



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, March 17, 2015

Issue 21a

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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Party standings:

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. May we find the resolve required to put aside some of the differences that divide us so that progress may be made for those whom we serve. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. Brent Rathgeber. Mr. Rathgeber served as an MLA in this fine Assembly for Edmonton-Calder from 2001 to 2004 and since 2008 has sat as Member of Parliament for Edmonton-St. Albert, which happens to be my federal riding. In September 2014 Brent published a book, *Irresponsible Government: The Decline of Parliamentary Democracy in Canada*. He will be more than happy to sell one to anybody who wants to purchase for the price of \$19.99. Mr. Rathgeber and I correspond on a regular basis as we deal very often with common constituents and immigration matters. I would like to ask Mr. Rathgeber to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Let us begin with school groups. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise today to introduce to you and through you 79 students from Michael Strembitsky school from my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie. Joining them today are teachers Ms Natasha Lalani, Ms Palinka, Ms Pennington, Mr. Lucas McCaw, Mrs. Tanya Boyko, and also joining them are five parents: Mrs. Melissa Syrenne, Mrs. Joyce Hebert, Mrs. Sandra Anderson, Mrs. Mandie Taylor, and Jamie Sveinson. This school represents students from 25 different ethnicities and quite a diverse group of students who are here today. I ask my guests – they are seated in both galleries – to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other school or education groups?

Seeing none, let us move on to the introduction of other important guests that we have. Let's start with the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, followed by the Premier.

Mr. Hale: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my family, who are here with me today. They are seated in your gallery. We have my wife, Maggie, who has put up with me for over 21 years – God bless her soul – and our sons Levi and Blu, future Alberta agricultural producers, who, I must say, have given me more than a few grey hairs. I would ask that the hon. members please give them the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Prentice: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you the members of the Métis women's security council who are in the gallery. This council was established in December of 2013 to provide the Alberta government with advice and direction on breaking down the barriers that face Métis women in our province. We have with us a group of amazing women: the chair, Michelle Fournie; Audrey Poitras; Brenda Holder; Hope Henderson; Karen Mackenzie; Lisa Higgerty; Loretta Calliou; Manitok Thompson – if you could all stand – also Marie Delorme; Rachel Venne; Sandra Sutter; and Sherry Cunningham. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask my guests to rise and receive the warmest welcome from this Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont, followed by the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a group of my constituents who represent the Leduc County Coalition, or LCC. They have come today to witness me tabling a summary of some 7,000 letters of concern opposing Edmonton's proposed annexation of some 38,000 acres of Leduc county. I would ask them to rise as I read their names: LCC board members Clarence Shields, Ed Moussa, Lynette Schurko, and Doug Wright; Leduc county manager, Mr. Brian Bowles; Mayor John Whaley; county councillors Clay Stumph and Tanni Doblanko; and county residents Mr. Schurko, Nicky Smith, Dave and Barbara Wedman, Dellia Tardif, Judi Trelenberg, and Jim Niederhaus. I would ask that the members of the Assembly give my guests the warm traditional welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, followed by the Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and introduce to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly Mrs. Sharon Smith. Sharon is a Wildrose candidate for Leduc-Beaumont and has been living in Alberta for over 20 years. I have never met anyone as passionate about speaking on behalf of her community. As a Leduc resident she's here to join other concerned Albertans about the recent annexation proposal for Leduc and its impact on her constituency. She has a beautiful family and, on a personal level, is someone I call a friend. I'll ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism, followed by Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you and to the members of this Assembly Kim Bugera and her children Keira and Jackson Laansoo. I see that Keira and Jackson are wearing green today. Kim is a very successful business owner in Morinville, and she is living up the hill from the MLA from St. Albert. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and please receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, followed by the Minister of Seniors.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce to you and through to all members of this Assembly two guests from my constituency who are seated in the public gallery. As we all know, postsecondary education is a cornerstone of our society as Albertans. Olds College is a postsecondary institution in

my constituency that sets a high standard for all educators. Olds College provides vital courses and education to students from all over our province, our nation, and, in fact, the entire world. It is a versatile institution, and it has become a hub of activity and a pride of the town of Olds. It's my great pleasure to introduce them. I'd ask them to stand as I call their names: Tammy Forbes, associate vice-president of external relations, and Jordan Cleland, vice-president of advancement. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mr. J. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you John Hart, the president of the First Special Service Force Association and the son of Geoffrey Hart, a First Special Service Force member, who has since passed away. Mr. Hart has driven up from Medicine Hat to join us today to recognize the important contribution of the men of the First Special Service Force, an elite Canadian-American commando unit established in 1942, also known as the Devil's Brigade. Last month 42 surviving members were honoured in Washington with the congressional gold medal, and today the city of Edmonton honoured the Devil's Brigade and the bravery borne by this elite group of soldiers. Accompanying Mr. Hart is Bree Claude, executive director of policy, planning, and legislative services branch with Alberta Seniors. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Whitecourt-St. Anne.

1:40

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour, my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two constituents from Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Seated in the members' gallery today we have Matthew Boonstra and his grandfather, Dick Baker, who live in Fort Saskatchewan. Matthew has been involved in many activities in fundraising throughout the community. It is his goal to enter the military and at some point to add political science to that career path. I would ask them to please rise and accept the warm welcome from the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great opportunity to introduce to you and through you my mayor from the town of Whitecourt, Maryann Chichak. Maryann, please stand up. She's a great, dedicated mayor, who is caring and loving and one of my best supporters in Whitecourt-St. Anne. Thank you for being here.

The Speaker: Thank you. Are there others?
The hon. leader of the Liberal opposition.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the House a friend, Ronald Brochu, who is married with two adult children, four grandchildren, and one on the way. He's also worked 40 years as an auditor in private practice with the Canada Revenue Agency and the Alberta government. He's been a senior tax auditor across the province. Mr. Brochu will be a candidate for the Alberta Liberal opposition in Edmonton-Gold Bar. Please stand, and we'll give you the warm welcome of the Legislature.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Two minutes each for these members' statements. I show Calgary-West, and then I'm not sure who is next, so if somebody would alert me to that, I'd be happy to recognize him or her.

Let's start with your statement, Calgary-West.

Devil's Brigade

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Officially they are the First Special Service Force, an elite Canadian-American commando unit under the U.S. Fifth Army, established in 1942 and trained near Helena, Montana, but in legend and fearsome deed they are the Devil's Brigade. The precursor to what we think of as Special Forces, these men fought in the Aleutian Islands, Italy, and France during the Second World War, taking on the toughest assignments and some say never losing a battle.

Last month 42 surviving members of the Devil's Brigade were honoured in Washington, DC, with the congressional gold medal, the highest civilian honour the United States Congress bestows. At the ceremony that day were Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, our Premier, and two Albertans who served in the Devil's Brigade, Maurice White of Edmonton and Leonard Corbett of Calgary. The Devil's Brigade comrades and fellow Albertans Bernard Cooper of Calgary, Henry Planger of Pincher Creek, and Lloyd Lewis of Canmore were unable to attend the ceremony.

Today the city of Edmonton honoured the Devil's Brigade. I'm proud to rise on behalf of the government of Alberta and honour the service of Mr. White, Mr. Corbett, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Planger, Mr. Lewis, and all the surviving members of the Devil's Brigade. Congratulations for this richly deserved honour bestowed upon you by our friends south of the border.

Sadly, the generation that fought the Second World War is leaving this life. It is almost 70 years since the end of the war, and it is a year this month since the end of Canada's military mission to Afghanistan. Just this past weekend family and friends and military personnel mourned the passing of Sgt. Andrew Doiron, who lost his life in Iraq. All of us who live in freedom in this great province in this great country owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who serve in our armed forces. Thank you to the men and women who serve this province, who serve this country, and to their families for their dedication and tremendous service.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, followed by Lethbridge-West.

Eliminating Violence against Women

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the years we've all stood in this House at different times to applaud impassioned and sincere speeches to mark International Women's Day or stand united in our calls to end violence against women. While it is incumbent on all of us to be vocal in our condemnation of domestic violence and violence in all forms against women, it must go with action. Despite our best hopes and increased awareness, there's no denying that this generation of women – call them Martha and Henry's daughters; call them the new Alberta or the Charter generation – have grown up with violence. A sickening survey from 2012 revealed that 1 in 10 Alberta men said that it was okay to hit a woman if she makes him angry.

Mr. Speaker, violence is never okay. We all must ensure that no woman and no child is forced to remain in a home where someone

thinks it's okay. Yet in 2013 17,000 women in Alberta were turned away from women's shelters in this province, 17,000 women that went out in search of help and were turned away from a safe space. This is due to inadequate transition housing for women ready to leave the emergency shelter, and it is due to inadequate income under Alberta Works to be able to afford an alternate accommodation. This blocks access to thousands that then seek emergency aid in the women's shelters and forces them back into danger.

Alberta is less than two weeks away from a budget that this Premier has said would be defining for the next 10 years. Well, the Premier may be right. If in the next 10 years we see thousands more women and children turned away from shelters or denied the help they need, then this Premier will have defined his legacy indeed.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West, followed by Highwood.

Unlimited Dance Collaboration in Lethbridge

Mr. Weadick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak to this House about some exceptional people who have made myself and Lethbridge exceptionally proud. On March 17 through 21 the University of Lethbridge will play host to a uniquely Albertan show that seeks to break down the barriers for people with disabilities while it entertains the audience. *Unlimited* is a collaboration between the U of L drama professor Lisa Doolittle and Pamela Boyd, founding artistic director for MoMo Mixed Ability Dance Theatre in Calgary, along with local organizations supporting people living with disabilities. Mike Sawchuk from the U of L was in my office last month explaining that the cast is made up of student performers from the U of L's dance and theatre for all abilities class, which itself has six students with developmental disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this show is an innovative endeavour that will allow people with disabilities to represent themselves on the stage, which is just as important as including them in the workplace, in relationships, and in the community in general. *Unlimited* is the third phase of a project initially begun as a series of theatre/dance workshops for people with disabilities, exploring the challenges of meaningful employment in partnership with the Lethbridge Association for Community Living.

The show has grown out of the U of L's unique innovation to proactively include a group of people with disabilities in a for-credit university drama course along with nondisabled students. Professor Doolittle is also investigating the effects of inclusive practices on the postsecondary level of education. Lethbridge is well known as a community that promotes practices which include people with disabilities, and I believe this is yet another example of that attitude.

Mr. Speaker, this government is also firmly committed to the belief that all Albertans are equal regardless of their level of ability, and I believe that *Unlimited* is a perfect example of that philosophy in action. It is an opportunity for inclusion that deserves recognition, respect, and admiration. I hope that anyone who has the opportunity to attend a performance of *Unlimited* does so, and I would ask that my fellow members join me in congratulating the University of Lethbridge for this unique and important accomplishment.

Thank you.

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

Okotoks Water Supply

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The town of Okotoks has achieved one of the lowest per capita water consumption rates in North America and continues to reduce water consumption even while increasing population. In fact, they've seen a 41 per cent reduction in water use while the population increased by 45 per cent. Despite these efforts Okotoks has now reached its capacity in drawing water from the Sheep River.

The residents of Okotoks have done everything they can to conserve. They came together and embraced water conservation controls such as having restrictions on watering their lawns so that odd-numbered addresses water on Thursdays and Sundays at designated times while even-numbered homes water on Wednesdays and Saturdays. They also have a popular water conservation rebate program, which reimburses residents as well as institutional, commercial, and industrial utility consumers for purchasing water-efficient appliances. Their efforts have won them a 2015 FCM sustainable communities award.

Okotoks residents have done their part, but they now need the province to meet them halfway. In February the town formally applied for water pipeline funding under the water for life program. It is crucial for the town to secure a new water source, and their proposed option is to build a water pipeline from Calgary. The proposal is supported by the Calgary Regional Partnership, who recently wrote a letter of support on their behalf, and the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce. What benefits Okotoks benefits Alberta. Without this pipeline the town's potential and their ability to build new residential communities and attract new businesses will be severely constrained.

I made it my goal to ensure that Okotoks is successful in obtaining a provincial commitment to help build this water pipeline. I think by now the Transportation minister has come to expect me to raise the issue with him every time I see him, and that will continue, Minister. Securing funding from the water for life program to build this pipeline is an essential part of the strategy to grow our community in a healthy and vigorous manner.

I would also like to thank the town of Okotoks for working collaboratively with their regional partners to find a solution that might eventually be expanded to help others in the region, and I hope to see it become a reality soon.

The Speaker: Thank you.

1:50

British Home Children

Dr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, between 1869 and 1940 orphaned and abandoned children arrived in the British Commonwealth countries, including Canada, from Great Britain. They came to be known as the British home children. These children rarely had a choice and were often forcibly taken from orphanage societies or poor families, some with and some without the consent of their parents. All were uprooted from any close family or relatives, and many were separated from their siblings, who were often the only family they knew. About 100,000 boys and girls aged six to 18 were shipped across the sea to Canada.

Some of the children were fortunate to be welcomed into loving homes. Others were not so lucky and were often used as cheap agricultural or other manual labour. Many were denied proper shelter or educational opportunities. They often worked in brutal conditions that can only be described as bondage. Many home children ran away from their guardians, searching for a better life. Some of the children overcame the trauma and adversity of their uprooted childhood and ill-treatment and went on to lead productive

and fruitful lives. However, all of them bore the scars of being deported from their home and family.

Two thousand ten was proclaimed as the Year of the British Home Child by the Parliament of Canada, and a commemorative stamp was released to honour these children who had been sent to Canada. Other nations, including Australia and the United Kingdom, have apologized for this shameful episode in history. Nova Scotia and Ontario have proclaimed September 28 as British Home Child Day. Mr. Speaker, I urge the government of Alberta to recognize the lives of these British home children, as other provinces have, and to declare September 28 British Home Child Day.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Hon. members, for those of you who've sent me notes about the timings, please know that the clock actually froze a day or two ago. It has since been fixed, and we're monitoring it today to make sure that it doesn't freeze again, we hope. So thank you for your notes, but please stand advised of that.

Let us begin with the hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Your first main set of questions.

Government Spending

Mrs. Forsyth: Last week when I asked the Premier why he's set on raising taxes, he begged the oppositions for some alternative ideas. It's no wonder why: Michener, licence plates, ending sole-sourced contracts, divorce by nursing home. All opposition ideas. But here is another. Your government just voted to spend another \$10 million on the Kananaskis golf course. So why don't you go ahead, take the Wildrose idea, and roll back the ridiculous spending on the golf course instead of raising taxes on hard-working Albertans?

Mr. Prentice: Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of Wildrose ideas, the latest is that they should block the Keystone pipeline, which has emerged as a policy of the Wildrose Party. I wonder if the hon. member would really like to speak to that and reassure all Albertans that they've not moved to the left of the NDP in terms of their economic position.

Mr. Saskiw: Point of order.

The Speaker: Hon. Opposition House Leader, your point of order has been noted during that response.

Let us move on to the first supplemental.

Mrs. Forsyth: Mr. Speaker, I'll be pleased to speak to that. The only people left are you guys.

Premier, Albertans need hospitals. They need schools. Albertans don't need their government spending millions on privately run golf courses, accessible to only the wealthiest of Albertans. Now, today we hear that the Premier is actually increasing the pension top-ups of the highest paid government executives. Those making \$140,000 or more will see the taxpayer-funded portion of their pensions increase by 22 per cent. So here's another idea for you, Premier. Why don't you just go ahead and roll back that pension top-up instead of raising taxes on hard-working Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. Prentice: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. But another idea of the hon. member's party that we certainly won't accept is her party's suggestion that not only do we block the Keystone pipeline but we immediately start a royalty review. Perhaps the hon. member

could reassure Albertans that this is not their case to destroy jobs and investments in our province.

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

The Speaker: Opposition House Leader, your point of order has been noted at 2:04.

Let's move on with the final supplemental.

Mrs. Forsyth: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's funny how he picks up something that's going on in the leadership review, and he refuses to answer the questions that are important.

This pension top-up for the highest paid management in the government will cost taxpayers millions. The Premier says that we're all in this together, but his actions don't follow his words. Last year the government ignored a management wage freeze and instead quietly gave them all a raise costing taxpayers at least \$50 million. So, Premier, if you won't cancel the pension top-up for upper management, will you at least take the Wildrose idea and roll back the \$50 million pay raises instead of raising taxes on hard-working Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Campbell: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the Wildrose has got it wrong. There is no pension top-up for senior officials. I can say to you that pension benefits of government employees are not increasing with this change at all.

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

Mrs. Forsyth: Well, I'll send him the information.

Public Body Executive Severance Payments

Mrs. Forsyth: Last fall's Accountability Act failed to address the massive severance payouts rampant throughout the agencies, boards, and commissions of your government, Premier, severances that have cost taxpayers millions. Under your new management, Premier, these payouts continue. Last year the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission paid out \$382,000 in severance to their VP of strategy, transformation, and ethics. That's three times the annual base salary. Premier, are these the kinds of severance payout payments that Albertans should expect from your new government?

Mr. Campbell: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said: we are under new management. We brought in the Accountability Act, that says that we will not pay out any more than six months maximum, and that's going on right now.

Mrs. Forsyth: Let's try this one. That same year the AGLC forked out another \$370,000 in severance for another high-paid executive. The VP of lottery and gaming services went home with a total of \$567,000 last year. That's a taxpayer-funded position, and under the Premier's watch nothing has been done to rein in these kinds of payouts. Under the new management of this Premier is it acceptable for the AGLC to be handing out \$700,000 in severance for just two people?

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, as I said, under this Premier's watch he's made it very clear that we are under new management, and we passed the Accountability Act last fall saying that we will not pay more than six months' severance to senior employees, and we're living to that vision. Thank you.

Mrs. Forsyth: The AGLC is exempt from the sunshine list, and it's exempt from the Premier's Accountability Act. There are hundreds of so-called arm's-length organizations, and they account for the vast majority of government spending, yet basic accountability like salary disclosure and severance caps does not apply to any of them. So much for your new management. When will the Premier get serious about transparency and accountability with Albertans' money and order an end to these massive severance payouts in all areas of government?

Mr. Campbell: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have over 314 boards and agencies and commissions in the province of Alberta, and the Premier has put forward a committee to look at reviewing all of these boards to make sure that they aren't redundant or duplicating services. We will make sure that all boards and commissions and agencies follow the same rules that we set out in the Accountability Act, and under this new management of this Premier we'll make sure that we're accountable to all Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Political Activity of Premier's Staff Member

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's go back to September 6 of last year. The Premier is elected leader of the party. He's taken the stage. "My election as the leader of this party marks the beginning of a commitment to integrity and the acceptance of responsibility." But now we see the Premier shrugging off allegations of bribery and his staff meddling in party affairs. My question is to the Premier: why is his principal secretary interfering in business while being paid by Albertans?

Mr. Prentice: Well, Mr. Speaker, party business and government business are clearly different; that's understood by myself and by everyone in my office, and clearly anyone in my office who's involved in party politics does so as a volunteer and does so on their own time.

Mr. Strankman: Respectfully, Mr. Speaker, the principal secretary is paid a handsome \$190,000 to help the Premier govern the affairs of the province. Let's go back again to the Premier's speech. "Albertans expect excellence and they expect performance from those who are in positions of trust. They will not accept excuses." Again to the Premier: why is his principal secretary, paid by Albertans, interfering in PC Party business?

The Speaker: Hon. member, I think we clarified yesterday that internal party matters . . .

Mr. Saskiw: Point of clarification, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: . . . really have no space or place in the Assembly here. These are rules that I didn't make up. These are rules that you yourselves made, but, hon. Premier or somebody, if you wish to respond and clarify again the position on this and how it might relate to government policy, that would be in order for someone to do.

No one is rising to that, so let us move on to the final supplemental.

2:00

Mr. Strankman: We'll try it again, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, using a government paid sick day to allow you to do partisan activities is unacceptable, no ifs, ands, or buts. These actions directly question the ethics of the government. In that same space the Premier asked Albertans to judge his government on "the actions we have taken, the progress we have made and the integrity we have displayed." To the Premier again: what are Albertans to think if he refuses to

explain these actions by his principal secretary's apparent misuse of government funds?

The Speaker: I didn't cut off the questions, so I am wondering if anyone wishes to answer that, bearing in mind what I read yesterday from House of Commons.

I see no one rising to answer, so let us move on to Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

Women's Shelters

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In 2013 17,000 women and children were turned away from Alberta's women's shelters due to lack of necessary resources to help them. Of the many thousands of women who use or need shelters, 50 per cent are aboriginal. In the face of pending PC budget cuts those numbers are almost certainly going to increase. This is a tragic failure of the PC government to protect society's most vulnerable. To the Premier: how have you allowed this deplorable situation to worsen if this government is supposed to be under new management?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The human costs of family violence are immeasurable, as the hon. member has stated, and the impacts can last a lifetime. We must work together as a community to reduce future incidents of violence. Some of the things that we are doing are funding the emergency shelters, having protection orders that allow families to stay safe in their own homes, screening and counselling, and, of course, assisting families through the court process. Annually the government of Alberta spends about \$70 million on many of these services to help women and families.

The Speaker: First supplemental. The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These 17,000 women and children are fleeing abuse and violence at home. When they're turned away from shelters, they're forced to return to unsafe, unhealthy conditions. This horrible situation is made worse by the fact that income supports are so inadequate that they don't allow women to escape the abuse and afford a place of their own. With the PCs' radical budget less than two weeks away, will this Premier commit to improving, not worsening, access to these services for women and children in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, shelters are only one part of the equation. It's the second-stage housing, the affordable housing, that we're working on. We know that many of the services that we provide include support for dealing with sexual assault, mandated treatment programs, counselling, and collaborative community response programs and services. In 2013 we developed the Alberta framework to end family violence. Under that framework we established the Family Violence Death Review Committee. We're looking forward to hearing the report from that committee.

Dr. Swann: With all due respect, frameworks and meetings don't solve the problem of transitional housing. It's precisely the transitional housing that is grossly underfunded. That means these 17,000 women and their children cannot get into the emergency shelter because the transitional housing isn't there. What are you going to do to improve that? Are you going to continue to tie the safety of our women and children to the price of oil, Mr. Premier?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government funds fully 97 per cent of all women's shelter spaces in the province. Sometimes women are turned away, but they get additional supports through phone, through counsellors that we can set up with them. It's a wraparound service we provide to women who come to an emergency shelter. We will continue to support women and families, I can assure the House.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, you rose on a point of clarification. My apologies for not noting it, but I have noted it now, and it was at approximately 2:01, during the exchange of questions that involved the Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Let us move on to the leader of the ND opposition.

Hospital Infrastructure Priorities

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When reviewing the state of our Edmonton hospitals, the documents read a little bit like the plagues of Egypt: asbestos, mould, insufficient protection for fire and lightning bolts. Yesterday I released documents showing that crowded hospitals mean cancelled surgeries. In today's documents we learn that because of PC neglect, when people actually get in the door, the buildings themselves have also not received the care they need. My question is to the Premier. Why has your PC government failed to maintain our hospitals, leaving us years behind on critical maintenance?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Mandel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We spend over \$70 million a year on maintenance on facilities across this wonderful province. Where there's an emergency, we move forward and fix it right away. Asbestos is sometimes in a building; it's been there for 20 and 30 years. If it's not touched, there's no danger to it. I think that trying to make a big scare out of this is a bit irresponsible.

Ms Notley: Well, what's responsible is asking the questions that are directed towards you.

To the Premier again. Last night your caucus passionately defended a decision to invest 2 million capital dollars in the rebuilding of a luxury golf club that some experts suggest will likely flood again. Meanwhile today's documents show that for the last five years your government has denied roughly the same amount of money for the removal of asbestos from one of Edmonton's largest and busiest hospitals. A luxury golf course, asbestos removal in a hospital: are these the priorities Albertans can expect under your government's new management?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, that's an incredibly unfair comparison. When we move forward and evaluate the needs we have in our various hospitals, we will take care of the needs. That will be the primary concern. We do spend over \$70 million a year, and we'll continue to do that. This government is committed to maintaining the facilities in this province.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly agree with the minister that those comparisons are awfully unfair. They're unfair to the people of Alberta. That's who they're unfair to.

Over the last five years the cost of urgent repairs to Edmonton's hospitals neglected by this PC government has amounted to almost a quarter billion dollars. To the Premier: if this is how well your government stands up for health care in the good times, how can

you expect Alberta families to trust you to protect our hospitals when the cutting starts?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, this government will cut costs, not care. We're committed to making sure all of our facilities are in the best of care. There are a lot of facilities in this province. We do a priority list, and we work as hard as we can to make sure every dollar is invested as best as possible.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Lesser Slave Lake.

Municipal Funding

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This PC government talks a lot of blarney when it comes to fair and equitable distribution of industrial tax revenue between regions and different population densities. For example, Strathcona county gets immense benefit from its proximity to refineries while the city of Edmonton relies heavily on inconsistent MSI funding from the province. The government talks about the importance of regional co-operation but doesn't mandate it. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: why do you continue to defend a system that leaves some regions looking for a lucky clover while others are rolling in a pot of gold?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say Happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone in the House. With an Irish background, I certainly want to say that, and I love the questioning.

Mr. Speaker, this government works very hard with municipalities as our partners to ensure the funding is important for them. MSI funding is a formula funding, \$11.3 billion, a formula that was made with the partnership of the AUMA, the AAMD and C, and the Alberta government. That's how we deliver programs, in partnership with our partners.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, given that there are gross inequities even between regions of lower population densities, where some are lucky to have a railway or pipeline run through them and others are left with nothing but potato fields, why does the minister allow some municipalities to prosper while others struggle through no fault of their own?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. All of the municipalities have a great deal of work that they're doing in their communities, rural municipalities as well, especially resource-based communities, with the roads, the wear and tear and that. What I will say to this hon. member and to members in the House: as we're doing the renewal of the MGA, this is certainly one of the many, 54, topics that we're discussing.

The Speaker: Final supplemental. The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the city of Calgary, which is the largest population centre in the province, is expected to provide a rainbow of services both for its citizens and those from surrounding communities, all with insufficient funding, why hasn't the minister mandated a more equitable share of revenue from the periphery to where it's needed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that if the hon. member would talk to those in rural Alberta with the AAMD and C or those in urban Alberta with the AUMA or talk to the mayors of Edmonton or Calgary, there's never enough money. I think it would be clear that all municipalities would say that. But in saying that, what we have done is made sure that we work with our municipal leaders and partners to find formulas like MSI that they agree on, that they all come together in consensus on, a long-term program, \$11.3 billion, to help them be sustainable. Working with our partners on those funding formulas is important for this government.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

2:10 Aboriginal Construction Career Centres

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today a new, two-year aboriginal construction career centres pilot project was announced with NorQuest and Bow Valley colleges. The program is designed to bring more aboriginal people into construction careers in the province, and I was really pleased to hear about such a program. But we've been talking about the troubling fiscal situation in this province, and we know that we need to do more with less. My question is to the Premier. Given the fact that we are in this fiscal situation, how are we able to afford additional programs such as these?

Mr. Prentice: Mr. Speaker, we've been clear that despite the fiscal challenges that we face as Albertans, we still need to invest in programs that are crucial to Alberta's future. That certainly applies to the aboriginal career construction centres opened at NorQuest College and Bow Valley College today, really important projects that pave the way for aboriginal people to have careers in the construction industry, supported by government, by the colleges, and by the private sector.

Ms Calahasen: Again to the Premier: given that this program takes place at the colleges in Edmonton and Calgary yet we have a large aboriginal population in the corners of our province, are students enrolled in NorQuest and Bow Valley the only individuals eligible for this program?

Mr. Prentice: No, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, any member of the aboriginal community who's looked into having a career in the construction industry is eligible and available and is welcome at the aboriginal construction career centres at Bow Valley College and at NorQuest College. This will be incredibly valuable to aboriginal people to get them jobs in the construction industry.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you. To the Premier again: given that recent media reports have suggested that we are looking at a downturn in the number of jobs in the construction industry, is now really the right time to be funding construction-related job programs like these, given the fact that they may even be just the greatest thing that ever happened?

Mr. Prentice: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are many opinions on the economic circumstances we face, but this government intends to continue to invest in infrastructure in this province to build the infrastructure we need, and we want to see fair and equal opportunities for employment in the construction industry. These programs give aboriginal Albertans a leg up, a chance to get started,

a chance to have a career, support their families in the construction industry. That's why it's so important.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by Edmonton-Manning.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the Premier prefers to answer questions from his own side than from the NDP.

Allegations of Criminal Wrongdoing

Mr. Mason: Apparently, this government believes that when it comes to potentially criminal allegations against a member of cabinet, the PC Party can serve as police, prosecutor, and judge. My questions today are about government policy. To the Premier: is it government policy that decisions about investigation of possible criminal allegations against a member of the government should be determined by the PC Party and not by police?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, the PC Party and the government of Alberta actually have one thing in common here. We do not investigate anyone. Police investigations are done independently by the police and the Crown prosecution service. I trust this member is satisfied with that answer.

Mr. Mason: Hardly so, Mr. Speaker.

Given that in our legal system we have prosecutors whose job it is to prosecute individuals when there is sufficient evidence that a crime may have been committed and given that these prosecutors work for the public and not for a political party, to the Minister of Justice: is it government policy that prosecutors should no longer worry about deciding whether or not to prosecute criminal allegations against government members because this will be taken care of by the member's party instead?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I previously said, it is a well-established principle in common-law jurisdictions that the Crown prosecution service operates independently of any political interference whatsoever. Nothing has changed in that respect, and I'm not aware of any criminal investigation or anything to which the member alludes.

The Speaker: The hon. member. Final supplemental.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, certainly, deciding that some of these matters are to be dealt with as internal party matters may be construed as interfering with the administration of justice.

Given that Alberta has judges who are responsible to decide the guilt or innocence of people accused of criminal acts and given that they also ensure that the accused has a fair trial, to the Minister of Justice: is it government policy that judges will take a back seat when it comes to criminal allegations against government members because a political party will now handle those matters? Will the accused be allowed representation . . .

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, if you wish to try and comment on this.

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, there are three orders of government in this country: the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. The judiciary operates fully independently in any part of this country.

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

School Construction

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Edmonton-Manning is a fast-growing constituency with a large number of young families. These families are of course concerned about schools for the children in their community. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Can you assure my constituents that school capital funding will continue to be a major item in this year's budget?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Campbell: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the hon. member is aware that I can't speak about any specifics ahead of the budget being tabled on March 26, but I can say that it is a major concern for many Albertans. I want to assure this member and others that I'm well aware of the need to continue building infrastructure in this province. Eleven hundred children are born in Alberta every week, and last year 300 people moved here every day. Schools are needed in this province, and we will continue to build them.

Mr. Sandhu: To the Minister of Infrastructure: given the recent announcement that planned starter schools will now move forward as full-build projects, can you please reassure my constituents that McConachie school is still moving forward as a full build?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the member and his constituents that, yes, it is. This school is a kindergarten to grade 9 school. It has an opening capacity of 750 students and can rise to a capacity of 900 students. This is a school that is estimated to have a contract in place by June of this year, with an opening date of sometime late in 2016. The fact remains that within the last week alone six additional schools have now had their contracts awarded . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Sandhu: Again to the same minister: will you make it a point to advocate for more school infrastructure in the capital region, especially since the price of oil is so low?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The capital region is a very vastly growing jurisdiction in our province, obviously. Currently in the phase 2 bundle of schools there are 17 school projects within Edmonton. There are 10 in the construction phase. There are two that are currently out to tender. There are five in the design phase. In addition to that, there are an additional 18 school projects that have been announced in phase 3 of our school build, and we will complete every single one.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Airdrie.

Light Rail Transit Funding

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Alberta's two major cities traffic congestion has reached intolerable levels. The closure of just one major artery in Edmonton has led to traffic chaos for hundreds

of thousands of Edmontonians just trying to get to work. In Calgary traffic congestion has been unacceptable for years. Both cities are crying out for funding for desperately needed light rail transit and other public transit. To the Minister of Finance: your government seems to have found a pot of gold for all sorts of other election goodies, so when can we expect some more much-needed funding for our major cities, including light rail transit?

Mr. Campbell: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd just ask the member to stay tuned for the budget on March 26.

Dr. Swann: Given that investment in critical public transit infrastructure is often tied to funding from other levels of government and given that the province has tied its funding of these projects to the price of a barrel of oil, when will the government take LRT funding off the royalty roller coaster so that Edmontonians don't have to wait decades before LRT can expand into its rapidly growing west end?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Campbell: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has been quite clear that we're going to come out with our budget on March 26. We'll have a 10-year financial plan. Again, we've been very clear that we are going to get off the roller coaster of oil. We're going to depend on less and less of it over the 10-year plan in our operating budget. I suggest the member stay tuned. I think it'll be good news for everybody.

Dr. Swann: Given that hundreds of thousands of Albertans would not be stuck in traffic today if this government had made funding of public transit a priority, as Alberta Liberals have long advocated, why is this government still continuing to download so much of the financial burden of urban transportation onto already-cash-strapped cities?

2:20

Mr. Campbell: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I would disagree with the first part of the member's statement, that people will take public transit. I mean, people use their vehicles in Alberta. We understand that that causes some issues, but we will continue to work with our municipalities. We have the GreenTRIP program in place, and we will continue to do all we can to invest in light transit and do what we can to educate Albertans on the popularity of and the importance of taking public transportation.

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

Urgent Health Care Services in Airdrie

Mr. Anderson: Thanks. Mr. Speaker, in 12 months the city of Airdrie will pass the 60,000 person threshold. It is now the largest population centre in all of western Canada without access to 24-hour urgent health care. This is becoming a dangerous situation for such a large population centre in that almost 60,000 residents, who on a good-weather day are 45 minutes away from the nearest 24-hour facility, in the winter are often completely cut off due to dangerous road conditions. To the Minister of Health: will the government ensure Airdrie is provided with access to 24-hour urgent health care as promptly as possible?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, we thank the member for his passion for his community. You know, we're looking at programs all the time where we can upgrade and improve opportunities for care within communities. As Airdrie is growing so quickly, we're going

to have to take a long, hard look at that community as it is really one of the fastest growing communities in our province. We appreciate the question.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, in co-operation with local health professionals, philanthropists, private developers, concerned citizens, and the city of Airdrie community leaders have submitted a proposal that would build a roughly \$35 million health park with access to 24-hour urgent health care which will cost the province only \$4 million of that \$35 million build. A pretty amazing deal. Minister, will you agree to review the proposal as soon as possible to assess whether it is a fiscally responsible way for the province to address Airdrie's current and future health care needs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mandel: Yeah. Mr. Speaker, I think it's incredibly exciting that a community would come together and be so dynamic and creative to put together a program in which they can partner with the province. We will take a very serious look at that. I think that more and more in our province communities like Beaverlodge and Bassano and others are coming together in order to work with the province and develop their health care system. We really appreciate the member's community, and we want to thank them very much.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the Airdrie health park proposal would also allow the province to move the beds and equipment from the current eight-bed urgent care clinic to the new health park. It would also allow for small overnight shifts of health professionals to staff the new facility 24/7 and would permit the expansion of urgent care as is so desperately needed given our current facility's multihour waits. This would be an amazing improvement for health care in Airdrie. Minister, will you commit to working with our community to ensure Airdrians have access to the urgent health facilities we need 24 hours a day?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, given the proposal that the community wants to put forward and the needs and the growth of the community, we'd be more than willing to sit down with, discuss, and look at options to make sure that Airdrie gets the kind of care they need. It's very exciting, again, to see communities throughout our province wanting to work with the government to find solutions. Rather than always trying to find a way not to do, they're finding a way to do.

Thank you.

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

Disaster Recovery Program Claims

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This PC government promised to close 90 per cent of all eligible DRP files by the end of March of last year. Not surprisingly, that didn't happen. Not even close. The same government made another promise recently to add another \$20 million in a campaign-style announcement with the Premier and the Member for Highwood, but this move raised concerns residents had of the timing. To the Premier: we know your government likes to campaign with public money, but how can you in good conscience play politics with flood recovery?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is not playing politics with flood money or flood recovery. More than 80 per cent of the 10,500 files have been completed, and our

government has provided more than \$100 million to Albertans to help rebuild and remediate their homes. Last year in October we made a commitment to triple the staff for the appeals and made a commitment to have those appeals completed by December. Promise made, promise kept.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Premier. Only six workers, as was just mentioned, were originally assigned to close these files after the devastating floods. This number was raised, as they've just said, to 18 with pressure from the opposition, still less than the number of workers you sometimes see working at a Tim Hortons. Why does your government always have money for MLA offices, severances, planes, cellphone bills, and vacations but can't seem to find the necessary resources to get these files closed and Albertans back on their feet?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to what I just said, we also made a commitment with the hon. Premier and the hon. Member for Highwood to make sure that we added additional staff with the DRP files. We did this so that people in southern Alberta who were devastated by the largest disaster in Canadian history had the opportunity to have a caseworker working directly with them. In addition to that, we removed the eligibility of 50 per cent and increased it, now advancing 90 per cent of eligible expenses to help fast-track payments for complex cases. We have made a commitment to have these most complex ones done . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.
Final supplemental.

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, and thank you to the minister. Again, my question was to the Premier.

Many victims of the 2013 flood continue to remain frustrated by the government's slow and confusing response, delayed now by almost two years after the floods. Premier, we all know the DRP process is complex, but considering more than 20 per cent of eligible files now remain open two years later, do you plan on doing anything differently going forward?

Mrs. McQueen: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is the largest natural disaster in Canadian history, as I said, 10,500 cases. More than 80 per cent of those cases are completed. We are now dealing with the most complicated cases, and we have made a commitment, our Premier and our government, to make sure we're there until every one of those cases is completed. We're working very hard with the communities and with individuals and with caseworkers designed for them so that they can get the services they need, with an increase to 90 per cent of costs for them. This is real action under new management.

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

Okotoks Water Supply

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The town of Okotoks has achieved one of the lowest per capita water consumption rates in North America and continues to reduce water consumption even while increasing in population. Despite this, Okotoks has reached capacity. In two short years the town is expected to have a water deficit. To the Minister of Transportation: when can the residents

and businesses of Okotoks expect to have approval for a new water pipeline, which will allow development in and around the town?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to this hon. member for the question. She has been a great advocate for her constituents on this issue, and her efforts should be commended.

I'm well aware of Okotoks' desire to increase their water capacity for this proposed pipeline, and we've been working closely with the municipality and the Member for Highwood on a solution. As the member knows, I'm not at liberty to discuss details contained in Budget 2015 until it is tabled on March 26. I'll have more details on the water for life program to share at that time.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Given that much if not all of the provincial government share of the funding for this project would likely be coming from the water for life program, how does this program determine which projects are priorities? And given the urgent need where does Okotoks stand on that priority list?

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to ensuring all Albertans have access to clean drinking water. Since 2004 the water for life program has provided more than \$875 million to more than 150 projects, and we know the demand is growing. At this time we know that Okotoks' ability to provide residents with a reliable source of clean drinking water is not in jeopardy, and we'll continue to work with the municipality to address capacity issues as the town grows.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Ms Smith: Thank you. Given that Okotoks is a leader in water conservation and yet has still reached its capacity under its current water licences, what will the government do to ensure that water needs for the town are met while we're waiting for this pipeline to be built?

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, both the water for life and the Alberta municipal water/waste-water partnership programs are vital to this government's ability to ensure Alberta communities have the water infrastructure they need. Projects for both programs are prioritized on the basis of need, with health, environmental protection, and operations-related issues addressed first.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Edmonton Land Annexation Proposal

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today there is going to be a petition presented by the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont with the signatures of nearly 7,000 of his constituents in opposition to the annexation plans of the city of Edmonton, plans that would expand the city and take over some of the best farmland in the world. This government has a history of ignoring Albertans, so what assurances can these 7,000 people have that the government is going to take this issue seriously?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

2:30

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question. For those members from those communities that are in the House today, there is a process in this province with regard to annexation, and it's very clearly laid out in the Municipal Government Act. Both the county of Leduc and the city of Edmonton are going through that process. We value that it's an independent process, and we let them work through that process.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the minister represents the neighbouring riding of Drayton Valley-Devon, which includes a portion of Leduc county. This decision will impact her constituents as well. Will she commit to meeting with the Leduc County Coalition and ensure that their voices are heard?

Mrs. McQueen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I always meet with my constituents, and I value meeting with my constituents on this issue. But also, what I've let all of the parties know is that there's a process with annexation. It's an independent process and a fair process that's laid out for all municipalities to work together on areas where they can find mediation and come together. At the end of the day they can go to the Municipal Government Board, and that is the independent process that we'll go through regardless of where an annexation happens in this province.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Leduc and Leduc county have shown that they have a good working relationship and that they are willing to sit down at the table and have a real discussion on important issues that impact their citizens, what options are available for the Leduc County Coalition to ensure their voices are not muffled by the city of Edmonton?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. It's very important for the people in the municipalities of Leduc county and Leduc city and the areas of Edmonton as well to be able to voice their opinions and their concerns with regard to annexation. That is all part of the mediation process. That's very well defined in the Municipal Government Act. Certainly, it's very much so that Leduc county hears from their ratepayers in this very important process for them. They are doing that. They are here in the House today. They've tabled a petition that the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont has accepted as well. The process is working, and they'll continue through that.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

Tailings Pond Management

Mr. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In October 2013 the dams storing tailings at the Obed mountain mine near Hinton failed. This became a significant concern to all of the residents of Wood Buffalo as a large, dark plume of solid particulates travelled up the Athabasca River. While the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo shut off their intake valve on the water treatment plant as it entered the region, residents still feared for the quality of their drinking water. To the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development: while I know the Obed dam break is still under

investigation by the AER, what is being done by this government in the interim to ensure that the Athabasca or any other waterway will be protected from other potential spills?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Albertans care deeply about the quality and quantity of their water resources. After the Obed incident all coal mine dams were investigated to ensure that they all had structural integrity. We are on an ongoing basis continuing to work with the cumulative effects management association, stakeholders – such as industry, aboriginal groups, and ENGOs – to gather scientific and traditional knowledge about the watershed to ensure that the river and that the watershed is safe for now and future generations.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is to the same minister. What has been learned from this dam break, and how is it being applied to oil sands tailings pond containment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This serves as a reminder of the environmental risk associated with having tailings on our landscape. This is why we take the safety of dams very seriously. Alberta was the first jurisdiction to institute dam safety legislation. This is why we introduced the new tailings management framework last Friday, to make sure that we can reduce the amount of tailings that are on our landscape moving into the future.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Allen: Thank you. Also to the Minister of ESRD. The reclamation of oil sands tailings continues to be a concern. How will the tailings management framework address tailings reduction and ensure that the appropriate cleanup occurs without cost to the taxpayer?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Under the new tailings management framework existing ponds are to be remediated, and we want to make sure that we slow the growth of any new tailings. Limits on new tailings will be in place. As well, there will be requirements for the treatment of existing tailings on the landscape. There will be triggers and limits that are in place under the framework to drive escalating regulatory responses to ensure that there is proper cleanup of tailings.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Menthol-flavoured Tobacco Products

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. A student group in Calgary called BAM is joining the chorus today calling for menthol to be included in the flavoured tobacco ban brought in by Bill 206. This has already been supported by the World Health Organization, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian cancer and lung associations, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Alberta Medical Association, Public Health Association, Alberta Policy Coalition for Cancer Prevention, Action on Smoking and Health, and this very Assembly, just to name a few. Why is the Health minister the only one who doesn't think it's necessary?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, this House passed recently the most comprehensive antismoking bill in the country. It actually passed the bill rather than talked about a bill.

Dr. Swann: Why don't you answer the question, Mr. Minister? Why are you the only one that doesn't?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered the question. We passed a very comprehensive antismoking bill, which deals with a great number of issues with flavoured tobacco and makes sure that our young people are protected.

Dr. Swann: Given that any doctor or health minister, for that matter, worth their salt would know that preventing smoking is the key to preventing lung cancer and other chronic lung disease and that menthol flavouring increases attractiveness and addictiveness of tobacco, especially for youth, why does the minister who says that, quote, children are the priority, end quote, not support the single most important health policy that would protect them from this addiction?

Mr. Mandel: Mr. Speaker, we do agree with the hon. member that smoking is a very, very, very bad thing to do, and we would encourage people not to smoke. We will in the fall look at other alternatives, but that will be in the fall.

Thank you.

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

Affordable Housing in Rural Alberta

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Affordable housing is a serious issue across Alberta, but in ridings like mine in rural Alberta it's becoming a crisis. Housing is becoming less attainable, and layoffs are occurring across many industries due to the low price of oil. This makes affordable housing a very serious issue in rural Alberta. In my riding of Innisfail-Sylvan Lake there are few to no opportunities for affordable and attainable housing. To the Minister of Human Services: given that this economic situation has made things worse for our lower income families, what role will this government play in ensuring that those low-income individuals and families do not end up going homeless in rural Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of the economic climate we want to see that every Alberta family has a good quality of life and access to supports when they need them. Albertans can contact Alberta Supports, with knowledgeable staff to help them to find basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter, of course, or even health benefits and getting child support payments. In addition, we have 53 Alberta Works offices across Alberta for help and training for individuals to enhance their skills or to advance their careers.

Mrs. Towle: To the same minister: given that the government is facing a \$7 billion shortfall this fiscal year, how will the government ensure that attainable and affordable housing remains a priority, and will they review all options and partnerships to build more affordable, attainable housing in rural Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that more than 10,500 people have received housing wraparound supports since

the launch of the housing first program. We're currently working with the Minister of Seniors on a housing strategy, and I think partnerships are absolutely essential. I look at the Alberta rural development network and some of their great ideas. I look forward to working with many partners just like them.

Mrs. Towle: To the Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour: given that rural Alberta has unique challenges to access affordable and attainable housing, what is your ministry doing to promote employment in rural Alberta, specifically to ensure that Albertans are not forced to always rely on the use of government programs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Things we deal with in our ministry are people without jobs and jobs without people. In January with Human Services and the federal government we helped fund the Women Building Futures online program to help train women in the trades so that they can get some of those high-paying jobs and look after themselves. We're also working to educate and train Alberta's workers with the federal government through the Canada-Alberta job grant. More than 490 Alberta employers and 3,450 employees have already benefited, and there's more to come.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by Medicine Hat.

2:40 **Public Service Right to Strike**

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2013 this government passed Bill 45, an unprecedented attack on the rights of workers to strike. Since then the Supreme Court of Canada concluded that the right to strike is a fundamental freedom. Given that the Supreme Court has affirmed that legislation similar to Bill 45 is unconstitutional, will the minister of labour please tell us whether he intends to respect the rights of workers to strike and repeal Bill 45?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, I think it was last week that the Premier talked about that we are going to go ahead and work on essential services legislation. I made it clear that when we do that, we will have respectable two-way dialogues with our workers and the people who represent them. If the topic of Bill 45 comes up, we will listen to what our employees' and their representatives' concerns are, and we will take those seriously.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that the Supreme Court of Canada decision has rendered many of our laws in this province that prohibit striking illegal, including Bill 45, and given that I think that the Supreme Court of Canada's decision was in fact predicated on some of the laws that we have created here in this province in the first place, to the minister of labour: is the government prepared to pay the million dollars a day for every day with unjust and unconstitutional laws that remain on the books here in the province of Alberta?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is talking about a legitimate issue. But, to be clear, the Supreme Court of Canada's decision was predicated on Saskatchewan legislation specifically, not on Alberta legislation. Having said that, the hon. member's concerns are legitimate. Our ministry has begun to and will continue to study that decision, and we'll act accordingly.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed the constitutional right of public-sector workers to strike as a fundamental freedom and given that Alberta's legislation not only prohibits certain public-sector employees from striking but also fines them astronomical amounts for simply threatening to strike, will this minister affirm today that he will not enforce these essentially illegal laws as directed towards public-sector workers?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked if we were going to enforce legislation that hasn't been proclaimed; think about that. I think the answer is quite obvious. We cannot possibly enforce legislation that has not yet been proclaimed.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the bell for question period time has rung, so we will stop here and continue on with members' statements in 30 seconds.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks for your member's statement.

Retrospective by the Member for Strathmore-Brooks

Mr. Hale: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta has been a privilege and an honour. I rise today as a proud representative of the amazing, resilient, and hard-working constituents of Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Speaker, many great things have occurred since I was first given the opportunity to represent the citizens of Strathmore-Brooks, and I am extremely grateful and humbled that my role has contributed in some small way to the betterment of all Albertans. I've been privileged to address a variety of important and diverse issues, including the importance of fiscal accountability and governmental transparency, the importance of the detection of invasive aquatic species, as well as making sure our seniors' voices have been heard in this House.

The bonds forged in my time here have shown me that strength and courage abound in our great province. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day we are all Albertans. We all want to build on the great legacy that has made our province so successful and catapulted our presence on the global stage.

Some important issues in the constituency of Strathmore-Brooks are the status of the Bassano hospital, the Strathmore hospital, along with wildlife management issues and agricultural policies that still need to be addressed. Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to bring to light these issues in whatever capacity I can, as I did as an MLA, a citizen, and most importantly as a proud Albertan.

As Alberta goes through some challenging times, I hope the people of this great province realize that we're all in this together and that we must continue to work together so that we can weather the storm and continue to be proud of our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I will forever remember my days here in the Legislature and all the interesting people I have had the privilege to meet and the many new friendships I have made. I would like to wish everyone the best with this old cowboy saying as you continue to represent the people of Alberta: my friends, may your horse never stumble, your cinch never break, your belly never grumble, and your heart never ache.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the five requisite copies of a summary of 7,000 letters that were presented to me as the MLA for Leduc-Beaumont by the Leduc County Coalition, and they were introduced earlier. The LCC is a group of county business owners, landowners, and residents who are committed to fighting to save our county from the proposed annexation of some 38,000 acres by the city of Edmonton. They believe that this is an unnecessary tax grab and that any boundary adjustments should be through a negotiated process that recognizes the future needs of both communities.

Mr. Anderson: I have two tablings; they're actually petitions, Mr. Speaker. The first is 1,000 signatures – this is in addition to 2,500 that were submitted earlier – with regard to residents in Airdrie asking for a 24-hour urgent health facility in their community.

The second one is 100 letters from parents around Westbrook school who have a very serious problem with regard to speeds in and around their school. I'm hoping that the Transportation minister can look at these letters and decide if it would be warranted to reduce the speed limit around the school to protect those students better.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I had the Member for Calgary-Buffalo next, but I see no presentation there, so let us move on to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Denis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to say that Alberta Justice supports victims first, and as such I'm going to be tabling five copies of the victims' services status report for 2013-14. These programs provided services to more than 71,000 Albertans, 15 per cent under age 18. More than 2,800 volunteer advocates, board members, and special-purpose volunteers contributed 161,047 volunteer hours during this report year.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Fawcett, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, response to Written Question 10, asked for by Ms Blakeman on April 14, 2014:

Which municipalities in Alberta have lands that are classified as flood prone?

On behalf of the hon. Mrs. McQueen, Minister of Municipal Affairs, responses to written questions and motions for returns asked for by Ms Blakeman on April 14, 2014. Response to Written Question 1:

What progress has been made on the formal commitment to develop a big-city charter, announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in a government news release on June 18, 2012?

Response to Written Question 2:

Which 10 municipalities had the highest property tax rates in Alberta for the 2012 and 2013 calendar years?

2:50

Response to Written Question 24:

How many safety codes officers in Alberta have been specifically trained to evaluate homes affected by the June 2013 flood and assess whether they have been flood-proofed to a sufficient

degree to warrant removal of the notice that the government has placed on the titles to those properties?

Response to Written Question 31:

For those property owners who received disaster recovery program compensation in 2013, what is the wording of the notice the government will place on the titles to those properties?

Response to Written Question 32:

Who are the members of the government's Disaster Recovery Committee, the body referenced in section 2.2.2 of the Alberta disaster assistance guidelines and section 7(3) of the disaster recovery regulation?

Response to Written Question 33:

As of January 1, 2014, how many homes in southern Alberta were deemed or estimated to be eligible to apply for disaster recovery program compensation in relation to the June 2013 flood, and of those, how many submitted applications for compensation, how many were offered compensation, and how many accepted the offered amount of compensation?

Response to Written Question 34:

As of January 1, 2014, how many disaster recovery program compensation claims from the 2010 flood in southern and central Alberta were appealed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs pursuant to section 8 of the disaster recovery regulation, and how many of those resulted in a reversal or modification of a previous decision made by either the Alberta Emergency Management Agency's director of recovery operations or the managing director?

Response to Written Question 35:

As of January 1, 2014, of the total number of southern Alberta residents who applied for disaster recovery program compensation in relation to the June 2013 flood, how many have requested a formal review of their files by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency's, AEMA, director of recovery operations, and how many have subsequently requested that a decision on their file by the AEMA director of recovery operations be reviewed by the AEMA managing director pursuant to section 7 of the disaster recovery regulation, and how many have subsequently requested that a decision on their file by the AEMA managing director be reviewed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs pursuant to section 8 of the disaster recovery regulation?

Response to Written Question 36:

How many municipalities requested financial or technical assistance from the government for riverbank stabilization or flood protection for the period between the southern Alberta flood that occurred in June 2005 and the flood of June 2013?

Response to Written Question 37:

As of January 1, 2014, what is the average length of time that it has taken to conclude disaster recovery program compensation claims in relation to the June 2013 flood, and what is the average compensation that has been paid?

Response to Written Question 38:

As of January 1, 2014, how many disaster recovery program compensation claims are outstanding from the 2010 flood in southern and central Alberta?

Response to Written Question 39:

As of January 1, 2014, how many disaster recovery program compensation claims are outstanding from the May 2011 wildfire in Slave Lake?

Response to Written Question 40:

What was the commencement date of LandLink Consulting Ltd.'s current five-year contract with the government to administer the province's disaster recovery program?

Response to Written Question 41:

What positions did Barry Giffen and Rick Thrall, LandLink Consulting Ltd.'s president and managing partner respectively, hold when they were employed by the government of Alberta?

Return to order of the Assembly MR 2, a copy of the report of the provincial advisory panel on community flood mitigation that

proposed \$830 million in flood mitigation measures at the Alberta Flood Mitigation Symposium held in Calgary on October 4, 2013.

Return to order of the Assembly MR 8, a copy of the performance review of LandLink Consulting Ltd. referenced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs during the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship's consideration of the ministry's 2013-14 estimates on April 17, 2013.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, we have two points of order and one point of clarification to deal with before we move on to Orders of the Day. Let's hear the first point of order. It was raised by Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills during the first exchange of questions and responses.

**Point of Order
Referring to Party Matters**

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise according to Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j), and I'd like to combine both of those two points of order.

Mr. Speaker, you never hesitate to stand up on so-called party matters, but it was not the case today when the Premier was referring directly to internal party debates, something that is clearly on the surface related to party matters. I suggest that's a double standard, and that's why opposition members lose confidence. Those same rules should apply to every Member of this Legislative Assembly no matter how important they are and no matter if they are the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to go down that route, we can talk about promises made during leadership campaigns and all that kind of stuff. In fact, the Premier himself in 2003 promised, when he was running for the leadership of the PC Party of Canada, free tuition for everyone. You know, bowls of rainbows and lollipops and magical unicorns as well, I think, were part of that promise. He promised in the most recent leadership campaign term limits, which, of course, is unconstitutional – and the government hasn't even attempted to put that forward – and no taxes and so forth. The Member for Calgary-Hays promised to have bars open till 4 a.m. Are we supposed to debate that here in the Legislature? The Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs talked about increasing taxes, carbon levies. Is that supposed to be talked about here?

Mr. Speaker, you know, we've been very clear in the Wildrose in our commitment to export our most important product, strongly in support of Keystone – I wanted to clarify that – but I suggest that in the past few days you've prevented us from even speaking on what you deem to be party matters. Here's an issue that's clearly a party matter. So not only was it a double standard not to prevent the member from speaking on these issues; I would ask that at a minimum those comments be retracted in their entirety.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, first of all, for his service the last three years to this Chamber. I didn't have a chance to do so, and I wish him well, whether in the practice of tax law, criminal defence, whatever law he may have practised as well, or in whatever he may decide to do. He's a very honourable professional.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's where my rainbows and lollipops, though, do end. He was referring to internal party debates. Well, it's routinely referred to as to what members of a party may say, and there's a clear delineation between what a member of a party may

say or asking an actual question of a party in the Chamber here. I'm actually going to table five copies of a reference to what the Premier was talking about: a member of his party, someone who is seeking the leadership, wanting a review and study of our royalty policy. I quote: I know this is the kiss of death for any politician to talk about, but I believe that it's time that we put everything on the table; I think it's really time that we looked at that formula.

On top of that, this same member goes on to state: why should we have a Keystone?

Mr. Speaker, this was a matter of opinion that the Premier was talking about, and the reality is that these positions are very similar to the New Democratic Party in this province. These positions are not what a conservative party would say, and that is the delineation that the Premier was talking about. He was simply talking a matter of opinion. There's lots of debate, comparison, and contrast in this Chamber, but it's very, very clear to me that there is no point of order because the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills just doesn't want to concentrate on the inconvenient truth that the Wildrose is very similar to the New Democrats.

The Speaker: Are there others? Does the hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition wish to weigh in on this?

Mrs. Forsyth: Well, Mr. Speaker, what this member is saying is ridiculous. This is the same member that says that we're so right that we don't know where we're going to be. It's been very clear. I left this party in 2010 because of the royalties that the previous Premier, Premier Stelmach, was bringing in. Including the Member for Airdrie, that's the reason why we crossed the floor in 2010, because of what this government was doing with royalties, what they were doing with health care and everything else that they were dealing with. So if the Premier wants to get off his horse to fight the pigs, we'll be ready to fight him.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others? No?

We're dealing with the two of these at the same time, I understand, so that will take care of the point of order raised at 2:03 and a subsequent one that was raised at 2:04.

I want to begin by stating that at the time of this question-response exchange, when the Premier rose to speak, there was such an uproar here that I found it very difficult to hear parts of what was being said, which is why I've ordered the Blues. Nonetheless, I have received the Blues. It's not uncommon for people to raise issues about ideas and policies and so on espoused by members with respect to their party's position on a matter. In fact, in this House it's frequently the case that opposition members, sometimes from all three opposition parties, preface their questions or their preambles by using the word "PC," which typically stands for Progressive Conservative. Now, I wouldn't stand and rule that out of order, as I haven't, so I'm trying to be as consistent as possible. But when matters deal with internal – internal – party matters, they ought not be raised here, and we all know that.

3:00

Now, in this instance I have read the Blues, and I will promise you this: I will be more vigilant going forward, assuming I can hear the questions and answers. If you want the Speaker to intervene and stop any references whatsoever to any party matters, I can be extremely strict about that. You may not enjoy it, but I can be extremely strict. Internal ideas, internal policies, internal party matters are something that is a little bit of a grey area, but you can tell by the temperature, the tone, and the temperance, or lack of, there that accompanies each of these questions as to whether or not it is a legitimate point of order that is forthcoming or if it's more

the case of a difference of opinion, a dispute on the facts. As we know, there are frequently two different versions of the story and all of those other things that Speakers like myself and others have stated in this House many, many times. Those situations do occur. Hon. members, at the end of the day everyone gets a chance to stand up and clarify what their point is, and I believe that has happened here, so I will be more vigilant going forward, I can assure you that.

However, one thing I did want to point out was that I believe, hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, you said something about how the Speaker prevented someone from asking their question, which is why today I've skipped through *Hansard* as quickly as I could just to see when and where that might have happened. I don't see it yet, but I will look and see if that was in fact the case because, typically speaking, I have tried to allow the full question to be asked such as happened today when the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler rose. I did not interrupt his question. He asked it in full, according to the Blues, and at the end of that exchange I even stated the following according to the Blues. "I didn't cut off the questions, so I am wondering if anyone wishes to answer that, bearing in mind what I read yesterday," and so on.

So the full question, hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler, was asked by you, and I allowed it to be asked. I wasn't sure where it was going, and frequently you don't know where some things are going until you've heard the whole question. I do my best to try and ensure that that is a consistent approach that I apply.

So that is the case, and as such I find no specific point of order here, but I have indicated what I will be doing going forward, so everyone should be forewarned about that, please.

Now we have a point of clarification. The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was referring to previous days where you prevented members from asking questions.

Mr. Speaker, on this point of clarification I think this is a vitally important question here. Earlier today the Member for Drumheller-Stettler asked a question about how tax dollars were being used. The question was in reference to whether or not taxpayer dollars were used for partisan purposes. Tax dollars. Taxpayer dollars. Of course, there's precedent for this and why this is important. Previously it was found that government planes were used for partisan purposes. We asked those questions in the Assembly because it involved taxpayer dollars, and those dollars were subsequently repaid by the PC Party.

Here the member asked a question, and it was in reference to whether or not a staff member, who is paid by taxpayer dollars, was doing partisan political activities. That's entirely an appropriate question. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking whether or not that's your ruling, that we in the opposition are not supposed to ask questions about whether or not an employee who is employed by taxpayers can participate in political activities during working hours. If that is the ruling, it is unprecedented, and it is completely uncharted territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Anyone else wish to chime in on this? It's just a point of clarification. I'd be happy to proceed.

Seeing no one, let me proceed. Thank you for asking, hon. member, because it gives me a chance to explain a couple of things again. First of all, as I said just moments ago, when I was addressing the first two points of order, I did not interrupt the hon. member's question. In fact, the Blues would show a full question that ends with a question mark in case one, where he asked about a principal secretary interfering in business while being paid by Albertans; in

question two, something to do with a principal secretary paid by Albertans interfering in PC Party business; and question three, to do with government funds, also ends with a question mark, so I believe I allowed full liberties there for the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler, and the full question is there.

Now, in between those questions and responses I stated the following. I stated, "Hon. member, I think we clarified yesterday that internal party matters . . ." – and then you rose on your point of clarification – ". . . really have no space or place in the Assembly here." I went on and made another comment, and I gave it as a cautionary note, but I did not bar the question from being asked in any way, shape, or form.

Also, while I'm on the point of clarification, neither did I prevent someone from answering it. I asked if they would like to answer, and according to what I have before me, the Premier stood and answered question one, and then the point was asked by me if someone from the government side wishes to stand up and explain how this does or doesn't relate to government policy. No one rose, and I stated that. No one rose to answer, but I gave an opportunity, and I did the same with the next one, too. To be clear, I ended that one by saying: I see no one rising to answer the third question either. But an opportunity was provided. That point of clarification is appreciated, and I hope so, too, are my comments in regard to them.

As such, we will now move on.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third 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 privilege to rise today and move third reading of Bill 17, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, you wish to go next?

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. Speaking on third reading.

The Speaker: I would normally go to the Official Opposition, but I see they've waved off that opportunity, so why don't we go straight to you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate an opportunity to just say a couple of words in closing on Bill 17, Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015. I certainly did outline our concerns in the Legislature here in, I believe, second reading, but just to highlight those again. Certainly, we see the utility of the supplementary supply in many areas, but it also, I think, highlights some indiscretion and poor choices that this government has made in regard to both health care and long-range planning for infrastructure, schools particularly, and then, of course, the issues around legal aid.

I guess an issue that's really come to light, I think, even more specifically than people would have noticed, is in regard to the Kananaskis golf course. Now, in the larger purview of this government and the very large budget that we deal with here each year, the number is not as big, but I think there's a certain symbolism around the Kananaskis golf course that many Albertans remember from its inception, back when it was first built, and the

controversies around that. In the intervening years I think it's worthwhile for us to consider again the value of that particular golf course in the Bow valley here in 2015. We know that since the golf course was built many, many years ago, there were many more private golf courses built in the same Bow valley area.

3:10

This is very sensitive ecosystem that is very limited in size. The scope of development in the Bow valley over the last 30 years has been quite significant, so maybe this is just a moment in time where we can reconsider the value of that space in the most sensitive area of the Bow valley still retaining itself as a golf course in the first place.

Certainly, in the face of other budget constraints that we have to deal with here in the Legislature, I think that maybe it's prudent for us to reconsider putting extra money into this golf course project when (a) I think that maybe the circumstances have changed considerably in terms of other golf courses being built already in the valley, (b) the chances that this same place would be flooded again with extraordinary meteorological circumstances, and (c) perhaps the opportunity to use this as some other purpose with the view to restoring some of the natural Bow valley ecosystem as well.

So that's one issue that I think that all Albertans should take notice of. Again, sometimes it's not the very expensive budget points but smaller ones that people can have a better sense of. You know, why would we choose to spend money on expensive golf courses when other health and education issues go wanting?

Otherwise, as well, we see that the legal aid is in the sup supply, but again I just wanted to reiterate the value of long-term planning and commitment to this program so that people have access to justice. The instability around legal aid funding has led to many people not being able to access proper legal counsel. We have some restoration of that funding here but only as an intermediate sort of measure. I would like to see long-term, stable funding for this program so that all Albertans have equal access to justice when they need it.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, followed by the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise here today to speak on Bill 17. The only few comments that I would have are that I simply cannot understand why the government would want to expend millions of dollars in order to run a luxury golf course, especially when the Premier has stated that we're in tough economic times, especially when he has stated that the budget is going to end up with massive cuts to our most vulnerable as well as seniors and those types of things. I think when, you know, people go out there and talk to average Albertans and they explain how their money is being spent, if you go door to door and say that this is where your government is spending money, millions of dollars on a golf course, yet they want to raise your taxes or they want to cut seniors' programs and other things like that, I think to most people, when you go to their door, that would be very alarming to them.

Mr. Speaker, I guess my question and my hope is that the government reconsider spending this amount on this luxury golf course and instead do the right thing during this economic downturn and actually start prioritizing. I think that if the government is asking Albertans to pay more in taxes, at a minimum they have to

cut wasteful spending to have any type of credibility with Albertans. Of course, we don't need tax increases right now. What we need to do is cut wasteful spending, and this golf course expenditure, where it's millions of dollars, would be the first easy step.

I think that it's shocking that the government hasn't had a reply for why this is a priority over schools, why it's a priority over seniors' programs. I know when I talk to seniors in my community – just last week I talked to a whole bunch of them about, you know, the expenditures on golf courses. They were quite alarmed by that. I think that most Albertans, when they become educated on it, become alarmed at it and completely frustrated with their government. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we should be spending money on fancy golf courses, and I hope the government would reconsider that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are you rising on 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Yes. I'd like to ask the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills – again, he's discussed the golf course and his discussions with seniors. I was noticing that in my constituency a lot of seniors are concerned with the increase of the rental rate of their accommodations. I was wondering if the member could enquire on that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A great question by the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler. You know, seniors are on fixed incomes. When they see things like their power bills doubling and tripling, you know, of course it's on the fixed component of their power bill, where even if they turned off their lights, their power rates would still go up. Now their rental rates are going up as well. There's a lot less left on the table.

When you're spending millions and millions of dollars on a golf course yet gouging the people who built this province, I think most of them will have a serious problem with that, not only seniors but also their families. I mean, oftentimes if the seniors can't afford to make ends meet, their loved ones have to assist them. I think that if they knew their government was spending tax dollars wisely and it was just a true financial crunch, most Albertans would be okay with it. But the fact is that when you're spending money on things like a golf course or carbon capture and corporate subsidies for carbon capture or brand new MLA offices, severances of upwards of half a million dollars for VPs of strategic relations, I think it's very difficult to go to those people that built this province and say: "No. You have to have rental increases. You have to continue to be gouged on your power bill."

Mr. Speaker, this is where you have a government that has been in power for 44 years, and it's tired. It's out of touch. Again, I thank the hon. member for his question, and I hope that the government would reconsider and stop the funding of this luxury golf course and instead perhaps put it to priorities such as seniors and other individuals in Alberta who helped build this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. There are still a couple of minutes left in 29(2)(a) if anyone wishes to participate.

Seeing no one, let us move on to the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, these bills are normally routine. It's part of doing the government's business, and we all understand that. But the issue of funding a golf course and particularly spending \$8 million to keep it operational while it is being rebuilt is absolutely something that this public cannot understand when it measures what this government considers a priority. That's the question that never did get answered in debate in Committee of the Whole, and it's too bad that it couldn't. The minister brought forward the issue dealing with insurance, yet he didn't provide any evidence of what we're dealing with with the insurance covering this golf course.

There are so many questions around that and the justification of why this should be. Why now of all times, 18 months after the disaster? Eighteen months after the disaster people are still waiting for their settlements, still waiting for their disaster relief, yet we're going to fix the golf course now. We can't wait any longer. The answers that we got just do not fly. The public does not accept what this government has so far provided as evidence of why they've got to provide basically \$10 million now and could not wait, could not defer, could not come up with any other agreement.

It's all about priorities. We've got seniors that are in need of medication that is not covered, and this is quality of life and life-saving medication that is extremely expensive that seniors must foot the bills for themselves. That is not funded. We have the issues of flood mitigation, that still are not funded, that communities need to protect against flooding. We have bridges that need to be fixed in rural areas, and they're not getting fixed because there's no funding. The priority list goes on and on and on, dealing with these necessary essentials, and unfortunately this government has decided that this asset, that it claims is so valuable, must be now fixed for the price of around \$10 million.

3:20

What I do not understand, if it is that valuable an asset, is why are we rebuilding it in a flood plain when we have told other communities that you cannot build in flood plain? That we need to understand. This doesn't make sense. We're not going to allow somebody to build a house of roughly \$400,000 in value in a flood plain, but we're going to put this \$50 million asset, supposedly, back into a flood plain. It doesn't make sense. How long will it be before it washes out again? Given the fact of what we're dealing with with climate science, I would argue with you that this so-called 100-year event, which seems to occur now about every other year – I don't know why we're calling it a 100-year event given the frequency of these events. But the fact is that it's not a matter of if it's going to be flooded out again; it's a matter of when it's going to be flooded out again.

Again, it goes back to the priorities of this government, and these priorities are a mixed message. They're out of line with the public's priority of what is prudent, fiscal, responsible spending of taxpayers' dollars. That's the one big issue that I have with this bill, the fact that we are spending money on something that is nice. It is certainly, possibly, something that's worth while showcase-wise for somebody that has a lot of money to spend, but we don't have a lot of money to spend. We need to evaluate what is absolutely necessary now and separate that from what . . .

An Hon. Member: Tourism.

Mr. Anglin: I don't have a problem with tourism. Prove it to me that it pays. That's all I ask of the government. Prove it to me that it pays off because you haven't done that. What you've shown me is that this is a black hole for sucking money, taxpayers' dollars, that has not produced a return of profit. I argue to you right now

that if it did produce a return, you would have shown us by now. Prove it. All we've asked is to show us how this works, that it has paid off huge dividends for this government. I think the public might be able to buy that, but you've not done that. What we have seen, in the public's view, is a black hole that sucks taxpayers' dollars away from hard-working taxpayers, with no great return. That's what's offensive about spending this money on this golf course now, and it's just not acceptable.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. The Member for Drumheller-Stettler on 29(2)(a).

Mr. Strankman: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night we heard the minister of ESRD expound on the values of the golf course, and that's well received and well appreciated, but he also commented that a good part of this funding was federal funds brought forward. To the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre: I'd like to know if he's aware of whether or not the federal involvement, subsistence to this program would and will or could be directed to the replacement of a facility that's on a designated flood plain.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, did you wish to respond?

Mr. Anglin: In the interest of political unity I think I'm done.

The Speaker: Anyone else? There are four minutes left under Standing Order 29(2)(a).

If not, let us move to the next speaker. Does anyone else wish to speak to third reading of this bill?

If not, hon. President of Treasury Board, would you like to close debate at this time?

Mr. Campbell: I'll just call the question, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a third time]

Committee of Supply

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order.

Hon. members, before we commence this afternoon's consideration of interim supply, I would like to review briefly the standing orders governing the speaking rotation. As provided for in Standing Order 59.02, the rotation in Standing Order 59.01(6) is deemed to apply, which is as follows:

- (a) the Minister, or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister's behalf, may make opening comments not to exceed 10 minutes,
- (b) for the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the Minister, or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister's behalf, may speak,
- (c) for the next 20 minutes, the members of the third party, if any, and the Minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister's behalf, may speak,
- (d) for the next 20 minutes, the member of the fourth party, if any, and the Minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister's behalf, may speak,
- (d.1) for the next 20 minutes, the members of any other party represented in the Assembly or any independent Members and the Minister, or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister's behalf, may speak,

(e) for the next 20 minutes, private members of the Government caucus and the Minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf, may speak, and (f) any member may speak thereafter.

During the above rotation speaking times are limited to 10 minutes. Once the above rotation is complete, speaking times are reduced to five minutes.

Provided that the Chair has been notified, a Minister and a private Member may combine their . . . speaking times, with both taking and yielding the floor over the combined period.

Finally, as provided for in Government Motion 22, approved by the Assembly yesterday, the time allotted for consideration is six hours.

Interim Supply Estimates 2015-16 General Revenue Fund and Lottery Fund

The Deputy Chair: The Committee of Supply has under consideration the 2015-16 interim supply estimates.

I will now recognize the hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance to move the estimates. The hon. minister.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Chair. I request leave to introduce Bill 18, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Madam Chair, interim supply estimates provide funding authorization until the new budget is approved. This is not unusual for government. In fact, it is required whenever spending authority is required to bridge the gap between the prior fiscal year and the passage of a new budget. Authorization is needed so that the government can continue to provide services until the budget is passed. These estimates are based on the department's needs to fund government programs and services. Government spending is typically higher in the early months of the year. This pattern occurs because some of the payments are due on April 1 for the first quarter, and some annual payments are also due on April 1. Members will note that the interim supply is inordinately high compared to what is expected for the overall government budget simply because there are a lot of front-ended costs that need to be paid out in the first quarter.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

Just to clarify, you are moving the estimates and not the bill.

Mr. Campbell: Yes.

The Deputy Chair: We are moving the estimates. All right.

Members of the opposition. The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I mean, we're talking about millions and millions of dollars, and that's all the minister has to tell us. We're only given this very brief statement, and he's not providing any details at all to this Assembly. It's pretty alarming that he's requesting that we vote on these measures without providing any details whatsoever. Millions of dollars. As the opposition we just got this.

I guess I'll just start with the glaringly obvious one, the \$28 million requested for the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Why on earth would we need this money allocated if, you know, the Premier hasn't made up his mind on whether there's going to be an election?

3:30

I think this is actually almost comical. I mean, the Premier has publicly stated that he's not sure when the election is going to be called, yet they're requesting \$28 million for the Chief Electoral Officer. I guess my question is – and, Madam Chair, I'm wondering whether or not we can go back and forth. My question is to the Minister. What is the \$28 million for when it comes to the request for the office of the Chief Electoral Officer? Would you be willing to respond, Minister?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Campbell: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. The fact of the matter is that this is basically a vote on the monies that we need to run the government from April 1 until the budget is passed. All of the money that is in the interim supply estimates will be completely debated once the budget is tabled on March 26, so the opposition will have a clear understanding of what the money is for, and they'll have the ability within the estimates to sit down and have that conversation with the various ministers.

Madam Chair, we know that the legislation for the electoral act says that we need to have an election sometime between March and May of 2016. The electoral officer has to prepare for that date, and it takes some time to do that, usually about a year out. We know from reading the *Hansard* from Legislative Offices that the electoral officer is looking at some, maybe, different ways of handling the votes, some of them being electronic. So it's important that the electoral officer know that he has the funding available and that he can start to move forward with the process that meets the legislation that says that the event has to happen between March and May of 2016.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess if this money is needed right now, the Chief Electoral Officer would have put in a request for the \$28 million and specified what exactly he would be spending the money on. Or are you coming here today to this Assembly and simply saying, "Yup, 28 million bucks. Let's go with it"? I mean, what details are there? What is this going to be spent on? I don't think taxpayers would understand saying that, you know, the Chief Electoral Officer is looking at doing some new stuff. I mean, what exactly is this \$28 million going to be spent on?

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Madam Chair, as I said, the budget will come out on March 26. The details of the budget will be discussed after that date. I'm not at liberty to discuss those details right now. I suggest if the member has questions of the electoral officer that he go talk to the electoral officer.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Well, thank you. I guess, presumably, the government, who is requesting \$28 million, would either know what the \$28 million is going to be spent on or the Chief Electoral Officer would have told them what the money is going to be spent on. But apparently this is some state secret. The minister doesn't know. The Chief Electoral Officer, according to him, hasn't requested the funds. So it's a little bizarre here that we're going to be debating numbers, we're supposed to have a debate in the Assembly, and we have a minister that doesn't know how this money is going to be spent. I mean, I think it's important when you're talking about millions and millions of dollars that you come here prepared to say,

you know, what exactly this money is going to be spent on. Just spell it out for us here.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Chair, I suggest the member clean the wax out of his ears. I've already said that the electoral officer went to Legislative Offices and made the request for the funding. That is all in *Hansard*. If the member has any other questions for the electoral officer, I suggest he either goes and talks to Leg. Offices or he goes and talks to the electoral officer, and he'll get the answers he needs. I'm not at liberty to talk about the budget until it's tabled on March 26.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess you're at liberty to tell us what these numbers represent. I mean, is it not your role to come here to the Legislature and know roughly where the \$28 million is going to be spent? Or do you not have that off the top of your head? I mean, it's a large amount of money.

I'll just move on though, Madam Chair. It appears that the minister does not know where this money is going to be spent other than that it's in *Hansard* somewhere apparently.

I'll move on, Madam Chair, with just a question regarding the \$20 million for the Legislative Assembly Office. I'm just wondering if the minister can provide a breakdown of what that money is going towards, whether it's the cost of moving into the new office building.

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Madam Chair, the support to the Legislative Assembly would have gone in front of Members' Services. They would have brought their request forward. I can tell you that the support to the legislative offices of \$20 million is to pay wages, salaries. I mean, we have leg. assistants that we have to continue to pay. We have staff to pay.

You know, the reason we bring interim supply, in fact, is that as of April 1 we have to make sure we have money to run the government until the budget is passed. It's that simple.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Just a simple question: what's the rough breakdown between operational, capital, and financial expenses in the \$20 million?

Mr. Campbell: Again, Madam Chair, the Legislative Assembly doesn't answer to me; the Legislative Assembly answers to Members' Services. The Speaker would have brought forward his budget request to Members' Services, they would have debated that, they would have said yea or nay to it, and that's what we have in front of us.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. My next question is on the \$256 million in financial transactions. I'm just wondering whether or not the minister can elaborate on what that means and what that represents.

Mr. Campbell: Again, Madam Chair, I can't make this any clearer to the member. This is interim supply monies to run the government from April 1 until the budget is passed. Until the budget is tabled, I'm not at liberty to talk about what the amounts are or what the amounts are to be used for. On March 26 we will table a budget. All of these figures will be in that budget. The members from the

opposition will have to sit down with each minister and talk to that minister about their department and about their spending.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my point is that, yes, these dollars represent the time period from April 1 until the budget is passed. The budget is going to be put forward on March 26. It will be passed in – you know, we can all guess how long it would take to pass a budget. What in that time period of four or five weeks could happen where the Chief Electoral Officer would need to spend \$28 million? I wonder what that is. I'm just wondering if the minister can confirm here today that during that time period the \$28 million would be for an election. What else could it be for, Minister? What would the Chief Electoral Officer need \$28 million for in that short time period between April 1 and how long it would take to pass the budget? What would he need that money for, Minister?

Mr. Campbell: Madam Chair, I don't know if I'm in the twilight zone or if it's Groundhog Day. I made it very clear that we have legislation that says that we have an event that will happen between March and May of 2016. The electoral officer comes to us and asks us for his funding because he has to get ready for it. This isn't something that you just snap your fingers and all of a sudden the electoral officer is ready to go. We know that the population of the province is growing, so that means there are going to be more ballot boxes. There are going to be more people involved in the process. As I said, when the electoral officer was at Leg. Offices, he talked about going electronic, so that has to be looked at and the cost, and money has to be spent on that. That's what the \$28 million is for.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. As mentioned by the minister, the election has to be sometime between April 2016 and June 2016.

Mr. Campbell: March and May.

Mr. Saskiw: March and May of 2016. What we're talking about is funding between April 1, 2015, and May or June of 2015. The election is deemed to be in 2016, and we're talking about monies in 2015. If the election is going to be held in 2016, why would he need \$28 million in the year 2015?

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

3:40

Mr. Campbell: Well, Madam Chair, as I've said, this doesn't happen at the flick of a switch, and our budget runs from April 1, 2015, to April 1, 2016. Any prudent budget person would make sure that there's money available to do the job that has to be done in the time frame as we've done with all of the departments and as we've done with all of the officers of the Legislature. We're prepared to help the electoral officer out so that he can do his job properly.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's interesting that you can say that with a straight face. The question here, I guess, is on the \$28 million that he's requesting for this time period of April 2015 to roughly the end of May. In his experience has a Chief Electoral Officer ever had the upfront cost of \$28 million a year before the

election? Is that typically the case? You know, let's spend \$28 million a year before the election. Or would most of those costs happen relatively prior to an election? I guess that's my question. Is the Chief Electoral Officer – are you saying that he came to this Assembly and said, "I need \$28 million a year before a scheduled election"?"

Mr. Campbell: Well, first of all, Madam Chair, the electoral officer doesn't come to the Assembly; the electoral officer goes to Leg. Offices. Again, I think the hon. member is a member of Leg. Offices, and I think that he should review the notes that were done there, and he'll understand the process.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think what we'll do as the Official Opposition is to write a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer and simply ask him whether or not he requested from this government \$28 million a year before the projected election. I think he's going to come back here and say that that's not the case, and if that's not the case, then the hon. minister will have misled the Assembly here today. I think there's no way the Chief Electoral Officer asked for \$28 million in this time period. It's impossible. It hasn't happened. It's fiction. I was on the committee that hired the Chief Electoral Officer. He was talking about electronic voting and all that stuff. It does not cost \$28 million. And he would not implement it a year before an election.

What I would suggest is that a \$28 million expense would be the cost of an entire election, which he would not need a year before that election. So I just question it. I'd just ask the minister very clearly this question. Did the Chief Electoral Officer ask for the \$28 million during the period of April 1 and the passing of the budget? Because if he hasn't, he has misled the House.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Campbell: Well, Madam Chair, the only person misleading the House is the opposition. I've been very careful in my comments, and I've said very carefully that the Chief Electoral Officer went to Legislative Offices and asked, and it was \$28 million to run an election. I've said that that process has to happen between March and May of 2016. I've also said that we will put in our budget the \$28 million. The electoral officer knows that he has the money. He can start the plan for what he has to do moving forward. And that's only prudent financing on our part.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, you know, I think everybody in this room knows that because it's being requested in just that specific time period, from April 1 to about the middle of May – \$28 million to be spent in that time period this year from April 1 to the middle of May – that there could only be one possible reason to spend that money, and it's an election. I think it would be interesting if the minister could actually just spell it out and say that there will be an election during that time period. It's interesting how he can say that that's not the reason for the money with a straight face. It's astonishing. It's a skill set.

I guess, Madam Chair, I'll continue onwards. The other questions that we had were with respect to whether or not the minister can with these dollar figures let us know in terms of, specifically, support for the Legislative Assembly and whether that breakdown is partially in capital, partially in operational, and whether any of that \$20 million that's requested for that time period is for moving

MLAs into the brand new MLA office building. Is any of that \$20 million for that?

Mr. Campbell: Well, Madam Chair, I don't have that information right at hand, but I can get it for the member.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I use some of my time at the end of the allocation?

The Deputy Chair: Yes, you can.

Mr. Saskiw: I'll cede the floor, then, to the other opposition party.

The Deputy Chair: Just a minute. I've got to get a ruling on exactly what you meant there because you had an hour slot between you and the minister, and you've used about 18 . . .

Mr. Saskiw: I'd like to add that on the end instead.

The Deputy Chair: I've been informed that if you want to give up your time to other opposition members, you can do that, but we'll continue with the rotation, so no guarantee that you'll get your 40 minutes back.

Mr. Saskiw: Sure. I'll keep going for a little bit here.

The Deputy Chair: Okay. Continue, then, please.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to continue on with breakdowns here. Just referring to the Executive Council expense of \$6 million: can the minister provide the Assembly with a breakdown of whether that's operational or capital expenses and what the proportion is?

Mr. Campbell: Again, Madam Chair, this is money that the departments have brought forward. This is all money that will be debated during the budget. The breakdown will be there, where the member will see exactly what the monies are, what is operational, and what is capital.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. member.

Mr. Saskiw: I've concluded. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: The next opposition member, from the next party, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a new designation as the next party, which seems hopeful, looking towards the future somehow. Well, the next party has quite a number of questions, that hopefully will be dealt with expeditiously.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, I think, almost exhausted the most obvious question, which is the \$28 million allocation to the Chief Electoral Officer. To that, I will quote, with apologies, Gertrude Stein, who said that a "rose is a rose is a rose." That an election is an election is an election really is what we are seeing here. We all kind of know that, but it would be nice if people could just say it out loud. I mean, the whole process of going through an election needs to have some certainty around dates because, in fact, people spend a lot of money on these elections, and the preparations are considerable. I think that for the sake of democracy, you know, this sort of game that the government is playing, while eminently readable, like the nose on their collective

faces – the dates, I think, are a responsible thing to disclose to the public for the sake of planning and for good governance and democracy.

Anyway, with that in mind, I just want to go through a couple of ministries that I would like to have a question about. First, Culture and Tourism. I saw that in 2014-15 the total operational budget for Culture and Tourism was \$157.5 million. Almost 46.6 per cent of that budget here is being spent in three months, the way I read it. I'm just curious to know what the money is being spent on there. Why is it such an increase? We should have maybe expected to plan for the budget so that it's comparable to the outlay or the budget expenditures from last year. It just seemed as though there was a big surge in the Culture and Tourism budget there towards the end that required this interim supply addition.

Okay. Maybe I can just start with that one.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Madam Chair, you know, Culture and Tourism has put in their request for what they need for the first little part of the budget to make sure that our services are being provided. I would suggest, you know, that Culture and Tourism is one of the departments that looks after grants, and a lot of those grants come due and have to be paid out. I would suggest that some of those monies would be for year-end because I think that April 1 is actually the first-quarter end. I think that on March 31, actually, the cheques go out or something like that. So all that's got to be looked after, and then they run a regular business.

3:50

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. Certainly, I'll forward that to the culture minister as well just because it seemed to be more of an expenditure or an outlay than the budget from last year.

In regard to Energy we were just identifying a 2014-15 budget item. The ministry budgeted zero for financial transactions and then this year were putting in an interim supply for \$33.6 million on this line item just in three months. I'm curious to know what that is. I really don't know, but if someone could point us in the right direction, that would be great. [interjections] What I'll do is that maybe I'll group a couple together, and then, you know, we can work through that way.

In regard to Environment and Sustainable Resource Development the capital investment for this department in the interim supply is \$44.8 million, which, as far as we can see, represents three-quarters of all capital spending in the department for 2014-2015. I'm curious to know what explains this considerable increase in funding for capital projects in these first three months in Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. If I can put that one onto the record, please.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Campbell: Well, Madam Chair, under the Energy piece, on the financial transactions all I can say is that some of that money would probably be for buying leases back. When you look at the lower Athabasca plan, in the areas where we put in conservation areas, we have to buy back the leases from those companies, and that's not without payment. So I will suggest that some of that is that.

When I'm looking at Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, I would suggest that with the capital investment, the majority of that would be around flood mitigation. So you're looking at the work that's being done on Springbank, the Ghost River reservoir, the Highwood and the work being done around the diversion down there, and then some of the flood mitigation that's being done around the province, the flood resilience program. Some

of that money would be for that because some of those projects have been approved and are moving forward.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

The hon. member.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for the answer. I appreciate that.

The next one I have is around Health. We're seeing a \$19.3 million capital investment in the Health budget, and considering the global budget of \$18 billion, I mean, we find this to be very low even by the standards of last year's budget. We know that we've identified through questions and through research – and health professionals have told us clearly – that the capital investment right across the province is inadequate, so we would expect there would be at least 25 per cent of the yearly funding for 2014-15. The funding in the interim supply gives 17 per cent for capital investment, so there's a proportional number, sort of a gap here, that I was just curious about. Again, it's reflecting what we see as a lack of investment in health infrastructure and a proportional lack of investment as reflected in this interim supply bill. I'm curious to know why that would be so.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Madam Chair, without getting into the real specifics, I can tell you that the capital investment in Health will be quite considerable. Again, this is a portion for the first part of the year that the minister has deemed he needs to get going on some of the projects, but I can say that you'll see that grow as the year continues.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Madam Chair, my next questions are in regard to Infrastructure. In the 2014-15 general estimates the budget for capital spending was \$1.143 billion, but the interim estimates only show \$153 million, or 13.4 per cent of the budget for 2014-15, as being invested in these three months. Again, there's a gap here in proportionality. Considering the three-month period we are dealing with and the overall investment, is this indicative of a considerable reduction in investment in Alberta's infrastructure over this next fiscal year? Is it a precursor or a shadow of the cuts that we can expect? If not, I'm curious to know why so little money is being spent in these three months on capital projects when capital spending is up in so many other departments during these same months. Again, the proportional shortfall in the interim supply is causing me a concern around infrastructure investment. I'm curious if someone could illuminate me and the public on that issue here today.

Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, thank you, Madam Chair. Without getting into the specifics, I can say to the member that we added I think it was \$6.9 billion, budgeted for 2014-15 for Infrastructure. I can say to you that you can add this on top of that. I will suggest that as the member stays tuned for the budget, he will see the full Infrastructure plan unrolled over the next five years, and I think he'll be quite happy with that.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. member.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Chair. My next question is in regard to Innovation and Advanced Education. The \$815.7 million in expenses is, in our estimation, around 30 per cent of the

operational costs of advanced education. But the quarter of the year that we are concerned with here involves two months in which universities and colleges are in their less busy summer months. My question is: why is almost a third of the annual spending required for a quarter, that's coming up, that is considerably less busy than other parts of the year?

As well, the \$195.9 million in capital funding in Innovation and Advanced Education is almost the entire amount budgeted for capital projects for 2014-15. I'm just so curious: so much funding in the first quarter compared to the last fiscal year as well. It just seems to be again considerably out of whack with other spending considering the seasonal requirements of advanced educational institutions. I'm curious to know something about that.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, Madam Chair, as the member is probably aware, we, through the government, actually fund a large part of the universities through our SUCH programming. What we're doing, basically, is playing catch-up. When universities and colleges spend their money, we at the end of the year have to make up that difference, so sometimes we have a little extra that we have to pay. We do that with municipalities and school boards, and actually Health comes out of the SUCH sector.

As far as the capital investment I can suggest that there are projects that are shovel-ready, and the minister would want to get those ongoing as we are entering, you know, the time to put the shovel in the ground and actually get some dirt moved.

The Deputy Chair: The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Madam Chair. My next question is to the Justice and Solicitor General ministry, of which I see the hon. minister here, which is great. I think it's important for the ministers to actually be here because, I mean, we're talking about sometimes tens or hundreds of millions of dollars here. So I appreciate the Minister of Justice being here to perhaps entertain these questions.

In the 2014-15 general estimates there was \$134 million to be spent on capital projects. These interim supply estimates have less capital spending than would be expected if this figure was to continue into the next year. Does that make sense?

4:00

So my questions are: why is there less than anticipated capital spending in the current estimates, \$28.8 million rather than \$33 million? Does that make sense? I'm just curious to know. Maybe it's due to the fact that there'll be less capital investment in the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General in the upcoming fiscal year. If so, where are we aiming in terms of cutting projects or finished projects that were undertaken last year if there were any?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Denis: Yes. I thank the Member for Edmonton-Calder for referencing that I'm here, because I am. He was talking specifically about capital. There is very little capital in Justice and Solicitor General. There hasn't been in the last couple of years. Typically, Madam Chair, what's happened is that we have a major project, which is the Alberta first responder radio communications system, otherwise known as AFRRCs, and that is going to continue over a longer period of time. I don't think I'm divulging any state secret by talking about how we will continue with this particular project. I do not anticipate any other capital projects in the next year, but

it's always been our commitment to get these towers up and get AFRRCs going.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Minister, and thank you, Madam Chair. I'll carry on with my questions. Yeah. I'm curious about this Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. Glad to see the minister of environment is here to ask about the interim supply for his ministry of \$44.8 million. It seems like three-quarters of all the capital investment for 2014-2015. I'm just curious to know why we have this explosion of funding for capital projects in the first three months directed to the environment minister. I'd be curious to know what he had to say about that.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mr. Fawcett: Yes. I'm just looking at what the hon. member is referring to. Just give me one second. Oh, there we go. You're looking at the capital.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah, capital. That's right: \$44.8 million.

Mr. Fawcett: Yeah. I think what's highlighted there – a lot of the capital that our department is expending is on the flood mitigation side. There is a lot of work that has been done. If you particularly look at the windows to get flood mitigation done in time, you're looking at very early on in the fiscal year, so that's why you would see a disproportionate amount in the first quarter.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. That's eminently reasonable, of course, the seasonal.

I'm curious to know, then, in regard to – I know this golf course has been a big ball that's been batted around here in the last couple of days, so is there flood mitigation from this capital investment going up into the upper Kananaskis, in the region of the 36-hole Kananaskis golf course? Is any mitigation going on there to your knowledge?

Mr. Fawcett: Yes. There will be flood mitigation improvements made as part of the rebuilding of the course to ensure that there is a level of protection to protect the money, both federal and provincial, that's going into the rebuilding of the golf course.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks a lot. That's awesome.

My next question is in regard to Municipal Affairs. I see a considerable sum, \$1.19 billion, in expenses for Municipal Affairs. I'm just curious to know if that includes the increased promises for the MSI funding that we've seen announced recently. I don't know if there's someone over there that can try that one.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and nice green that you have on today.

My understanding is that it does, but it goes only for the period in which this would cover. However, I will undertake to contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs for you, and we will get some further particulars for you.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. That's great. Thank you so much.

My next question is in the Department of Transportation. In the 2014-2015 estimates the \$1.8 billion throughout the whole year was meant to be invested in capital. In the interim supply estimates, that we see here before us, that we're debating, \$730 million is to be spent within a short period that we're debating here today. So I am finding that to be a very significant investment during a relatively short period of time, and I just would like some, perhaps, information. I think all Albertans would like to know why we would be spending, you know, more than half of the whole year's estimates on capital on Transportation in a three-month period.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Drysdale: Well, Madam Chair, I'm a little confused because we're not suppose to be debating the budget till next week, when it's presented, but I know where this money is being spent, mostly because there's one large payment there if we have to purchase that land for the Calgary ring road to the Tsuu T'ina Nation, and it's there. Hopefully, the feds will transfer that land in June. But I'm not sure if we're supposed to be talking about all of these details and debating the budget right now. So I know where the money is going, and I'll leave it at that for now.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. I mean, when we do interim debates, I am going to ask where the money is going, for sure, right? That's a very important development for not just the city of Calgary but for the whole region.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member. That's your 20 minutes.

Mr. Eggen: What?

The Deputy Chair: Yes, it is.

So we're moving on to the next 20 minute segment. It looks like we're moving on to the private members of the government caucus. Are there any members?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Chair: The question is being called. Are there any other members who have any other questions?

Seeing none. . .

Mr. Eggen: Sorry. The rotation, just for clarification, Madam Chair, goes: government, then anybody else. I'm not quite finished all my questions yet. [interjections] What? Sure I can. Now I know what Grant Notley felt like.

The Deputy Chair: Hon. member, you do have five minutes.

Mr. Eggen: Oh, there you go. Perfect. Yeah, I just have five minutes more of questions anyway, so it's perfect.

Okay. So I've got a question in regard to Treasury Board and Finance. For 2014-15 the general estimates state that \$15.2 million was expected to be spent on financial transactions. In the interim supply estimates it estimates \$256 million is to be spent on financial transactions. I'm just so curious to know what that is being used for, these financial transactions, and why would they increase not just dramatically but, you know, I would say exponentially from the 2014 fiscal year, please.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mr. Fawcett: Sure. Just to get clarification from the hon. member, the first number that you're referencing was from the, I guess, current year budget?

Mr. Eggen: Yeah, that's right.

Mr. Fawcett: Okay. You know, I'm not sure what that is, and I can ask the Minister of Finance to get back to you on that.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you very much. I mean, again, this whole issue around interim supply is something that we need every year, I suppose, in some way. But the scale and the scope of interim supply this year has been exacerbated considerably by this fog of election time, right? So we would be dealing with far fewer numbers here and, really, probably better accounting for each of the budgets and how they make it into the financial year, and interim financing would be much more modest and much more rational if we weren't dealing with this sort of looming fog of an election.

4:10

I think that the idea of having an election season, at the very least, really does end up being a much more prudent way for us to spend money in the areas that we are responsible for but also for Albertans to see how that money is being spent. To have giant interim supply bills, I think, speaks to another layer of confusion for how Albertans can see how we are spending these public funds, which are becoming more scarce all the time. If we just could, you know, have a sense of when an election is going to take place, then it's much easier for each ministry to plan, and it's much easier for the public to see what's going on, and we would all be better for that.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members who wish to speak?

Seeing none, then I shall put the following questions.

Vote on Interim Supply Estimates 2015-16 General Revenue Fund and Lottery Fund

Agreed to:

Support to the Legislative Assembly \$20,460,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Agreed to:

Office of the Auditor General \$6,670,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Agreed to:

Office of the Ombudsman \$821,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Agreed to:
Office of the Chief Electoral Officer \$28,000,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Agreed to:
Office of the Ethics Commissioner \$250,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner \$1,711,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate \$3,242,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Office of the Public Interest Commissioner \$313,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Aboriginal Relations
Expense \$51,883,000
Capital Investment \$6,000
Financial Transactions \$19,268,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Agriculture and Rural Development
Expense \$179,467,000
Capital Investment \$940,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Culture and Tourism
Expense \$73,535,000
Capital Investment \$250,000
Financial Transactions \$400,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Education
Expense \$956,600,000
Capital Investment \$128,900,000
Financial Transactions \$5,300,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Energy
Expense \$96,000,000
Capital Investment \$1,500,000
Financial Transactions \$33,641,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Expense \$167,557,000
Capital Investment \$44,801,000
Financial Transactions \$353,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Executive Council
Expense \$6,385,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:
Health
Expense \$4,690,537,000
Capital Investment \$19,341,000
Financial Transactions \$8,700,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Human Services	
Expense	\$1,185,482,000
Capital Investment	\$1,721,000
Financial Transactions	\$170,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Infrastructure	
Expense	\$147,500,000
Capital Investment	\$153,000,000
Financial Transactions	\$4,900,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Innovation and Advanced Education	
Expense	\$815,725,000
Capital Investment	\$195,900,000
Financial Transactions	\$48,000,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
International and Intergovernmental Relations	
Expense	\$12,000,000
Capital Investment	\$6,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour	
Expense	\$50,435,000
Capital Investment	\$300,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Justice and Solicitor General	
Expense	\$431,071,000
Capital Investment	\$28,771,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Municipal Affairs	
Expense	\$1,185,555,000
Capital Investment	\$2,526,000
Financial Transactions	\$109,192,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

4:20

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Seniors	
Expense	\$181,693,000
Financial Transactions	\$2,375,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Service Alberta	
Expense	\$81,535,000
Capital Investment	\$10,685,000
Financial Transactions	\$2,500,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Transportation	
Expense	\$258,827,000
Capital Investment	\$729,462,000
Financial Transactions	\$19,531,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

Agreed to:	
Treasury Board and Finance	
Expense	\$42,704,000
Capital Investment	\$681,000
Financial Transactions	\$2,518,000
Transfer from the Lottery Fund	\$386,929,000

The Deputy Chair: Shall the vote be reported?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 61(3), which reads, "Following the Committee of Supply's report on interim or supplementary estimates, the Assembly shall immediately revert to Introduction of Bills for the introduction of the appropriation Bill," I would move that . . .

The Deputy Chair: Hon. minister, at this time we need you to request that we rise and report.

Mr. Denis: Yes. That's what I was getting to, actually. I would move that we rise and report, with thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. Government House Leader.

[Motion carried]

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Mr. Weadick: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again. The following resolutions relating to the 2015-16 interim supply estimates for the general revenue fund for the fiscal period ending June 30, 2015, have been approved.

Support to the Legislative Assembly, \$20,460,000; office of the Auditor General, \$6,670,000; office of the Ombudsman, \$821,000; office of the Chief Electoral Officer, \$28,000,000; office of the Ethics Commissioner, \$250,000; office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, \$1,711,000; office of Child and Youth Advocate, \$3,242,000; office of the Public Interest Commissioner, \$313,000.

Aboriginal Relations: expense, \$51,883,000; capital investment, \$6,000; financial transactions, \$19,268,000.

Agriculture and Rural Development: expense, \$179,467,000; capital investment, \$940,000.

Culture and Tourism: expense, \$73,535,000; capital investment, \$250,000; financial transactions, \$400,000.

Education: expense, \$956,600,000; capital investment, \$128,900,000; financial transactions, \$5,300,000.

Energy: expense, \$96,000,000; capital investment, \$1,500,000; financial transactions, \$33,641,000.

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development: expense, \$167,557,000; capital investment, \$44,801,000; financial transactions, \$353,000.

Executive Council: expense, \$6,385,000.

Health: expense, \$4,690,537,000; capital investment, \$19,341,000; financial transactions, \$8,700,000.

Human Services: expense, \$1,185,482,000; capital investment, \$1,721,000; financial transactions, \$170,000.

Infrastructure: expense, \$147,500,000; capital investment, \$153,000,000; financial transactions, \$4,900,000.

Innovation and Advanced Education: expense, \$815,725,000; capital investment, \$195,900,000; financial transactions, \$48,000,000.

International and Intergovernmental Relations: expense, \$12,000,000; capital investment, \$6,000.

Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour: expense, \$50,435,000; capital investment, \$300,000.

Justice and Solicitor General: expense, \$431,071,000; capital investment, \$28,771,000.

Municipal Affairs: expense, \$1,185,555,000; capital investment, \$2,526,000; financial transactions, \$109,192,000.

Seniors: expense, \$181,693,000; financial transactions, \$2,375,000.

Service Alberta: expense, \$81,535,000; capital investment, \$10,685,000; financial transactions, \$2,500,000.

Transportation: expense, \$258,827,000; capital investment, \$729,462,000; financial transactions, \$19,531,000.

Treasury Board and Finance: expense, \$42,704,000; capital investment, \$681,000; financial transactions, \$2,518,000; transfer from the lottery fund, \$386,929,000.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, all those in favour of the report please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please say no. That is carried.

I would like to alert the hon. members that Standing Order 61(3) provides that upon the Assembly concurring in the report by the Committee of Supply, the Assembly immediately reverts to Introduction of Bills for introduction of the appropriation bill.

Introduction of Bills

(reversion)

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Bill 18

Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am rising today on behalf of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to request leave to introduce Bill 18, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor has been informed of the contents of this bill and recommends the same for acceptance in this Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 18 read a first time]

4:30

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 12

Common Business Number Act

[Adjourned debate March 12: Mr. Quest]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Madam Speaker, my understanding was that we were going to debate Bill 12 for a bit subsequent here.

The Acting Speaker: Correct.

Are there any members who wish to speak to Bill 12? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Well, I would rather just adjourn instead of speak to it. [interjection] I cede the floor to the Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Madam Speaker, we've had a lot of progress this afternoon, and as such, with some co-operation from both the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills as well as the Member for Edmonton-Calder, I would move that we adjourn the House until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, we need to have adjournment of the debate on the bill first.

Mr. Denis: I would move to adjourn debate, Madam Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: I would again move that we adjourn the Assembly until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow, Madam Speaker.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:32 p.m. to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

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