piece of legislation that allows us to manage our precious resources to the benefit of all users, so we do not have any plans to repeal this legislation, but I'm always happy to hear from any of the colleagues

in this Legislature or all Albertans or landowners on ways that we can improve our legislation.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the government plan to amend the act to address the concerns that landowners have raised over various parts of it?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act allows for the government to plan wisely for the future needs of Albertans to help manage growth while balancing the rights of property owners. My ministry has no immediate plans to amend this legislation. I'd be happy to hear any concerns from Albertans regarding this legislation with respect to balancing these issues.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: is the government planning on having additional legislation to follow up on the Respecting Property Rights Act?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, this government does respect private property rights, and our Premier has been one of the strongest advocates in this area over his career. The all-party committee, the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship, has made recent recommendations on property rights, and I've asked my ministry to review these recommendations as they relate to my department.

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

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along the same vein – the minister is warmed up – when the Premier was running for leadership of his party, he said that property rights would be at the top of his priority list. Since then all landowners have seen is a trumped-up Bill 1 and not a whole lot else. Bill 36 continues to be a gross infringement on property rights, giving the government the hammer over lease agreements and landowner rights. The Premier personally signed a promise to review Bill 36 months ago, but there's still no progress. When can we expect this review to be completed?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, again, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act is an important tool as part of our integrated resource management system, in which we need to make sure that we're utilizing the landscapes, the airsheds, the watersheds and maintaining the biodiversity in this province so that we can get the social licence to develop our natural resources. This is an important tool that we continue to implement through the regional planning process, and this government is committed to that.

The Speaker: Supplemental, please.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Centralized planning hasn't worked in eastern Europe, and it won't work here. If the Premier doesn't fulfill his promise to review Bill 36, which concentrates power in the hands of the PC cabinet, limits rights to compensation for landowners, and blocks access to the courts for citizens, does he expect landowners to be okay with no review, no action, and no repeal of Bill 36?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, again, I need to reiterate the message, I guess. The hon. member isn't quite understanding this. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act is an incredibly important piece of legislation for developing the province's resources. It's the foundation

on which our integrated resource management system is based, with which we can go out confidently to the world and say that we're responsible developers of our resources. That's vitally important to the economy, it's vitally important to our communities, and it's vitally important to Albertans, who care about protecting and enhancing our environment.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Final supplemental, hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With draconian legislation like Bill 2 and Bill 24 still taking away the rights of landowners, can anyone expect this government to actually do meaningful work to protect property rights like repealing these bills, or will they just give more lip service and broken promises on the eve of an election?

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, there is no one that has a better track record on protecting private property rights than our Premier. He has a track record and a reputation in this particular area, and there's no one that has a better record of understanding how to balance the development of our natural resources with the environmental consequences of that. This is what this piece of legislation tries to balance in the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, and it's a very important piece to be able to get access to markets for our resources.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, followed by Drumheller-Stettler.

School Construction in Edmonton-South West

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ran in the 2012 election to bring forward an agenda as a dad of two young daughters to get our area of Edmonton-South West caught up and proactive in building the schools we need today, not 10 years from now. I'm getting a bit nervous, though, as I see the oil prices dropping and the budget ahead, and I'm hoping that there's still money for our schools that we need. Even though we've accomplished securing a commitment for eight new schools in our area, we need to keep building more schools to continue to rapidly expand. My question to the Minister of Infrastructure: given where our province is headed financially, are we still expecting these new schools in Edmonton-South West to be finished on time?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are. The member has three schools in phase 2: Southbrook, Windermere Catholic, and Ambleside. All three of these are schools that have contracts awarded, and the contractors are mobilizing by March 30 of this month. In addition, this member has five schools in phase 3. Four of these were starter schools that are now going to be fully built schools by the end of 2016.

Mr. Jeneroux: I like that answer, Mr. Speaker.

Given that we're planning to open these schools on time, can the Minister of Education tell me if we're going to be able to afford to staff these schools with the resources we need to continue to offer the high quality of education our teachers in Alberta provide?

Mr. Dirks: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Infrastructure minister for the confirmation that these schools are going ahead. That's very good news. Our government is committed to investing in education so our children have every opportunity to reach their potential. That means investing in schools, providing the teachers that are needed, ensuring we have an outstanding curriculum and that we can do the

very best for our students all while we are living within our means. We take very seriously our responsibility for students to provide the teachers that are necessary.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Jeneroux: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, given that we're seeing an average of 28 to 31 babies born a day – a day – at one of the nearest hospitals, which is a kindergarten class, can the Minister of Infrastructure continue to keep up with the rapid rate of growth happening in Edmonton-South West, particularly in our young kids?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have one of the largest school-build projects in Canadian history ongoing right now in Alberta. I think I previously said 108. It's actually 102 schools that will be opening in 2016; 102 schools will be opening in 2016. Those are schools that were announced in 2013. They'll be ready for 2016. The schools that were announced in 2011 were ready in 2014. We're going to keep pressing ahead to make sure that we have the infrastructure and the schools for our children.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler, followed by Lethbridge-West.

2:30

Rural Health Review

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 23 of last year the Premier called for a rural health review to be done in 90 days. Back then the Premier said that we need practical solutions that can be implemented without delay. Well, it's been 170 days. Still no report and no solutions to the problems of longer wait times, doctor shortages, and a crumbling infrastructure. It's just another example of PC electioneering: promising big and underdelivering once the votes are counted. To the Health minister. It's been 170 days. Where's the report?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, what we indicated was that the report would be done in three phases of 90 days each. The first phase was done about December 15. The second and third phases are now complete. The report is just being finalized. It will be released early next week by statements, we think, by the Premier.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised this report, and, as the member opposite says, it's in 90-day increments. This government has not delivered on its word. Folks in my riding are calling this a broken trust. In a recent interview the chair of the health review said that he expected the full report to be released now. Minister, why?

Mr. Mandel: To the hon. member: I think I've answered that question. I think that the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster did an incredible job of putting this report together, and I think that it's a remarkable discussion with Albertans, information, heart-to-heart talks with people about what we need in rural Alberta. I think the results of the report and the information are quite fantastic. We look forward to implementing many of those decisions, and we're quite excited about it.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely frustrating. The priorities are simple. This does not require splitting the atom here. Maintaining and adding rural health physicians, sustaining and improving primary care, ending divorce by nursing home, fixing

ambulance service, improving wait times. Why are you going to continue to delay this report?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, we haven't delayed this report. It's going to be ready before we had estimated due to the great work of the committee, who worked tirelessly for the first 90 days and the next 60 days in order to get this done. They should be really recognized for the tremendous work that they've done to support Albertans.

The Speaker: Lethbridge-West, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

Postsecondary Tuition Fees

Mr. Weadick: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last December the provincial government approved tuition increases for 25 programs at postsecondary institutions in Alberta. Student groups say that these increases broke a promise to students. My questions are all to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. Given that Alberta already has the lowest participation rate in postsecondary education, doesn't the minister think that this is going to hurt accessibility in our province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is not to have the cheapest education system in Alberta; our goal is to have the best education system in Alberta. Our aim is excellence. I approved 25 market modifiers in 2014. This decision allows the affected programs to deliver vital, competitive, and responsive programs that meet the needs of students. The market modifier program is going to generate approximately \$21 million in additional revenue for the institutions. I am committed to working with all Campus Alberta partners to build a strong system.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Weadick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 25 programs which were approved for hikes include engineering, commerce, economics, pharmacy, and many nursing programs, some seeing increases of 71 per cent. How are students supposed to afford an education and gain the skills they need to have a successful career when they face overnight hikes like these?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, graduates from Campus Alberta have just made the best investment of their lives. Recent market modifiers do not apply to students who are already enrolled in those programs.

I'm happy to tell the hon. members that our graduates are extremely successful at paying back any loans and finding jobs. Aside from the \$408 million available for student loans, we invest \$234 million in student aid supports. These supports include scholarships, bursaries, grants, and debt management programs.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Weadick: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, to the same minister. We know that student aid is usually student loans, and therefore students will be paying back this money that they have to borrow in order to attend these programs. How long will Alberta students be paying for these hikes?

The Speaker: Mr. Minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Our system has served Alberta learners extremely well, and 90 per cent of Albertans with government student loans pay them back on schedule. Our most

recent graduate survey data shows a 94 per cent employment rate for graduates, and those grads who received government student loans had an average of \$20,000 owed. Graduates in the survey reported a mean annual income of \$60,300. We still have work to do, but we are well on our way. I invite the hon. member to help us build a Campus Alberta that is sustainable, accessible, and achieves excellence.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview in place of Edmonton-Calder, followed by Calgary-Glenmore.

School Construction Reporting

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Infrastructure minister presented an update on school construction around the province, school boards have come forward claiming the information on nearly a dozen schools is inaccurate. After defending this report for three days, the government is now saying that this misinformation is the fault of a couple of typos. To the Minister of Infrastructure: how can you claim that almost a dozen inaccurate dates are simply misprints?

Mr. Bhullar: Mr. Speaker, I know of one specific case in Red Deer where in one instance a school board has asked that a school project be delayed so that they can have consultation with local communities to make sure that the school is a facility that the entire community can use. We'll listen to the local authority, and instead of that school being ready by 2016, it will be ready in 2017.

In another case, Mr. Speaker, we made a mistake and said that construction would start in December 2015 when, in fact, construction has actually already started.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Bilous: Empty fields.

Given that based on what school boards are reporting, there are at least 11 mistakes that this PC government is attributing to typos and given that these 11 delayed schools mean families once again have to bear the burden of your incompetence, will the government admit that it has failed Alberta families, students, and teachers by once again overpromising and underdelivering?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member just went from 12 to 11, and if he has 11 examples, I would be more than happy to look into every single one of them because the fact remains that we want to be very open and transparent about this process. So if there's a mistake, we will look at it. We'll update it so that every single Alberta parent out there can take a look at their project, know when it's going to be ready so that they can plan their lives accordingly. This is critically important for us. We take it very seriously. And 102 schools will be opening in 2016, as committed to.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Final supplemental.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll hold you to that, Minister.

Given that yesterday the Education minister said that construction is a big word by implying a lot of different things are part of construction, what else do you mean by construction: stapling news releases together, constructing sentences inflating your own record on school construction, constructing a narrative to get yourself re-elected, or is it anything besides building a school?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What construction does mean is that when you award a contract, the specific general contractor has to do a few things, first of which is to make sure that their subcontractors are all lined up. That's a very important piece. The second thing, which is critically important, is to make sure the ground is actually thawed so they can start construction, a pretty important point. That's something that is critical so that there are not additional costs to make sure that you have heating and so on when you're pouring a foundation. These are all very important parts, very important pieces . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

I must recognize the next member, and it will be Calgary-Glenmore.

PDD Safety Standards

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The PDD safety standards have been designed to ensure safe-living homes for community members. Unfortunately, with the enforcement of standard 8, inspectors from fire, safety, and health are creating distress. To the Minister of Human Services: how will the government ensure that service providers and their clients are not unfairly suffering because of this standard?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has a responsibility for the safety of our most vulnerable, and we will not compromise on that. These laws apply universally to all landlord and tenant settings, and these standards are not new. We've been working with the service providers for the past two years, so now they are aware that standard 8 will require inspections.

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister. I appreciate the process you're going through. At the same time I'm hearing reports that inspectors are telling family members they have to move where the cat dish is placed in the home. Again to the minister: why is the implementation of this policy forcing people to live in homes that look and feel like institutional settings?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we cannot compromise on the safety of our most vulnerable. We know that these compliances must take place. Often some of the required changes are as simple as putting in a fire extinguisher. Again, we want to work with the agencies to resolve issues. If agencies are not able to meet the deadline, we're happy to talk with them, and they can apply for an extension.

Ms L. Johnson: I appreciate that information, Madam Minister.

Again, with respect, the standard is causing some landlords to consider evicting these vulnerable individuals and forcing them out of their homes. To the hon. minister: will your department put an end to this standard before more damage is done?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we do not take chances with the safety of our vulnerable. As a matter of fact, at this point today 82 per cent of the homes have already been

inspected at the various levels across Alberta. Again, we want to work with the agencies. If they need an extension, need to speak with us, we're happy to work with them.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Disaster Recovery Program Claims

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been more than 18 months since flood waters devastated communities across southern regions of our province. Many Albertans faced the worst as they lost everything and struggled for months as they tried to rebuild their lives. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: can you tell me why nearly two years since this disaster 2,000 Albertans are still waiting for financial assessment from the DRP program and why they are still out of their homes?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank this member for his excellent question. I want to say how committed we are as a government to help these people get back into their homes. The largest natural disaster that we've had in Canadian history, and we're working hard to complete these files. We have completed more than 80 per cent of the files. There were 10,500 files that were there. We've completed more than 80 per cent of them. Our goal will be that until we're completely finished, we will be there to help all of those files be completed. We've provided over \$100 million to Albertans to help rebuild and remediate their homes.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. member. First supplemental.

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the process for applying for financial assistance to the DRP is wrought with confusing paperwork, why are you making it so difficult on those Albertans who have already been through so much?

Mrs. McQueen: Well, Mr. Speaker, again a great question by the hon. member. Since our Premier has come here and I've come to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, we've done a couple of things. One, with the open files we completed all of the outstanding appeals by December 2014, as we said we would, by tripling the staff. Since then, with the Premier and the hon. Member for Highwood, we also added 15 more caseworkers to close the files that are open. We've committed to closing those by June of this year.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Final supplemental.

Mr. Lemke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what are you doing to ensure those Albertans with open files are given the funding they are eligible for so that they can rebuild and move on once and for all?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, when we announced in High River, with the Premier and the hon. Member for Highwood, the addition of 15 more caseworkers, we also announced that we are advancing 90 per cent of the eligible expenses to help fast-track payments for the complex cases. This is making sure that we clear up these cases and we help these poor people that were devastated by this flood.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. That concludes Oral Question Period.

Just in response to the question posed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, your microphone was cut off when I stood up at the 35-second mark. The clock is working just fine. We know that you continued to speak, and I don't know if *Hansard* picked that up or not. But just to answer that.

Number two, as a result of the reasonably short questions and answers from some of you, we were able to get 108 questions and answers on the record today. So well done to all of you.

Now, in 30 seconds we will proceed with the continuation of Members' Statements, and we'll hear from Calgary-Fort, Banff-Cochrane, and Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: I show the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort going next and then Banff-Cochrane.

Retrospective by the Member for Calgary-Fort

Mr. Cao: Merci, M. le Président. It's known that I will not be returning to the Legislature following the next election. It has been an exciting 18 years. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to serve the people across Alberta and the wonderful people of the Calgary-Fort constituency and to have been at many places in our great province. I'm grateful to have met and worked with many community organizations and the great people in my political association.

The work of 18 years cannot be said in a few sentences – it's in volumes of the *Hansard* report – but I can briefly say that I have worked with five Premiers. Memorable moments are many. Just to name a few: celebrating Alberta's centennial with Alberta's official song, cutting Alberta's credit card to symbolize Alberta being debt free, initiating the naming of Alberta's veterans highway, parental maternity leave increase, employment standards applied for domestic workers, removing the wage differential of youth, and, particularly, medical benefits for severely handicapped people. Another memorable time was being elected by my peers, by you, to serve you as Deputy Speaker in 2008 to 2012.

My thanks go to all my office assistants, all LAO staff.

I would like to thank my family for motivation: my wife, Kim; sons William, Winston, Ulysses; daughters-in-law Sarah, Mimi; and grandchildren Dylan, Maxwell, and one on the way.

I thank all members of this Assembly, past and present, for sharing time and space with me.

To the media: thank you for leaving me alone, with a low profile, to serve constituents for 18 years.

This Cao-boy will be riding to a new horizon. I wish everyone all the best in yours.

From the bottom of my improved heart, thank you. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Well said.

Let us move on to the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Action for Agriculture

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Action for Agriculture was established in 1990 by concerned ranchers and farmers in southern Alberta. At the time they felt there was a need for a voice for agricultural working landscapes as urban demands for land use and

recreation expanded. As it turns out, 25 years later the need for that voice to be heard is greater than ever.

Over the years Action for Agriculture has educated and lobbied for the responsible management of our watersheds, and they have promoted the understanding that land is a resource and not a commodity to be simply bargained away. The continued loss of productive agricultural land to other uses is a threat to all Albertans as the ecological goods and services of which we are all the benefactors are at risk of being severely impacted by current land-use decisions and practices.

Currently Action for Agriculture is focusing its efforts on methods to allow landowners to preserve their lands as agricultural in perpetuity and, in doing so, to slow down the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural lands so that future generations can benefit from these working landscapes.

2:50

One tool available to landowners to achieve this is conservation easements. Conservation easements are voluntary restrictions placed on land that allow for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of agricultural land. However, current legislation in Alberta, specifically the land trust grant program, does not recognize cultivated lands appropriately, and the use of easements as a preservation tool is very limited because of this.

Mr. Harvey Buckley, who is the current chair of Action for Agriculture, and myself recently met with the Minister of ESRD and in July with representatives from Alberta Agriculture to outline the issues surrounding the use of easements on cultivated lands, Mr. Speaker, and we'd like to thank them very much for their consideration.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Statement by the Speaker

Rotation of Members' Statements

The Speaker: Before I recognize the next speaker, hon. members, let me say this. With respect to today's rotation regarding members' statements, today is day 18, I believe, but the sixth spot, which we're about to have filled, was ceded by one member to another. The Speaker has no objection to that happening, provided that there is that kind of reciprocity of mutual understanding. So that is why you will now hear from the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills instead of someone else.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: Hon. member, the floor is yours.

Retrospective by the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills

Mr. Saskiw: I'd like to thank the Member for Medicine Hat for that.

For the last three years I've had the great privilege of representing the constituents of Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills. They entrusted me to work hard on their behalf, and I've tried every day to live up to their expectations and to advocate for their priorities. I hope I served them with the tenacity, integrity, and respect for my constituents that all Albertans rightfully demand from their MLAs. I defended the values of my constituents even when it wasn't the popular thing to do, when it wasn't the easy thing to do. I did it because it was the right thing to do. That's why our constituents send us here: to make the right decisions, not to take the easy way

out. I know you all came here for the right reasons. I hope you stay focused on why you are here and that you aren't afraid to make the tough decisions that need to be made.

It has become clear that this Premier is going to call an election a year early. For the sake of future generations I hope this Premier and those who follow will keep taxes low and will keep the flat-tax rate, Alberta's primary competitive advantage, and will streamline government to get spending under control, now and always. I hope you will let yourselves be guided by the common sense of the common people and that the Premier will lead a renewal of faith in everyday Albertans in their abilities to make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and communities.

When the Legislature resumes later this year, my constituents will have elected a new MLA. I will not seek re-election. This has been the honour of a lifetime. I've enjoyed the experience immensely, and I will forever value new, forged friendships. I have not made this decision lightly, and it is with mixed emotions that I stand here today. I look forward to returning to the private sector, to spending time with my family, and to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you to my constituents for their trust and confidence, thank you to my colleagues for their passionate and sometimes even entertaining debate in the House, and thank you, most of all, to my family and friends for your dedication, love, and support. Thank you, all. God bless, and good luck. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Good words.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: I think we have one petition I may have overlooked here. Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, were you trying to catch my eye with a petition?

Ms Fenske: Yes.

The Speaker: Let us go to that quickly, then.

Ms Fenske: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition that was put together by Ruby Kassian. It asks that the government repeal the Daylight Saving Time Act. These signatures were collected throughout the region of northeast Alberta.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Fawcett: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of a dam integrity briefing note prepared by the Alberta Chamber of Resources. In this document there is a quotation from Dr. Norbert Morgenstern, whom I referred to in a question from the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. He is an internationally recognized authority in the field of geotechnical engineering and a professor at the University of Alberta and a member of the Alberta Order of Excellence. Dr. Morgenstern states that it is his view that dam safety applied in the Alberta oil sands industry is the best in the world.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, or someone, Edmonton-Centre perhaps, on behalf of?

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have tablings on behalf of the leader of the Liberal opposition. The first one is from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law on developments in Alberta law on farmworkers. They make the claims of farmworkers

for legislative protections even stronger, refuting the argument of the Premier that we need more research and debate before taking action on unconstitutional exclusions. This is specific to constitutional decisions and rights of farmworkers.

The next are all on vaccines. Comparison of Effects of Diseases and Vaccines, prepared by and available online from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

An opinion from the *Calgary Herald* titled Vaccine Opponents Risk Return to a Dark Age, published February 12, 2015, encourages parents to protect their kids with vaccinations.

An article from the *Globe and Mail* published November 5, 2013, titled Officials Urge Immunization After Measles Outbreak in Alberta.

The second last, Mr. Speaker, an article from the *Metro* news published February 16, 2015, titled Alberta's Unlikely to Hit Long-term Targets for Child Vaccination Rates. So the status quo is clearly not working.

Finally – and a little bit of a surprise – from the C.D. Howe Institute, commentary 421, A Shot in the Arm: How to Improve Vaccination Policy in Canada. It calls on Alberta to mandate vaccinations for school entry.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a budget backgrounder produced by the Alberta Federation of Labour that shows government provided, in their view, inflated figures of Alberta's per capita spending. The report finds that the figures are inflated as a result of the government including flood repair money in its calculations in addition to comparing Alberta's spending to the Canadian average rather than specific provincial averages.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other tablings? Edmonton-Centre, you have one more tabling?

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry. I have my own tablings. It looks like I've got three. The first is a tabling from Judy Semeniuk, living in Alberta, directed towards the Premier. She is a regular voter and concerned taxpayer and is expressing her concerns with the cuts in the Klein era, which were never reinstated, and how the government is proceeding without consulting taxpayers.

Secondly, from Niko Palmer an e-mail – he also lives in Edmonton – writing about the current crisis in maternity care. I believe he's talking about pregnant women finding it very difficult to find primary caregivers, particularly if they're in remote or rural areas.

Finally, Elena Renderos, also from Edmonton, is writing also on maternity care in Edmonton with concerns about difficulties having consistency in finding care for pregnant women and a critical shortage of obstetricians, fewer family doctors providing maternity care, and the demand on midwives far exceeding the number of registered midwives.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there were no points of order today and no points of privilege, so I believe that right at the stroke of nearly 3 o'clock we can move on to Orders of the Day.

3:00

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 17

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill 17, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015.

The supplementary amounts provided by this bill reflect the fiscal picture outlined in the third-quarter fiscal update released on February 24. These amounts are necessary for the government to conduct business and fulfill its commitments for the current fiscal year. The additional amounts mainly relate to support for the municipal sustainability initiative and the Alberta community partnership; support for drugs and supplementary health benefits, collective bargaining costs in Alberta Health Services, and payment to physicians; support for capital maintenance and renewal to accelerate school construction and modernization projects; provide emergency funding for firefighting in forest protection areas, mountain pine beetle mitigation; support for municipal disaster and flood controls, mitigation, and ongoing recovery efforts.

I respectfully urge my colleagues in this House to support the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Do I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre going next? Okay. Thank you. Followed by, I think, Edmonton-Calder, and then we'll proceed after that. Thank you.

Ms Blakeman: Looks like a plan, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for allowing me to stand and speak in second reading on Bill 17, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015. Of course, this is the bill stage of the estimates that we debated yesterday afternoon and yesterday evening. Unfortunately, I was not able to return in the evening, so there are a few comments that I would like to offer. It's my fault that I wasn't able to come back, and therefore I can't question and receive answers for the questions that I have.

One of the concerns is around the funding for legal aid, which did appear in the supplementary supply and appears here on page 3 of Bill 17 in the amount of \$16,739,000. Now, I believe there is almost \$11.36 million for the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and management compensation agreements. I'm going to assume that that is staff in the department that was entitled, and I think that also included the one-time lump sum that was paid out to employees as part of the agreement but kind of in lieu of an actual percentage raise. I mean, clearly, that shows up in a number of the departments that had applied for supplementary supply estimates, and that's – I was going to say "as it should be." Ideally, we would know that in advance and it would already be part of the budget, but when those settlements come a little after the fact, indeed, I'm glad the government found the money because otherwise our people would not be paid.

Sorry; just while I'm at that, Mr. Speaker. I can't remember who said it over there, but the government has slipped into a habit of giving one side only of the story. And, tsk tsk, I'm going to give you the example so you don't need to crinkle your eyebrows at me. For example, there was much ballyhoo about how our public-sector employees are paid the most or the highest amount in Canada. Oh,

my goodness. Huff puff. Well, that only makes sense, and the information that wasn't given was that our private sector also is up in that league. They are on the same level, as a matter of fact, and that tells us that the issue is not an overpayment to public-sector employees. What it is is a roaring, great economy for Alberta, in that everybody is doing really well.

So to just give half of that and to make it sound like the public-sector people were being grossly overpaid is a little sneaky. No; it's really sneaky. And that has become more regular than I would like to see it coming out of Public Affairs around government. So stop doing that because I'm on to you. Now, I know that will change your behaviour. Oh, for sure. But I just thought I'd tell you that I noticed.

Okay. Under supplementary supply is the \$5.5 million for Legal Aid Alberta, which was a bit of an arm wrestle, as I saw it, with the Minister of Justice, who was trying to cut costs, but in doing so – the minister has a contract with Legal Aid Alberta, and they have to perform certain tasks, certain duties as a result of that contract. The minister puts in money toward Legal Aid Alberta as does the federal government. But we have an increasing number of people who are in conflict with the law and are also fairly low income, so they're looking for assistance from Legal Aid.

I just want to underline how important that is for women. You know, I talk a lot about equality and seeking and achieving legal equality, social justice equality, and economic equality, and legal aid is very important for women. I wish it had a larger family law section because that's usually where women are most in need of their services, but I won't belabour that at this time.

Now, what was happening was that there's such a thing as a Rowbotham application – I hope I said that properly, Mr. Speaker; I think I did – in which an application can be made to the courts using that argument that says, in essence, that this person really needs to have legal representation and shouldn't be here self-represented. And the judge can say: "Righty-ho. I agree. Go get them a lawyer." In this case the money for the lawyer that's been ordered by the judge is then paid by the Minister of Justice out of his department's budget.

There was such limitation upon the money that was being granted from both the provincial and federal governments to Legal Aid Alberta that they'd had to revise their application criteria downward. They'd actually reached the point, much to their distress, where an individual who was getting AISH, assured income for the severely handicapped, was considered too high income to be eligible for legal aid, which is pretty bizarre and looked terrible when it hit the news. In fact, 5 and a half million dollars was granted to Legal Aid. The minister did come up with the money within about a month, I think, which I'm sure they would have liked sooner, but I was glad to see that it happened in a month.

But what we don't know is where we are going forward. We continue to have I think I was told the other day five to six more of these Rowbotham applications every week, which is a much more expensive way to fund lawyers than the reduced rate that they are eligible to receive under legal aid. So you have an arrangement under legal aid where all lawyers are expected to spend a certain amount of time performing legal aid cases. They get paid at a much lower rate – if you want to look at it, a deal for Alberta taxpayers – but are being paid at the higher rate that is resulting from a judge's order in council, much more expensive.

I don't want to see this again in supplementary supply, so I'm hoping that there is adequate funding and that the minister is quick like a bunny to let Legal Aid know and to sign their operating budget. Last year I think there was a delay where that wasn't signed until June, which is, you know, kind of unfair, Mr. Speaker. They're trying to run a budget, and they haven't managed to get the minister

to actually sign off on it, so that places them in a very difficult situation. I hope that the minister is able this year to both supply adequate funding so that we're not getting all of these challenges and to approve their budget in enough time that they can make good use of it throughout the entire year. Those are my comments on the Justice section.

The other area that generated a lot of discussion – I was trying to zoom through the Blues from last night so that I didn't ask questions again, and I do apologize if I didn't read this properly and I repeat a question. I apologize for that. But one of the areas that was generating a lot of discussion was under Environment and around, if I'm remembering correctly, buying out the land leases. The situation there is that when the – I'm not going to remember the full name of it: something, something Athabasca, lower Athabasca . . .

3:10

An Hon. Member: Regional plan.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you.

. . . regional plan was finalized, there was certain land that was expected to be brought back into the fold, so to speak, into public land, so there was a certain amount of that that was spent – oh, no. Sorry. I might totally be in the wrong place here. Yeah. Wrong place.

This was the one that had the Kananaskis golf course. Oh, yes. I mean, that looks bad, and it's also kind of curious as to why money would be spent to restore the Kananaskis golf course, which has always had a bit of – what's the word? – scandal attached to it. At one point they imported special silica sand from somewhere – I don't know where – exotic in the world in order to use that sand in their sand traps, and it garnered the then government a good deal of unwanted attention for spending this extra money on this super sand to put in a golf course. Yet here we are: \$8 million to maintain the operational infrastructure and grounds at the Kananaskis golf course during the rehab – in other words, they're paying everybody to keep going even though they don't have a golf course to keep going on – plus \$1,170,000 for capital for the Kananaskis golf course. That's a lot of money.

I read in one part that it was because it was flood recovery, and that's why they were doing it now. But I do question that allocation of resources when we don't have enough money to do some of the things we'd like to do with children or in Education or in Municipal Affairs, yet we're laying out some serious cash here on a golf course. I hope that doesn't happen again. I am very curious about the government's defence that they did it because the golf course was included under flood infrastructure because it's not here. The line above it actually is talking about implementation of flood infrastructure recovery measures, so I'm kind of curious about the government using that as their reason that the golf course got that amount of money.

There is quite a bit of money in Environment and Sustainable Resource Development around the flood hazard identification program, flood infrastructure recovery measures, and then the usual wildfires. Then there's mitigation programs to build berms, recovery erosion controls, the Springbank off-stream reservoir, and watershed resiliency and restoration, which is around drought and water and the province's watersheds.

My concern around this is that you can't fool with Mother Nature, and I think that the choice has been made to protect some peopled land, particularly in the Okotoks and High River area, by diverting rivers and trying to build reservoirs to divert water into. Boy, you've got to be careful with that. This just happened in a tremendous hurry. So I'm looking for some reassurance from the government that there were, you know, appropriate consultations with some pretty slam-dunk, impressive scientists because I am

quite concerned that we will end up implementing a number of things here that will cost us very dearly in the future in that we have tried to fool Mother Nature and she will get us for it, as often happens. We need to be doing this right the first time rather than scrambling after the fact. So I'm looking for a bit of reassurance around that, please.

I think it was fairly clear what the money in Health was being spent for. Human Services was clear enough for me. Thank you. Transportation was fine, but I did wonder in Transportation why there are 119 vacancies, which was part of the money that was talked about by the Minister of Transportation.

Oh, my goodness, it's a bit thin over there.

He said that some of the money that was saved was saved from not filling 119 vacancies.

Some Hon. Members: Look behind you, Laurie.

Mr. Campbell: It's pretty thin over there, too.

Ms Blakeman: Fair enough. All right, then. Yeah. Everybody is out in the fabulous constituency.

I'm wondering why you would not be filling those vacancies. I know it's one way of saving money, but, you know, we are supposed to be budgeting to provide the programs and services, and we need people to do those. If we don't fill the vacancies, that work is not being done, and eventually that costs us quite a lot, as we learned from the deferred maintenance during the Klein years.

Those were some of the issues that I wanted to raise in second reading of Bill 17, which is the supplementary supply act, that the government is looking to pass through over the next couple of days. Hopefully, I can get some answers once we get into Committee of Supply, but I appreciate the opportunity to put my comments on the record.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, after whom 29(2)(a) will be available.

Mr. Eggen: On 29(2)(a)?

The Speaker: After you, 29(2)(a).

Mr. Eggen: Right. Okay. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on second reading of Bill 17. I'm just reminded that this is the extension of the estimates from yesterday, so I just had a number of significant and some smaller issues to highlight around the supplementary supply.

Now, it's not unfair to say that sometimes supplementary supply can be quite a significant amount of money, involving many different ministries, depending upon when it occurs. Because we are moving into an electoral period, I think that perhaps the requirement of supplementary supply is somehow made larger. It can be unfortunate in some circumstances because, of course, we're talking about ongoing funding and choices that we make for each ministry. If somehow things do get cut short, I just want to make sure that they stay on the table after the election period does see itself through.

Regardless of who forms the next government in regard to the postelection period, I think it's very important for us to remind ourselves that we need to provide ongoing, stable, long-term funding for essential core services such as health care, education, and infrastructure and that the funding can be counted on, not just over a period of weeks or months but over a period of years, so that we can make the necessary decisions to not just deliver health care

and education, for example, but to actually build capacity in both of those areas as well.

Now, what we've seen sort of thematically are some problems in regard to the Health budget specifically and then some problems that we've identified in regard to the infrastructure spending for both health care and for education as well.

First, health care. Although it seems as though – I mean, everything in health care globally is quite large numbers because, of course, it is a very important part of our overall budget. But what we are identifying here is that we didn't spend some of the money that we did budget for last year. You know, in some ways you end up seeing a cut by omission somehow when we actually did provide for budget allocations around pharmacy and for other collective agreements around Alberta Health Services. So there's no service being provided necessarily, but then the money is not being spent as well. It's important for us to identify that there are effective cuts taking place in health care already, even before this budget that we are anticipating here on the 26th of March, and they're having real effects on the capacity for health care professionals and staff, and so on, to deliver the health care that we require.

3:20

Also, you know, it can't be understated, the irony that does exist in decisions that the government has made around this supplementary supply in light of cuts and delays that we've already seen for projects that were very essential and important for all Albertans. One that comes to mind straightaway for me is the Tom Baker cancer centre. It's a facility that is not in keeping with the population of not just Calgary but the whole surrounding hinterland that the Tom Baker supplies and services. We know that the expansion and the modernization of that facility has been anticipated for many years. I just find it ironic that we would still have that on the table when we are making other supplementary supply decisions here in this bill that direct money to what I would suggest is maybe not quite as essential and pressing as, let's say, developing the Tom Baker cancer centre.

Usually I don't look at some specific things, but, I mean, it just can't be avoided, seeing how certain infrastructure choices are being made here in this supplementary supply. Maybe, you know, it's symbolic, but at the same time I really question the choice to put supplementary supply money into the Kananaskis golf course, in fact, not just for flood mitigation or for flood reconstruction, but I see – maybe I'm not reading it right – money for operation of the Kananaskis resort as well. I mean, maybe one does not equal the other, but choices do reflect on the intention and the priorities of individuals sometimes. When I look at the Tom Baker cancer centre and the absolute necessity of moving forward on that, I just am feeling a bit conflicted on that particular issue.

Back to health care. There are a number of spending areas within the existing budget that I think we could have sharpened up considerably. You know, the whole emergency wait time initiative issue, I think, is something that is lingering and not being addressed in the most direct way possible. We haven't seen the numbers actually being reduced in a significant way for emergency wait times around the province. I get updates very regularly from different emergencies around the province saying just how overcapacity they are at any given time. For us to look at supplementary supply and not perhaps target funding more specifically, that could help to mitigate the overuse of emergency rooms across the province, from the Misericordia to the Foothills, I think, is something that we could have done better on as well.

The whole issue around, of course, the Child and Youth Advocate. Certainly, it's important to have that extra funding, but we were just, I think, all very conflicted in the Legislative Offices

Committee meeting in regard to the cuts that seemed to be imposed by this government on the Child and Youth Advocate. We knew that the relatively modest funding increases that the Child and Youth Advocate required were a reflection of legislation that was directing that office to expand its services. Especially, you know, considered in light of more disclosures of child deaths in care, that we saw here in these last couple of days, it certainly underscores the importance of investing in the Child and Youth Advocate to have the independent investigative capacity of that office expanded, not for the sake of just building a bigger bureaucracy but for trying to solve a systemic problem we have with children in care and the level of protection that we can afford children in care. Again, you can see in supplementary supply the reflective lower number that the advocate was asking for during their budget considerations in Legislative Offices. Again, it just reminds me of a real sore spot that will continue to linger until we start to make more reasonable, logical decisions around funding independent offices of the Legislature.

Again by omission, the choice of cutting the Auditor General's funding: we should remind ourselves of that during the supplementary supply discussion because again we see, clear as day, with the Auditor General's report that we saw yesterday, that a dollar invested in the Auditor General is an incredible investment for saving money and resources down the road each and every time they do their job. Certainly, I know just how modest and careful they are with their budgets. Certainly, we should have supplemented their capacity to what they had required in their budget discussions because, of course, we know that money is tight, and when money is tight, it redoubles the responsibility we have to audit and account for those monies in an independent sort of way.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the supplementary supply the other issue I wanted to just bring up is around legal aid. I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre did a good job of reviewing the problem that we have in legal aid. Again, I would suggest that it's an investment for saving money in the legal system down the road. We know the backlogs that we experience in our justice system, and I know that the minister responsible has been looking for ways to expedite some cases and has legislation before the House in that regard. But I would venture to say that a prudent investment in legal aid is the best bang for your buck to streamline the legal process and to help expedite the dispensation of justice in this province. For us to somehow compromise that, I think, is us as a legislative body compounding a problem that we should be in fact trying to solve.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker, in regard to supplementary supply, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thanks.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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

I don't see anyone rising, so we'll move on to Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 17, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act. I guess, just generally speaking, some of the main points are that when you look at these documents, it appears that overall the government just doesn't have a handle on its spending. I don't think that should come as a surprise to any members of this Assembly. In fact, when the current Premier was travelling across the province, I think he was pretty shocked and astonished at how spending had escalated without any fiscal constraints. You know, it appears as well that they always do, throughout the years, underestimate certain costs such as the cost for wildfires and other types of emergencies. You'd think at this point in time that you'd have a more accurate number,

that it wouldn't be out by such a large percentage year after year.

3:30

A couple of main points to consider when you look at these numbers: the fact that there has been no attempt to cut what most Albertans, I think, would understand as wasteful spending. One of these is, of course, the carbon capture and storage. Two billion dollars has been wasted since this program was announced by the then Premier Stelmach, and, of course, we thought this was going to be changed, but now that program has been extended by five years, to the year 2020. [some applause] Which ones clapped on that one? You know, this has been experimental technology that hasn't proven that it would actually reduce any emissions. It's corporate subsidies. We feel that industry with the proper incentives could go ahead and make sure that their practices are the best practices throughout Canada and North America. But this carbon capture has been a complete, dismal failure.

We're going to see more of this in the years to come because some of the financial statements and the contracts that went into this are going to be uncovered. It takes time to do FOIPs, but some of the companies that were awarded these contracts had deep connections and tentacles throughout the whole current government, or PC Party, apparatus. I look forward to seeing what those documents reveal.

But on the surface of it, it just appears that, you know, when a private entity like Shell states that this technology is simply not feasible economically, you would have thought the government would have got the hint and cancelled it. In fact, this was a complete flip-flop. I know that during the leadership race the current Premier indicated that this technology was, to my understanding, a waste, but instead they decided to extend the program by five years, to 2020. I would be remiss if I didn't say that this was a dismal waste of money.

The second key component that you can find throughout the supplementary estimates is the federal building, and this, of course, is the extravagant building for MLAs and bureaucrats. The price tag is roughly \$400 million, and I don't think that includes the cost of, or the value, I guess, of the transferred land that went into this deal. It includes things like a million dollar sky palace. It includes a garden rooftop – it must be just beautiful – an 80-person movie theatre, I think eight shades or five shades of marble.

An Hon. Member: Fifty shades.

Mr. Saskiw: There could be more. There could be more. That will make for some interesting times in that building with that happening.

You know, this is one of these extravagant things. When you're looking at schools or other dilapidating infrastructure, you'd think that a brand new MLA office building would be the last thing on a priority list. Of course, it went over budget, I think by about \$100 million, give or take a few million. This is one of the things that we in the Wildrose suggested could be one of the first assets that the government divests itself of to help balance the budget. Assuming they put 400 million bucks into this building, they got the land for free, you would assume that you could get that same price or roughly the same price on that building. Why not sell that building and put those funds towards the impending fiscal mess and perhaps get closer to balancing the books?

I don't think anyone in their right mind could think that at a time where oil prices are where they're at there is a need for a brand new, fancy federal building. I know the minister at the time called it the crown jewel of the government. I think those words have come back

to haunt him. I think that Albertans are going to look at that during the election period and say: well, that's one example of a waste of money that has been perpetrated on taxpayers.

The other aspect, when you look at the supply estimates, is the costs that are being paid out to the cancellation of certain oil sands leases in the north. Of course, this is under the lower Athabasca regional plan, whereby the government unilaterally cancelled leases, property rights, of oil sands companies. I guess the question is: if the government can come and unilaterally cancel oil sands leases, those property rights, what chance does a farmer, a landowner have? Of course, the lower Athabasca regional plan is the first of a series of regional plans. The subsequent plans are more than likely going to trample on even more rights. A lot of the land up north was Crown land, and of course the issues aren't as severe with those facts in hand.

The question that I have for the government is: how much money has gone for these cancelled leases, and who calculated the compensation for the cancellation of leases, and who receives what funds? The fact is that under the law there was no legal right to provide compensation, so the government must have come up with some scenario or formula to compensate the oil sands companies that lost their leases. I think that Alberta taxpayers have a right to know who is receiving those monies, what it's being received for. Is this setting a precedent? When future regional plans are developed and landowners lose their rights or companies lose their property rights, what will the compensation be to them? Under the law there is no right to compensation, so the government did this, apparently, out of their goodwill or to pacify some of these companies that invested substantial amounts of money in the north, which, of course, generates the vast majority of the revenue in this province. What is going to happen to those smaller landowners when their property rights are trampled? There's no right to compensation, so what formula is going to be used by the government to provide that, or is no formula going to be used at all?

The other aspect that's been touched upon by other members of this Assembly was the refurbishing of a golf course and the operation of it. Of course, governments are never good at operating businesses. I'm sure they wouldn't be good at operating things like golf courses. My question is, you know: during a time of apparent economic downturn why would the government expend tax dollars on a golf course? The dollars that you're looking at, maintaining the infrastructure and grounds of the golf course, are \$8 million. Obviously, if you ask taxpayers what the priority would be – would it be a school, or would it be health care infrastructure or a golf course? – I think maybe with the exception of some avid golfers they would argue that the golf course would not be on the priority list. You know, if you look at other jurisdictions, it's only in Alberta where they would sink this much money into a golf course.

Again, you look throughout the document. Aboriginal Relations: there's a \$5.6 million promise for housing on the Lubicon Lake band. Of course, we'd want more details on this. Why was there this deficiency in the first place, and what exactly are the projects that are going to be funded? The government hasn't really delineated how those funds are going to be allocated and for what projects.

The \$3 million for critical infrastructure on Métis settlements. My riding has two Métis settlements, Kikino and Buffalo. Of course, I'd like to examine what exactly the government is proposing here. Where are the details, and why wasn't this appropriately budgeted for in the previous fiscal year?

Mr. Speaker, we see again and again, when you look at the budgeting of this government, that they never do take into account proper contingency rates for disasters, and what I would suggest is that they seek the advice of the Auditor General to do an analysis

operationally of why they're always underestimating this and for an explicit contingency to be put in the budget so that they don't always have to request more during the supplemental supply. Of course, you know, if there's funding that's needed for emergencies like the Alberta flood recovery, every member in this Assembly is going to support those types of allocations provided the projects make sense. But at the same time, why not budget for a reasonable amount, a reasonable contingency, in advance so we don't have to come back to the Assembly and ask for more money year after year after year?

We see as well in the Justice and Solicitor General department \$5.5 million for legal aid. The government put forward a one-time funding increase in this department. We'd like to ask that the government consider having a funding formula where you have year-over-year consistent funding at the rate of inflation plus population growth to help those most vulnerable in our society get the proper legal representation.

3:40

When you don't have the appropriate legal aid in place, what happens is that it clogs the system in place. You have unrepresented litigants in court who then tie things up. The judge typically has to bend over backwards to make sure that their rights are being upheld, and that inevitably leads to delays in the court system. This slashing of the budget and increasing it one year or the next year creates havoc within the court system, it creates havoc within the legal aid system, and it creates havoc with the lawyers that do this type of work generally on a much lower, reduced basis, sometimes pro bono.

We're also looking at, of course, that it made a splash in the news on Municipal Affairs, where all of a sudden the government came up with \$400 million in the MSI capital grant program. It'd be nice to get an understanding of why the government can't simply go forward with predictable, consistent funding for municipalities. The timing of this, obviously, appears to be pretty fortuitous, you know, one month before election. It's, I guess, pretty good timing if all they're concerned about is campaigning and getting re-elected.

Mr. Speaker, I guess, just in general, when you look at the overall budget and what's been put forward here, you see a government that just has out-of-control spending. This government spends more per capita than any other province on all sorts of things, yet Albertans aren't getting the best results. I think that this is a telltale of a government that has been in power so long that they'll do anything to get elected, and their spending will just get more and more out of control. By the government's own polling, it shows that the number one concern of Albertans and how they would want to fix the fiscal situation is to cut wasteful spending, and I think that's got to be the priority here.

You know, the PC government has been talking tough about this upcoming budget on March 26, but my guess is that when we see the budget document, it's going to be one of those mushy ones, where they've moved far to the centre to appease certain stakeholders throughout this province. I'm very interested in seeing what this budget is actually going to produce, if it's going to be a tough budget or if it's going to be one of these things where, you know: tough talk without the actual tough action.

By this bill itself, the supplementary supply estimates, you can see that, you know, there hasn't been any restraint in spending: \$8 million for a golf course, \$2 billion for carbon capture, a federal building. There's no restraint here, so I'd be very surprised if I saw on March 26 a budget that actually showed some fiscal restraint. It'd be a great thing to see. I just don't expect that to be the case given the document that we're debating here today.

With that, again, I look forward to seeing if the government has any actions that would fix this process and would help to ensure that Alberta's finances are in good hands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

I don't see anyone wishing to pursue it, so let's move on to the next speaker. It will be Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, please.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank my colleague from Lac La Biche that spoke before me and congratulate him. Apparently, being a young newlywed is much more fun than being in here on a daily basis, so congratulations to him.

There are a number of things in the supplemental bill that I hope the government takes under consideration. You know, we have to do the business of government. I applaud the government for looking at things like flood mitigation and some of the attempts at flood mitigation, but I will say this. If you look at the structure of how we're dealing with it, it's piecemeal, and in my view that's inefficient. So here we are with a supplemental bill that even based on my questioning yesterday is trying to get three different and separate ministries dealing with this issue, and that's a systemic problem.

Evidence of the problem just came out in the Auditor General's report, where the Auditor General talked about Infrastructure purchasing homes in a floodway and then ESRD investing money to build a dike to protect that floodway, which changes the floodway to normal land. Now you've got the community saying that now that you built the dike and also purchased the land, they want to resell the land for development. That's a waste of money. That's a waste of money. That money is better spent on more productive flood mitigation.

I think that the only way to deal with this going forward, to make more efficient use of the money that we spend is to look at how we're going to deal with flood mitigation overall, provincially, and maybe bring that under one ministry or one authority so that we can basically not spend and overspend and counterspend between ministries. That's not getting us ahead of the game.

The other thing is that when you look at what has been proposed even in this supplementary budget, in dealing with some of the issues, we're not looking at it holistically. What we are doing is dealing with more of the symptoms of the problem. On the issue of the flood mapping and the studies about floods – and the minister spoke about that today – when you look at the broader picture, we're not looking at the entire watershed.

So on the issue affecting Sundre, which is one of those few communities in this province that has a significant flood problem, we're not looking at the actual watershed in the high country and what the logging is doing to the flow of the river. Without taking that under consideration, we don't know if we're spending the money efficiently. We don't know if we're wasting the money.

When you look at the three different ministries – Infrastructure, ESRD, and Municipal Affairs – each has something in this budget, this supplemental budget, for flood mitigation. The question now comes: are we getting our money's worth? Are we doing what's right? Without that knowledge upriver of how it's going to affect the entire river basin, we don't have that answer. This ministry can't tell me, this government can't tell me anymore than I can tell them whether we're getting our dollar's worth on spending this money. All we know is: we're going to pass this so we can do some flood mitigation work.

My colleague from the fourth party had mentioned something about: he was conflicted over this golf course. I can assure you that

I am not conflicted. This thing has to come out of this supplemental budget. It really does. If we are going to go after the Auditor General and tell a committee to reverse a decision, where an independent committee met and decided to give the Auditor General an additional half a million dollars, and we rescind that, but we're going to spend \$1.1 million to construct a golf course and another \$8 million to make sure it stays operational while we're rehabbing that golf course, that to me is just not something we can reconcile.

Is a golf course a good investment? I'd rather leave that to the private sector. I'm not so sure it is in the sense that up in the high country it is. But I will tell you this. The private golf course owners aren't really thrilled that this government is building a golf course again anyway. They have their own issues. But to have that golf course operational while it's under rehabilitation, to me, you wouldn't do that in the private sector. You wouldn't spend that kind of money while you're rehabilitating your golf course. You'd just fix your golf course. So I think that absolutely has to come out in light of the items that we absolutely need, that are essential.

The minister stood up the other day in this House and said that there are no unsafe bridges in the province. Well, that's absolutely untrue, but I will give the minister credit. It depends on what you define as safe and unsafe. You can change the level all you want, but the fact is that I can name you two bridges in my constituency, and I know the Member for Little Bow can name a number of bridges that absolutely are not up to standard. They need to be fixed. I have a bridge called the James River Bridge that needs a quarter million dollars to be repaired and brought back up to standard. It is absolutely essential that this bridge be repaired because this is an evacuation route for sour gas wells in case something goes wrong. Clearly, we have a critical piece of infrastructure, we have a county who says, "The province hasn't funded us, so we can't fix the bridge," it needs a quarter of million dollars, and we're going to spend \$8 million to keep a golf course operational. That doesn't make sense. That you cannot reconcile.

3:50

How do you justify that to the public? Do you want to go out to the public in the next election and try to sell that to the public? Do you want to campaign on that? I know one thing; I do. If you approve it, I will be campaigning on it. I'll have fun anyway. How can you build a golf course when you have these other important needs? You just can't do that. How can you tell the public that, on one hand, everybody's got to give up something. Front line: everybody's got to give up something except those who are going to golf up in Kananaskis. That, to me, cannot be reconciled.

We have hospitals that need to be taken care of, that need to be built. Clearly, those are expensive. One of the things that would help tremendously in dealing with these supplemental budgets as well as with our regular budget is to have a list of priorities just like every municipality does on a yearly basis. You list your capital projects by priority. How would this government want to do that? It's flexible. You should do it by ministry, in my view. If you want to do it as a whole, it doesn't matter. But you list by priority what projects should be built next year. You draw a line of what is funded and what is unfunded.

There are always circumstances that arise during a budget year, where projects that are unfunded need to go to the funded level and something needs to move out. The public understands that. But if you want to sell an austerity budget to the public, if you want to sell a supplemental budget that doesn't address the basic needs of their critical infrastructure, then that public, in order to buy into this, would like to know where their critical infrastructure is on the

priority list in relationship to the budget you're passing. That's all they want to know. They want that information so that they can rely on it. If this government were to adopt that practice, this is something we could easily sell to the public, saying: this is why we need these things.

With that, I just want to talk a little bit about the money that's going to the Springbank off-stream storage, that \$4.5 million. I don't know if it's right or wrong. I watch the newspapers. I know the government is dealing with the experts, and they're deciding whether this is the right deal or not. I will tell you this. There is an argument on whether you should store in-stream or out of stream, which one is better. It is site specific, whether it should be more efficient in-stream or out of stream. That I don't have an issue with. I'm willing to accept the experts' advice on site-specific designs. But I will tell you this. When you look at the money that's being proposed, \$4.5 million, compared to the money that would be lost in a flood, the devastation even in a minor flood, the money comparison is not even worth talking about in the sense of how much better this investment is to protect the property damage that could be a result of a flood.

Backing up, provincially speaking, when you look at the value you get by doing something right and how you're going to protect the community, the property, the businesses downriver, it is, to me, paramount that we look at our flood mitigation holistically and think about it in terms of: if \$4.5 million can do the trick for Calgary, then why can't we get that kind of money for a community like Sundre and some of these other communities that have not seen that flood mitigation money come in for what I would call a long-term solution that could protect billions of dollars in dealing with a community that is prone to floods? This is something that, in my view – if you take a step back, look at the broader picture, and design how you're going to attack the whole flood mitigation problem by your watersheds, I think the investment dollars would be significant in a sense of what every dollar spent would save in flood prevention and flood damage. I think that would be immeasurable.

With that, clearly we need to pass the supplemental bill. It will pass, but I hope – I hope – before we're done here we get rid of the money that is slated for this golf course. It is unnecessary. It is not good for the public, and it's not good to try to sell an austerity budget that you're planning on selling to the public, where everybody's at fault for our fiscal woes. How do you sell that if we're going to be building a golf course? It doesn't make sense.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I understand, hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler, that you wish to participate.

Mr. Strankman: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I think it's an interesting comment. The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre makes prominent mention of the Kananaskis golf course. The government has been interestingly quiet in their final deliberations in regard to the sale of aircraft that they were using in competition with private industry, so I was wondering if the member could go into the use of government funds for private industry. There also are private owners of golf courses in the province. I think that's an important competitive thing, the idea of using taxpayers' money.

You also made mention that there are uses of interdepartmental rivalry with funding allotments, and there is the \$4.8 million transfer from Municipal Affairs to the Department of Seniors. I was wondering if you would like to give some comment in that regard.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure about inter-departmental rivalry. I haven't seen any ministers tackling each other in a rivalry. But I will call it interdepartmental inconsistency. It happens. When this government is looking for efficiencies, as in any business enterprise, as in any organizational structure, if you look at the goals of each ministry, one of the things you have to make sure is that they don't conflict with other ministries. That, I think, is paramount, and it's a never-ending task for an executive branch to look at that, to make sure it is efficient.

I do want to talk about that question on the golf course because the investment of public dollars into a golf course is questionable under a number of standards. In this province, where we have a very, very short season, we know that private golf course owners struggle to get that bottom line. In order to get to that bottom line, they look at the competition. When you've got a government in there, that has unlimited pockets, that can invest in something like a Kananaskis, particularly \$8 million to keep it operational while it's under rehabilitation, it really puts at a disadvantage the private golf course owners who are struggling to make sure that they can, you know, make a profit and be successful. It's unfair to them, particularly those within that driving range – driving range: there's a pun for you – within the driving area of that golf course where they compete for the golfers.

You have the two stages of this, where you have government investing in what probably should be private – and I'm not saying that Kananaskis isn't a great place to go. It is, and it always has been, and it probably always will be. The fact is that if we're going to invest in rehabilitating the golf course, which I think is wrong, and then invest another \$8 million just to keep it operational while it's under reconstruction, that does not seem logical to me. It is something that I have a difficult time reconciling on spending money.

I see one of the ministers shaking his head. If he can provide a different answer than we got last night, then I'm really interested in hearing it and comparing it to the record we got last night on the \$8 million. We were told last night that that \$8 million was about keeping this place operational while the construction was under way. I just feel that that is not something that you would ever do in the private sector. Yes, they suffered damage, but if they're going to invest to build their golf course, they would just build their golf course.

In the end, where is the revenue stream that we can see over the last, say, decade, the last five years of this golf course? How much have they spent operationally, and how much revenue have they seen returned as a result of how much money has been spent? We don't know if that golf course has ever been profitable. There's no proof that it's ever been profitable. Then the question is begged. Why are we investing in the first place if it's never been profitable? We need answers to those questions. If it's profitable, then there's no reason for government money to be in there in the first place. It is certainly something that this government should think about turning over to the private sector.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you. We have eight seconds left under 29(2)(a).

If not, are there any other speakers, or are you ready for the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question has been called.

Hon. President of Treasury Board, did you wish to close debate?

Mr. Campbell: Question.

The Speaker: No? Question. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a second time]

The Speaker: We shall move on.

4:00

Bill 12
Common Business Number Act

The Speaker: You're moving it, hon. member? Thank you.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 12, the Common Business Number Act.

The purpose of this legislation is to enable Alberta to enter into a partnership with the Canada Revenue Agency to adopt a common business number. The common business number is based on a one business, one number vision, where a business is provided with a single unique identifier to be used when dealing with government. Simplifying how businesses interact with government when allowing them to identify themselves with a common business number will particularly support our small-business community. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, representing 95 per cent of the businesses and creating 35 per cent of the private-sector employment in Alberta.

In 2013 we engaged the small-business community to help determine how we can create the right conditions for small business to continue to thrive in our province. As part of this I led eight in-person engagement sessions across the province attended by 170 small-business owners, and 335 small-business owners also completed an online survey. What we heard was a consistent message, that it can be difficult for small businesses to determine where to find the right information about where to obtain business services, support, or regulatory information from government. Having been a business owner myself, I know first-hand that businesses spend a considerable amount of time looking for information and determining whom to contact in the government for help, particularly in the start-up stages. I also know that our small-business community wants to know what rules apply to them, what government expects when it comes to compliance.

Mr. Speaker, our government listened to what we heard from small-business owners, and we're now delivering that through the Alberta small-business strategy. The strategy is intended to maintain Alberta's favourable investment climate and make it simple to do business in Alberta. One of the commitments made in the strategy is to provide better client service for small business, and adopting the common business number is one of the ways we're achieving this, by allowing businesses to conveniently identify themselves using a single identification number. This will reduce the number of times small businesses provide the same information to various government programs, saving them time and money.

In recent years some provinces have begun to adopt the common business number for their programs as well, and they include our B.C. and Saskatchewan new west trade agreement partners. Jurisdictions that have adopted the common business number have realized benefits for businesses and government, including red tape reduction by eliminating duplicate registration requirements, improving service delivery and program compliance, and expanded opportunities for online service integration and collaboration.

This bill is the first step to achieving these benefits for Alberta by establishing the necessary legislative framework for our province to adopt the common business number. Here are just a couple of examples of the way this bill will do this. First, it establishes the legislative authority to adopt the common business

number as our province's business numbering system. This satisfies the requirement under the federal Income Tax Act that only permits the Canada Revenue Agency to share business information with the provincial partners for the purpose of administering a federal, provincial, or municipal law.

Second, the bill allows Alberta to enter into a formal agreement with the Canada Revenue Agency to obtain basic information about a business's identity like its name, date of incorporation, and contact information.

Third, it allows Service Alberta to establish agreements with other public bodies, gradually expanding the use of the common business number across provincial programs.

Finally, the bill contemplates the establishment of an information system hub to facilitate the exchange of certain business information between the Canada Revenue Agency and participating provincial programs to facilitate the use of the common business number and to protect data integrity.

In addition to these measures, the bill contains regulation-making powers that will allow our province to streamline government regulatory requirements and eliminate duplication in procedures.

As you can see, this bill creates a legislative framework that will enable Alberta to simplify how businesses interact with government and by allowing businesses to identify themselves using a common business number. I think this bill is a significant step forward for our province towards its goal of providing a business-friendly environment, and it's been endorsed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business as a way to reduce red tape for small-business owners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 13
Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015

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

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today and move second reading of Bill 13, the Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015, on behalf of the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

When the current act was created, aquatic invasive species were not considered to be a large risk in Alberta, and for this reason, the current act does not sufficiently address the issue. The proposed amendments would establish measures to protect our lakes, rivers, and water infrastructure from the devastating consequences of aquatic invasive species. The measures suggested include mandatory watercraft inspections at our borders, new authority for enforcement officers, and a controlled invasive species list.

Mr. Speaker, all Albertans have an interest in protecting our water for recreation, irrigation, and use in our homes and businesses. That's what makes these amendments so critical.

I now move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 14
Agricultural Societies Amendment Act, 2015

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education.

Mr. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise to move second reading of Bill 14, the Agricultural Societies Amendment Act, 2015, on behalf of the Minister of Agricultural and Rural Development.

Alberta's agricultural societies are valuable organizations that work to enhance the quality of life in our communities. They have a long and important history, predating the creation of our province. In fact, the original statute that established agricultural societies was a Northwest Territories ordinance from 1886.

Over the years agricultural societies have continued to evolve. They not only fulfill their traditional role of encouraging awareness and improvements in agriculture but also provide services that improve the quality of life for the residents of their communities. There are currently 293 agricultural societies that administer over 3,000 activities annually. These include rodeos, fairs, farmers' markets, 4-H activities, agricultural education, farm safety education, and scholarships. These societies operate more than 700 facilities such as hockey and curling rinks, community halls, and exhibition facilities.

Mr. Speaker, despite changes to how societies operate, some of the wording of the original 1886 ordinance remains in our Agricultural Societies Act today. It is important that our legislation remains current and relevant to ensure that it is meeting the needs of our agricultural societies and the communities that they serve. In a nutshell, the Agricultural Societies Amendment Act will modernize the existing legislation, make sure that it is well aligned with the Societies Act, ensure that all agricultural societies have effective bylaws in place, and recognize that large and small agricultural societies need to have flexibility in how they are structured to meet their unique needs.

The current act is overly prescriptive, going as far as outlining the order of business for annual general meetings, membership fees and membership eligibility, and entitlements within the legislation itself. Under the new provisions these types of requirements would be contained in each society's individual bylaws. This would allow societies both large and small to tailor these requirements to their individual needs and allow the procedures to be updated from time to time without having to reopen legislation.

To ensure good governance and oversight practices are maintained, minimum requirements for bylaws will be outlined in the regulation. For example, bylaws would have to include provisions for membership requirements, rights and obligations, as well as requirements for directors in terms of office. New or amended bylaws that are introduced by societies will be vetted by the department.

4:10

To reflect the evolving role of agricultural societies, we are also updating some of the language in the act to recognize that these societies are not solely agriculture based and are involved in a variety of community activities. For example, the object statement will be broadened to reference communities in general rather than just agricultural communities.

The number of people involved in agricultural production who are required to be part of an application to form an agricultural society has been updated from at least 25 per cent of a minimum of 15 applicants to 25 per cent of at least 50 applicants.

We've also added a provision that further clarifies authorities and responsibilities of societies incorporated under the act. For example, the revised statute states what are referred to as natural person powers to agricultural societies such as the ability to enter into contracts; to purchase, own, use, and dispose of property and assets; and to enter into indemnity.

Mr. Speaker, while we recognize the unique role of agricultural societies in this province, we also want to ensure that the legislation

is aligned with the best practices outlined within the Societies Act. This includes provisions that apply to maintaining a members' register, having a registered office, liability protection for society directors, and the process for major decisions such as amalgamations and dissolutions.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments have been carefully considered. My department has been working closely with the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies and held consultation meetings across the province. All agricultural societies were invited to attend and to provide input. Approximately 200 people representing 97 agricultural societies took part in the consultations.

As a result of these changes, the majority of provincial agricultural societies will have to update their bylaws. However, the societies will have three years to comply. The department will work closely with the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies to provide ongoing support to agricultural societies to facilitate the changes.

I am confident that these changes will effectively meet the needs of our agricultural societies and support their outstanding efforts and service to their communities. I urge members of the Assembly to support this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 15 Securities Amendment Act, 2015

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill 15, the Securities Amendment Act, 2015.

In 2004 Alberta made a commitment to ongoing reform under the provincial-territorial memorandum of understanding regarding securities regulation. Ongoing review of regular amendments to the Alberta Securities Act is required to keep pace with industry developments and to support the ongoing reform of the Canadian regulatory system. The Securities Act was last amended during the 2014 fall session and, for the most part, is amended at least once a year.

As I mentioned at first reading, the proposed amendments relate to four topic areas: enforcement-related amendments, point of sale related amendments, amendments that support the continued harmonization of derivatives regulation, and housekeeping amendments of a technical nature.

I'd like to take a few minutes to provide some detail of the amendments. I'll start with the enforcement related amendments. Mr. Speaker, effective enforcement and compliance are essential to advance investor protection and foster a fair and efficient capital market. Our proposed enforcement related amendment is designed to improve the Alberta Securities Commission's enforcement capacity by clarifying its investigators' statutory authority to electronically record statements or evidence during an investigation.

Other proposed amendments will permit the extension of an ex parte court order appointing a receiver, a receiver and manager, trustee, or liquidator; prohibit the directors of an insurer under an investigation from exercising any of their powers that have been granted by the court to the receiver, receiver and manager, trustee, or liquidator to avoid conflicting exercises of authority; permit the court to revoke or vary an order upon application; and allow for ex

parte applications to be made in the absence of the public. Ex parte is, of course, the legal proceeding brought by one party whereby the other party might not be present or represented. Similar provisions exist in other jurisdictions like B.C. and Ontario, permitting ex parte orders to be issued.

Moving on, the point of sale related amendments relate to the third and final phase of the point of sale project to facilitate the development of a summary disclosure document specifically for exchange-traded funds, also known as ETFs. An ETF is a security that tracks a commodity, index, or basket of assets. It trades like a security on an exchange, and like a security, its price can change throughout the day as it's traded. The summary disclosure document will be similar to the fund facts. Summary documents are currently in place for mutual funds and segregated funds which provide investors with the key information about a fund in a concise and easy to understand format.

Mr. Speaker, work continues on the continued harmonization of securities regulations across the country. The proposed amendments relating to the harmonization, including the prohibition on the front-running in section 93.3, will be expanded to apply to derivatives. An example of front-running is when a broker buys up a stock based on information that has not yet been shared with his or her clients.

The Securities Amendment Act, 2015, also proposes an amendment to expand the definition of associate to include persons cohabitating in a conjugal relationship who share material for the purpose of insider trading or tipping and are not otherwise captured under the Alberta definition of the adult interdependent partner. This amendment would capture persons in a conjugal relationship of less than three years or those who have not had a child together.

Other technical and housekeeping amendments to the Alberta Securities Act are intended to clarify or update existing provisions. They are changing "and" to "or" at the end of subclause (ii) and the definition of officer in section 1(II), harmonizing the wording of beneficial ownership in section 5, and striking the phrase "pursuant to subsection (2)" in section 33(3).

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments will ensure that Alberta honours its commitment under the 2004 memorandum of understanding to ongoing reform in international commitments as well as the ongoing harmonization of security laws and regulations across Canada. As you know, the co-operative capital markets regulator proposed by Ottawa is not yet operational, and there's been some slippage in implementation timelines. Meanwhile there are several jurisdictions that have not joined the regulator, so it is important that all provinces and territories continue to work to harmonize legislation to strengthen the existing Canadian securities regulatory system.

I ask for your support for these amendments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I adjourn debate on Bill 15.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 16 Statutes Amendment Act, 2015

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise today and speak on behalf of Bill 16, Statutes Amendment Act, 2015, on second reading.

This bill amends the following pieces of legislation: the Provincial Court Act, the Court of Queen's Bench Act, the Police Act, the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act, the Land Titles Act, and the Post-secondary Learning Act.

An Hon. Member: That's a lot. Wow.

Mr. Donovan: There is a lot there. These are the updates that will ensure provincial legislation is clear, concise, and effective.

Now, to provide some details on proposed changes, the most significant ones are to the Provincial Court Act and the Court of Queen's Bench Act. Starting with the Provincial Court Act, there are three amendments that will provide civil procedures and other processes for the Provincial Court to clarify the jurisdiction. The goal of the changes is to make Alberta's civil justice system more effective, efficient, and accessible for all Albertans. So we might not need all the lawyers that are in this room.

The first amendment will increase the maximum monetary judicial award from the prescribed cabinet for civil matters from the Provincial Court from \$50,000 to \$100,000. It must be noted, however, that the current maximum limit in the court's civil matters will remain at \$50,000, which was set in 2014. The proposed amendments give the government the option to raise the limit to \$100,000 at a later date, if required, without having to amend the legislation.

The second amendment will update the civil matters section in the Provincial Court Act by repealing provisions governing civil procedures. These provisions will instead consolidate into a single regulation under the act to govern the procedure for civil matters in Provincial Court.

The third amendment provides a procedural foundation for the court to stream down dispute claims into what's going to be referred to as resolution tracks. The aim to make the civil claims process more effective and efficient is to anticipate that the resolution tracks will be part of the pilot project in both Calgary and Edmonton later this year. In this project court officials will direct civil disputes to the appropriate resolution track so that court services are available to matters that are needed by them, while more straightforward civil matters can be resolved quickly and effectively. This will simplify the process, providing alternatives for dispute resolutions and resolving less complex civil claims. Finally, the alternative track in the courtroom not only will ease pressures on the courts; it will also mean more accessibility to the justice system for self-represented litigants.

4:20

I'll now move on to the amendments to the Court of Queen's Bench Act. These changes will create a second Associate Chief Justice position and give the Chief Justice the power to issue directives limiting the jurisdiction of masters. Over the past two decades the Court of Queen's Bench has not increased in size to match Alberta's rapidly growing population. The complement of the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta currently has one Chief Justice and one Associate Chief Justice with 65 Crowns, referred to as regular justice positions, for a total of 67 justice positions.

Calgary and Edmonton are the fourth- and fifth-largest centres in terms of population in Canada, respectively. This presents a unique governance challenge for the court to determine the dedicated Associate Chief Justice needed for each major city to oversee the operational needs such as judicial scheduling. With the proposed increase, the court would have one Associate Chief Justice in Edmonton and one in Calgary, giving the Chief Justice the capacity to provide more strategic direction to the court as a whole. Adding the new Associate Chief Justice would help the Court of Queen's Bench deal with increasing case volumes and give the strategic leadership the needed effectiveness to serve Albertans.

It must be noted that an increase to the court complement requires the provincial government to create a new judicial position and the federal government to make the appointment. It is the province's

responsibility to create the new Associate Chief Justice position now so the government of Alberta and the Court of Queen's Bench can work with the government of Canada to see that it is filled.

The second amendment to the Court of Queen's Bench Act gives the Chief Justice the powers to issue directives on the jurisdiction of masters. Masters and judicial officers appointed in the province sit on the Court of Queen's Bench. Currently they primarily hear interim applications in civil matters and applications involving bankruptcies. They also hear certain applications under the Maintenance Enforcement Act. There are some exceptions. Masters have the same jurisdiction as a judge sitting in the chambers. This means that they can expand the types of applications they hear during the interim applications in family matters. In future, in order to increase accessibility to justice, it is anticipated that the masters will be asked to hear interim applications on family matters. As the master's role is expanded, it will be useful to have clear but flexible mechanisms to control the types of applications the litigants can bring forward before a master. This amendment requires the Chief Justice to provide such a mechanism.

Next, under the Statutes Amendment Act changes will be made to the Police Act. This is necessary because a potential inconsistency between the Police Act and the police service regulations has been identified. In 2011 a change was made to the definition of one who can be designated as a presiding officer governing the discipline or performance of a police officer under the regulation. The change was inadvertently missed in the Police Act. Section 13(1) of the regulation identifies that

any of the following persons may serve as the presiding officer at a hearing:

- (a) ... [a] former police officer;
- (b) a former member of the judiciary, including judges of the Court of Queen's Bench and the Provincial Court.

Chief of police or current chief of police. In contrast, section 45(3) of the act specifies that "the chief [of police], or a police officer designated by the chief [of police] shall conduct a hearing." All chiefs of police have been advised to immediately cease using the presiding officers who do not currently serve as police members until the change can be made under the expanded definition of presiding officers under the act. The proposed amendment will be addressing the potential inconsistencies.

In addition, there's another small amendment to section 52 to align the legislation with current practices. It is suggested that section 52 be amended to require that the police service and police commission notify the director of law enforcement about the police complaints and how the complaint was disposed of. This change will ensure that legislation is consistent with the current practices of provincial regulations and that the act is consistent.

Next, the amendment to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act. The foundation was established in 1994 to develop an active partnership between sports, recreation, active living, parks, and wildlife programs. However, in 2013, with a directive of the then minister of tourism, parks, and recreation, the focus was mandated on delivering sports programs and services. Since that time the foundation has been operating as the Alberta sport connection. The amendment to the act officially changes the name to the Alberta sport connection. This also includes provisions for the transfer of land previously owned by the foundation. It has not been actively engaged in managing the lands donated and purchased by them since 2013. This change will ensure the Alberta sport connection can officially continue to focus on making Alberta the best place in Canada for sports and sports development.

The transfer of lands is expected to be done over the next 10 years and will only be done under the provision that the new owners honour the original conditions that were set out on the lands.

Culture and Tourism is working with the Treasury Board and the Justice and Solicitor General's office to develop a transfer plan for the lands, and it will involve input from the original donors as well as stakeholders in the near future. In the meantime the lands will continue to be managed by Culture and Tourism.

Next are the Land Titles Act amendments. The Alberta land titles system and its supporting software have served Albertans well for the past 30 years. However, a significant upgrade is currently under way. Once completed, this upgraded operating system will position our land titles office to deliver efficient and effective services for years to come. The key upgrade to this system will be the ability for the subscribers to submit documents to the land titles registry electronically with a unique digital signature. The amendments to this act are required to enable the use of these digital signatures. Specifically, amendments will allow the most frequent land title users, such as lawyers and land surveyors, to become subscribers.

Subscribers will have the ability to affix their digital signatures onto documents they submit to the registries for the land titles office. These types of forms will be accepted, and procedural guidelines for digital signatures will be developed by the registrar of land titles. Paper registrations will still continue to ensure access for those that are nonsubscribers. The registrar will be authorized to recognize a certified authorization for those who will be working in partnership with the land titles office, to maintain the master list of eligible subscribers, and to monitor the compliance with guidelines to ensure that proper practices on the part of subscribers is taking place.

This structure will ensure that unique digital signatures are more secure than traditional pen and paper signatures. The appropriate offence provisions are included to deter the misuse of digital signatures. Where individuals affix an electronic signature in contravention of the act or they incorporate the digital signature of another person, they may be fined up to \$10,000 or imprisoned for six months.

In addition to the authorization of digital signatures, the amendments will provide title insurance for companies from making claims against the land titles assurance fund. The assurance fund is intended to compensate the individuals so that true loss will not be done. Land titles insurance companies collect premiums from policyholders, recover the potential claim loss, and they should not compensate the Alberta assurance fund.

Mr. Speaker, Service Alberta has worked extensively with the Law Society of Alberta, the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association, and the Real Estate Council of Alberta to ensure a system that is needed for their professionals and their real estate transactions.

Lastly, a necessary amendment to the Post-secondary Learning Act is being made. It concerns the legal status of the boards of governors for both Medicine Hat College and SAIT. The college was established by an order in council in 1970, and the SAIT board was established by the same in 1982.

On that, I will adjourn debate on second reading of Bill 16. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I realize that I've got that parade on today at 4:30. I would move that the House stand adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.

The Speaker: Thank you. I was hesitant to recognize you because we've hit 4:30, and pursuant to section 4(2) of the standing orders we have to adjourn until Monday, but thank you for making the motion right at the appropriate hour.

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

Bill Status Report for the 28th Legislature - 3rd Session (2014-2015)

Activity to March 12, 2015

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 Respecting Property Rights Act (Prentice)

First Reading -- 6 (Nov. 17, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 30-31 (Nov. 18, 2014 aft.), 142-46 (Nov. 24, 2014 eve, passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 169-73 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 206-11 (Nov. 26, 2014 aft.), 277-79 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c15]

2* Alberta Accountability Act (Denis)

First Reading -- 404-05 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 456-67 (Dec. 9, 2014 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 500-14 (Dec. 10, 2014 aft.), 515-16 (Dec. 10, 2014 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading -- 516-20 (Dec. 10, 2014 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014, with exceptions; SA 2014 c9]

3 Personal Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014 (Quadri)

First Reading -- 22 (Nov. 18, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 89 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft.), 165 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 173 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 259-75 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c14]

4 Horse Racing Alberta Amendment Act, 2014 (Campbell)

First Reading -- 22 (Nov. 18, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 89 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft.), 165-67 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 174-75 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft.), 177-79 (Nov. 25, 2014 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 279-81 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2014 c12]

5 Securities Amendment Act, 2014 (Campbell)

First Reading -- 22 (Nov. 18, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 89-90 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft.), 167-68 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 173 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 281-83 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014, with exceptions; SA 2014 c17]

6 Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2) (Olson)

First Reading -- 22-23 (Nov. 18, 2014 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 90-92 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft.), 175 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 193-206 (Nov. 26, 2014 aft.), 283 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 321 (Dec. 2, 2014 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014, with exceptions; SA 2014 c18]

- 7 Chartered Professional Accountants Act (McIver)**
First Reading -- 159 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 275-76 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve.), 319 (Dec. 2, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 425 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 480 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2014 cC-10.2]
- 8* Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 (Kennedy-Glans)**
First Reading -- 159 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 276-77 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve.), 319-21 (Dec. 2, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 425-28 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 480 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c13]
- 9* Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2014 (Olesen)**
First Reading -- 237 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 336-38 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft.), 428-33 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 470-75 (Dec. 9, 2014 aft.), 477-80 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 495-500 (Dec. 10, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2014 c10]
- 10* An Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children (Jansen)**
First Reading -- 238 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 300-18 (Dec. 2, 2014 aft., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 338-55 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft.), 357-66 (Dec. 3, 2014 eve.), 367-74 (Dec. 3, 2014 eve., passed with amendments), 538-548 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft., recommitted, passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 536-38 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft, recommitted to Committee), 548 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft., passed)
- 11 Savings Management Repeal Act (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 334 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 433-41 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 468-70 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 494-95 (Dec. 10, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c16]
- 12 Common Business Number Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 562-3 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 13 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015 (Leskiw)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 14 Agricultural Societies Amendment Act, 2015 (Olson)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619-20 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 15 Securities Amendment Act, 2015 (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 620-21 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 16 Statutes Amendment Act, 2015 (Donovan)**
First Reading -- 563-4 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 621-22 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 17 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015 (\$) (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 597 (Mar. 11, 2015 eve., passed)
Second Reading -- 612-19 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., passed)

- 201*** **Electric Utilities (Transparency in Billing) Amendment Act, 2014 (Anglin)**
First Reading -- 86 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 125-28 (Nov. 24, 2014 aft.), 238-52 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 406-08 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 408 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c11]
- 202** **Safe and Inclusive Schools Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 (Blakeman)**
First Reading -- 86 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft., passed), (Dec. 3, 2014 aft., withdrawn)
- 203** **Safety Codes (Sustainable Structures) Amendment Act, 2014 (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 192 (Nov. 26, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 409-18 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed)
- 204** **Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving Demerit) Amendment Act, 2014 (Amery)**
First Reading -- 388 (Dec. 4, 2014 aft., passed)

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