



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Issue 23

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 28th Legislature

Third Session

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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.

Thursday, March 19, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. O Gracious God and Holy Creator, as we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we ask for renewed energy to help us continue our work back home at the local level with the people in our constituencies. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, I believe you have a visitor in the gallery.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mrs. Cecilia Villanueva Bracho, consul of the United Mexican States in Calgary. Thank you for being here with us. Cecilia is accompanied by Ms Lilia del Carmen Morales, deputy consul from the consulate of the United Mexican States in Calgary, and Mr. Pérez, liaison officer for the seasonal workers agriculture program with the consulate of Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta and Mexico benefit from a long-standing relationship, including significant trade between our two jurisdictions. In fact, Alberta opened its office in Mexico more than a decade ago, and since then our relationship has flourished. Over the years Mexico has grown to become Alberta's third-largest trading partner, with two-way trade between our jurisdictions totalling close to \$2.4 billion.

Today it is my pleasure to ask our guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mrs. Sarich: Mr. Speaker, it is my special honour and privilege to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly two very remarkable Albertans seated in your gallery.

It is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Laurie Hawn, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Centre. He was first elected in 2006 and will be retiring from politics at the next federal election. He served as a parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Defence from 2007 to 2011. Mr. Hawn had a distinguished career with the Canadian armed forces, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In 2010 Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Mr. Hawn to the Queen's Privy Council of Canada, and in 2011 he was appointed to the Treasury Board subcommittee on the strategic and operating review. Mr. Hawn was also selected as a Canadian representative and co-chair of the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board of Defence. In 2012 he was appointed to serve on the Treasury Board cabinet committee, and in 2013 the Prime Minister appointed him to the Treasury Board Sub-Committee on Government Administration.

Mr. Hawn is a servant of the people. His leadership is principled in approach, coupled with an unwavering commitment to the constituents of Edmonton-Centre. He is a true friend of mine and supporter of many individuals and groups within Edmonton and area communities.

Laurie is accompanied this afternoon by his lovely wife, Mrs. Judy Hawn. Mr. Speaker, heartfelt, sincere thanks to Judy, a dynamic spouse, mother, and grandmother. She embodies the ideals we cherish as Albertans: strength, loyalty, and commitment. She has given selflessly and made tremendous sacrifices, all in support of her hero, Laurie, the person she loves dearly.

To both Laurie and Judy, on behalf of all Albertans, our debt of gratitude for your immeasurable contribution and service to our great country, province, and city. May your life's journey continue to be filled with an abundance of blessings. I would now ask the Assembly to please join me in providing the traditional warm welcome.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, and congratulations. Thank you on behalf of all.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, you have a group to introduce?

Mr. Denis: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also very happy to see Laurie and Judy coming to join us today.

I'm also privileged today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 11 individuals from the Department of Justice and Solicitor General who are here today for question period. These are all individuals who work hard every day to help keep our communities safe, put our victims first, and provide access to justice for all of us. I'd ask them each to stand, one by one, as I call their names: Morgan Peachey-Dupon, Kiernan Adams, Nikki Thompson, Carrie Coburn, Lisa Goldrup, Paula Vo, Janet Hughes, Gayln MacIsaac, Barb Hermans, Andrea Muller, and Marcus Smith. I ask that you please give them the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Let us move on with other important guests, starting with school groups.

Strathmore-Brooks, I believe you have a guest to introduce.

Mr. Hale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature on behalf of my colleague from Airdrie 101 visitors from C.W. Perry school here today to watch our proceedings. I would like to introduce the teachers and group leaders and parents with them: Miss Stephanie Wilson, Miss Jolie Nelson, Mr. Curtis Fong, Mr. Brian Jackson, Mrs. Jolene Roberge, and Mrs. Laura Hudson. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there other school or education groups?

Seeing none, let us proceed with the Minister of Human Services.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce two residents of my fantastic constituency of Edmonton-Glenora. Marlene and Richard Hauser have come to the House to watch the proceedings and catch a glimpse of their wonderful granddaughter Lindsay in action as one of our hard-working pages. I thank them for coming this afternoon. I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the Minister of Seniors.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly

Vasant Chotai, who is the president, and Susan Morrissey, who's the executive director of the Edmonton Social Planning Council. Now, the Edmonton Social Planning Council is celebrating its 75th anniversary of serving Edmonton and area with very high-quality research. In fact, later I'll be profiling their most recent document, A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton. I would ask them to please rise and accept our congratulations on their 75th anniversary, and please welcome these two to our Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors, followed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. J. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you some very special constituents that I have here today. Seated in the members' gallery, Herb Holgate is a second-generation farmer from Thorhild county. He and his wife, Rose, have been married for 56 years and worked the same farm his family first homesteaded in 1914. They're accompanied by their daughters: a very good friend of mine, Deb Hamilton; Cindy Wietzel; and Bonnie Ollikka.

Alberta's greatness is borne on the backs of determined, hard-working families like the Holgates. Like families before them, they've dedicated their lives to enhancing the resources our province is naturally blessed with and leaving our communities better than we found them. They're certainly doing that. The Holgates made the journey to Edmonton today to receive the Alberta Century farm and ranch award in recognition of their ongoing contribution to Alberta's proud agricultural and cultural heritage. It's truly an honour for me to be their MLA.

I'd like to ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you 19 interns who began their local government careers in the municipal intern program in May 2014. This program provides an opportunity to gain real-life experience within our departments as we support towns, villages, counties, municipal districts, and cities across this province. This group will join more than 200 interns who have participated in this valuable program since 2002. I would ask them to rise as I say their names: Ryan Westerson, Kaylee Galipeau, Nicola Wood, Stefanie Drozda, Carl Kurppa, Jason Lussier, Darlene Bezeau, Logan Robicheau, Jeff Chipley, Léanne Labossière, Tyler Andreasen, Jenelle Braun, Karl Mielke, Matthew Siddons, Reed DesRoches, Dustin Bisson, Kate Churchill, Jaiden Henry, and Anna Lim. The Municipal Affairs staff with the program: Wendy Peters, Melanie Wood, Chelsea Williamson, and Erin Hambleton. Let's give them the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Thank you. Your second introduction, please.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased to introduce to you Brian Alford, president and chief executive officer of the Safety Codes Council, and his colleagues Tyler Wightman and Erin Stroud. These folks are in the House today for the introduction of Bill 21, the Safety Codes Amendment Act, 2015. Also seated in the public gallery are my staff from the public safety division of Municipal Affairs: Bruce McDonald, James Orr, Colin Robertson, Asha Clarke, Karen Pottruff, and Alex Morrison, who

have been hard at work on Bill 21. Thank you for your outstanding work. If you could rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you three individuals. First, a social work practicum student, Kelsey Ackerman originally comes from Lethbridge and pursued studies at Lethbridge College, Bow Valley College, and Vancouver Island University, and now she is at Grant MacEwan in the social work program. She is planning to work with youth at risk, and she is a very, very excellent prospect, I think, in that regard. The second person I would like to introduce is a first-year social work student working in the office of Friends of Medicare, Robyn Bryant. She is working toward her diploma as well at Grant MacEwan and comes from St. Albert originally. The third person I'd like to introduce is Sandra Azocar, who is the executive director of Friends of Medicare. The three of them came here together today. I'd ask the three of them to rise and receive a very warm reception from the members.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have two minutes each.

Let us start with the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

International Day of Happiness

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The International Day of Happiness will be celebrated tomorrow in all 193 United Nations member states, who have adopted a resolution calling for happiness to be given a greater priority. Here in Alberta we have so much to be thankful for that every day could be considered a provincial day of happiness. Albertans have built a province in which we are privy to a quality of life that is second to none, and since we're under new management, I have no doubt that we are on course for even better things in the future.

We are blessed with some of the most beautiful scenery and greatest recreational opportunities on the planet: mountains, parks, forests, waterways, and grasslands that are so gorgeous we have to Remember to Breathe.

We create unforgettable memories, cheering on the Stampeders, Flames, Oilers, Eskimos, and our amateur sports teams. We enjoy the Calgary Stampede, West Edmonton Mall, a myriad of festivals and celebrations, and so much more.

We have natural resources in abundance; a young, skilled, productive workforce; a strong commitment to innovation and knowledge-based industries courtesy of a financially responsible government provincially, which has created a highly competitive business environment, built modern and efficient infrastructure and the best tax regime in the country by far. Add to that world-class education, health, and human services, Alberta Get Outdoors, or GO, Weekend, which is celebrated on the second weekend of April every year. This year it's April 10 to 12.

Mr. Speaker, during the International Day of Happiness tomorrow, the first day of spring, and on every day that follows, we would do well to remember the words of our Premier: we cannot win a bigger lottery than living right here in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Childhood Immunization

Dr. Swann: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the past several weeks Alberta Liberals have called on this government to take action on a simple question of public safety, mandatory choice on vaccines for school enrolment. When faced with this issue, the PC government has simply offered platitudes about the importance of vaccination but refuses to show real leadership. It says that it needs to consult with school boards and parents to ensure their rights are not infringed upon. Of course, this was the same argument used against gay-straight alliances, which, it was later proved, was inappropriate when it came to protecting the safety of our schoolchildren. That's exactly what vaccines do.

Ensuring our schoolchildren are immunized for these diseases not only protects them but those around them who may not be able to be immunized such as newborn infants, those with allergies, or seniors with immune deficiency. In fact, school immunizations are a great way to protect the whole community, from infected children and the vulnerable to senior citizens. Under our policy Alberta would join four other provinces that require either proof of immunization for students registering in public school or mandatory choice; that is, they would require that a formal decision be made by parents. While exceptions are made for those that cannot be vaccinated or those with religious or other objections, the result is that once given information and faced with a choice, parents often opt to protect their children.

The Minister of Health claimed that provinces with mandatory choice provisions have lower vaccination rates, but that's wrong. Newfoundland has mandatory choice, and its immunization rates are the highest in the country: 95 per cent immunization for mumps, meningitis, measles, and rubella. Alberta is only at 74 per cent. While no one should be forced to take any vaccine, an informed decision should be made. The discomfort of my Conservative colleagues with this issue is obvious, but this issue, a serious public health issue that's growing, needs to be addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Edmonton-South West.

Albertans' Response to Economic Environment

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here in the Legislature we have had much discussion regarding the impact that \$42 oil prices continue to have on our provincial government and the upcoming Budget 2015. I speak today on behalf of my constituents and the many Albertans that also face uncertainty. Our current economic environment has meant that tough decisions are being made province-wide. The total number of layoffs now reaches into the thousands. I am hearing reports of smaller lineups in the food courts and parkades of downtown Calgary. A constituent who is in corporate computer hardware and IT sales had over \$1 million in sales contracts cancelled in just one day.

Through it all and true to our determination as Albertans, constituents are also informing me of innovative ways by which employers are protecting their employees. This has included reducing payroll and overhead costs by introducing new vacation packages and decreasing top-management salary expenses. These steps ensure that employers are still able to get the job done and meet their operational demands.

Layoffs are always difficult and can be a significant burden on individuals and their families. I remind all Albertans that this downturn will not last, and we will get through it together. Our government will continue to work with employers to offer relevant support services to their employees where needed.

This evening the canvas auction for the 2015 Calgary Stampede will take place. The tarp auction for the chuckwagon race is to many Calgarians an indicator of the health of the local economy. I wish success to the bidders and their wagon teams. A gathering of citizens is good for our city and for its people. Mr. Speaker, we are all in this together, and I hope that Albertans remain confident in knowing that we will persevere through these tough times.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I believe we have time to hear one more. Let's hear from Edmonton-South West, please.

Compassionate Caregivers

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little over a year ago, on February 1, 2014, Albertans gained the ability to take eight weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave from employment in order to serve as compassionate caregivers for their loved ones. I'm immensely thankful to have had the privilege of spearheading the Employment Standards (Compassionate Care Leave) Amendment Act, 2012, and I am proud that Albertans now have this opportunity.

But the story behind this milestone for caregivers goes back to my earliest days as an MLA. Knocking on doors and speaking with families in Edmonton-South West back in 2012, one thing kept coming up over and over again, the importance of healthy, stable, supportive families. I was shocked to learn that so many people were being forced to choose between their jobs on the one hand and caring for palliative family members on the other. Alberta was the only province not to have any legislated supports in place to help these compassionate caregivers or to give them the peace of mind that they would not lose their job should they need to take time to care for a loved one.

Over the 2012-2013 fiscal year alone 573 Albertans accessed the federal compassionate care EI benefits, which was a 16 per cent increase over the previous year. However, the federal EI benefits don't protect the caregivers' jobs. I was deeply disturbed by this, Mr. Speaker. Having consulted with stakeholders and experts such as the Canadian Cancer Society, the Alberta Caregivers Association, and a research team at the University of Alberta, the need for legislation that would protect compassionate caregivers was obvious. The expertise and support of these organizations and individuals played a huge part in ensuring this bill was passed in the House in the spring of 2013.

Now Albertans have had access to job-protected compassionate care leave for a full year thanks to the hard work of these motivated individuals and the families and caregivers who spoke up. No longer will any Albertan have to make the choice between being a caregiver for a loved one or keeping a job. Albertans are better served by it, and I'm proud to have played my part and even more grateful to have been of service to young families in my constituency and across the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Hon. members, 35 seconds maximum for the question, 35 seconds maximum for the response or reply.

Let us begin with the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Health Care Performance Measures

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Five years ago this government made a commitment that by this March we'd have the best health care system in the world. The report was called *Becoming the Best*. It promised that all surgeries would be completed within 14 weeks. So how have we done? Knee surgeries take 49 weeks; hip and back surgeries take 37; stomach surgery, 47 weeks. Minister, I get that this province is growing, and I get that your bureaucracy is growing. After that failed plan, why would Albertans believe that the plan you announced yesterday will be any different?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have the same challenges in health care that I think every Canadian jurisdiction is wrestling with. Five-year plans are important goals, they're important targets, and they're long-term objectives that the government aims to pursue. We will keep working towards them. We'll keep working with the front-line staff, the people that provide that compassionate care, caring for Albertans when they need it. We'll keep working with them, ensuring that there's local decision-making to help ensure that Albertans are always looked after.

Mrs. Forsyth: Minister, you failed every one. Every single one has been a failure.

Health experts have repeatedly told us that the most important measurement of the health care system is the ER benchmark. It's why we held an emergency debate in this Legislature in 2010. Five years ago Albertans were promised that by March of this year 90 per cent of patients would be admitted within eight hours. Here's how we're doing. In Calgary 40 per cent of patients are admitted within eight hours. In Edmonton it is even worse, at about 30. Minister, rejigging isn't helping. What are you going to do about it?

Mr. Bhullar: Mr. Speaker, what we're going to do is ensure that Albertans have a quality health care system that is there for them when they need it. It is a system – let's be very honest – that can use improvement, absolutely. We'll continue to make improvements in the system by working with the front lines to make improvements. There are developments happening. For example, wait time for radiation therapy for cancer was three weeks last year, in March of 2014, whereas it was 5.3 weeks just four years ago. Steps are moving. Things are moving. We are continuing to . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, and we'll probably hear more in the next supplemental.

Mrs. Forsyth: Tell that to somebody who's waiting for radiation. Three weeks? Come on, Minister.

Five years ago Albertans were promised that by this March patients needing a specialist would see one within one month of referral. [interjection] It's not funny. Today they wait three months, but in Calgary patients waiting for a spine specialist can't even see one. The U of C is turning people away because they have 1,803 people on a wait-list. This is unacceptable, Minister. Since 2010 we've spent \$75 billion on health care, and today someone can't even get the access that they need to get spine surgery. Minister, what are you . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's let the minister respond.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, Alberta is a vastly growing jurisdiction. We have more and

more people coming to our jurisdiction every single year. Nobody brings a hospital with them. Nobody brings a doctor with them. Nobody brings a specialist with them. That's why we're building infrastructure that's needed for health care. That's why we're working with the front line of health care providers to ensure Albertans are taken care of. That's why when we bring forward our budget next week, it'll be a sound, principled fiscal plan that'll ensure Albertans are getting the core services they need.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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

Provincial Elections

Mr. Saskiw: It takes a lot of guts, courage, and determination to bring in a fixed election law: that was what the ESRD minister said just three years ago, fawning over his government bringing in a fixed election law. Now, the Premier laughs and shrugs it off, but the reality is that Albertans expect leadership they can trust, not just more of the same broken promises. To the Premier: do you agree with your minister that this law is important to protect the integrity of our democracy?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, I think that under our Constitution any election is important to protect our democracy, and as someone who shares my same profession, I'm sure that the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills would agree.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That same ESRD minister spoke about fair play when he rightly noted the unfair manipulation of the election process by former Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. You see, he called an early and unnecessary election just days after Stockwell Day, a former minister of this province, became federal Leader of the Opposition. Sounds familiar. To the minister: do you agree with your colleague that using Liberal tactics and manipulating the date of an election is below the office of the Premier?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are very challenging times, as you know. We've got challenges where we've got oil sitting at \$40 a barrel or just above that and we've got a \$7 billion hole in our budget. But this is a time, as we prepare our budget, when we go out and we talk to Albertans about what's important to them and hear from them. That's what's important to this government, to hear from Albertans.

Mr. Saskiw: Mr. Speaker, if you called an election when oil and gas went up and down, we'd have elections all the time.

The Premier once asked Albertans to judge him by, and I quote: the integrity we have displayed. Getting some clarity on how he can break the integrity of his promises and the word of his MLAs matters to Albertans. The PC MLA for Calgary-Shaw said that "fixed election dates do work" and that it's important to not leave "the advantage to the government of the day and denying Albertans the certainty of an election." It's not bad advice. If the government is going to break its own laws, will they at the very least give Albertans the certainty of the election date?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that we talk with Albertans and we hear from Albertans. These are

challenging times. These are not business-as-usual times. This Premier has a great deal of integrity. We'll be laying out a plan on March 26 with the Finance minister, and then we'll want to make sure that Albertans have an opportunity for input as we move forward in the years to come.

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

Agency and Government Management Compensation

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Premier is set to pin the blame on Albertans with the largest tax increase in Alberta history, today we found more fat, waste, and mismanagement across government. Travel Alberta rakes in \$50 million every year from taxpayers. According to the public service pension plan Travel Alberta has 50 managers. The total number of their staff: 100. Minister, how can you justify a \$2 billion tax grab when we have one manager for every employee at Travel Alberta?

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

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you that the job that Travel Alberta does is quite amazing. The funds that come to Travel Alberta come from the tourism levy, which is specifically set up to promote tourism and develop tourism.

Thank you.

Mr. Saskiw: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The fact is that while your PC government has the most bloated, most expensive government in Canada, you're asking average Albertans to take the hit. After the Wildrose exposed excessive waste like \$1,000 dinners and tuxedo rentals, the government ordered a review of management at Travel Alberta. The CEO has been tossed, but records show that there are 50 managers in a 100-employee organization. Minister, how can you expect Albertans to put up with your doom and gloom when you can't even clean up your own house?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The work that Travel Alberta does is incredibly important to the economy of this province. That is how we are diversifying this economy. Money is being brought in by tourists, and we are encouraging Albertans to travel within our province as well.

Mr. Saskiw: Mr. Speaker, golf courses, golden handshakes, corporate handouts, and maintaining perks for their bloated bureaucracy: these are PC priorities. While Albertans everywhere are hurting, managers across government have never seen it so good. Fresh off an 8 per cent pay raise this summer, senior managers will see the taxpayer-funded portion of their pension bumped up by 22 per cent, and while they're going to raise taxes, the Premier and his MLAs are the highest paid in Canada. Minister, when are you going to stop cleaning out Albertans' wallets and clean up this mess?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, I think the member knows well, or at least it's been explained enough times in this House, that the pension benefits don't change. The government is moving to ensure that the pension fund is sustainable and solvent, and I think that's a prudent thing to do. That's what a real fiscal conservative would do.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Investigation into Release of Information

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the government told us that it halted an internal probe into alleged breaches of cabinet confidentiality and FOIP laws because the Privacy Commissioner is conducting an investigation. We also learned that the Calgary Police Service investigation into the same matter has gone cold. The Minister of Infrastructure has been publicly accused of peddling dirt on his colleague the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs to the opposition and the media. To the Minister of Infrastructure: will he categorically deny his involvement in leaking the phone bill?

2:00

Mr. Khan: I thank the hon. member for the question. As the hon. member alluded to, we've answered this question a number of times, Mr. Speaker. This is an independent investigation led by the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. It would be inappropriate for us to try to interfere or to try to rush the report along. We have confidence that in due time the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will complete her report.

Dr. Swann: So the minister doesn't deny it.

When faced with these allegations, the only answer the government can muster is that it's part of an ongoing, independent investigation. While we respect the independence of these offices, Albertans have a right to know the scope of the investigations, especially if cabinet ministers are involved. To the Minister of Infrastructure again: are you being investigated by the Privacy Commissioner for breaching the FOIP Act and peddling personal information about your caucus colleagues? Yes or no?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, as I identified yesterday to this member – and maybe he wants to check *Hansard*, but for his own edification, the police operate fully independently of any political authority in this country. What's happened, if there is an investigation or not: what I would suggest is that this member simply go and contact the Calgary Police Service and ask them because I'm not about to. I don't interfere in investigations.

The Speaker: Thank you.

A final supplemental, hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the *Metro* news reports today that the PC Party has called in a former Calgary Police Service officer to investigate claims of alleged bribery in an Edmonton nomination race. While that seems odd in itself, what is more surprising is that allegations against one member of the cabinet led to his resignation while he tries to clear his name, while the Minister of Infrastructure remains in the front bench. Why hasn't the Minister of Infrastructure stepped aside while these investigations are going on? Why the double standard, or is he waiting to be told to step down?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader. The matter is under some review, under some investigation.

Mr. Denis: It is under investigation, that he mentioned, part of the matter, that is. But, Mr. Speaker, again, I've answered these questions before, and I have no further comment.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the ND opposition.

Surgery Delays at Stollery Children's Hospital

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday I asked why so many children at the Stollery children's hospital have to suffer the emotional toll of cancelled surgeries. I was told that it was a blip, it was flu season, you know, all the kinds of answers we're used to. Today the interim chief of pediatric surgery at Stollery stood with me and challenged the minister's assertions head-on. He told us that it's not a blip; it's a trend, and it's getting much worse. So again to the Premier: will he explain why Alberta families are seeing 100 per cent more cancelled surgeries at the Stollery hospital this year over last?

Mr. Bhullar: Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, because last year there were 1,643 emergency surgeries, and this year there are 1,931 year to date already. So the fact is that there are 287 more emergency cases that have to be dealt with. Approximately 200 of those emergency cases were dealt with without affecting any other surgeries or cancelling them. About 87 of those emergencies did result in other surgeries having to be cancelled or postponed for the day, but it was because of emergencies.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, our numbers don't include emergency surgeries, so it's completely not relevant to this issue.

Now, the minister told us that a number of cancelled surgeries are only 1 per cent of the total number, but he included in-patient and outpatient surgeries. In fact, the cancelled surgeries for in-patient kids are the most serious, and those are the ones that are being turned away. The chief of pediatric surgery suggested today that sometimes the rate of cancellation of in-patient surgeries is as high as 30 per cent. So again to the Premier: can he explain why we don't have enough beds for the kids who need these surgeries?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member's question and the statements before are something that she needs to consider very wisely because she herself said that in-patient surgeries are the ones that have had to be cancelled or postponed. The reason why that happens is quite simply because an emergency comes in the door. When an emergency comes in the door, they have to find a way to fit in that surgery, and sometimes that means delaying the surgery that is not an emergency.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the chief of pediatric surgery says that the information that we're getting from this government is just wrong, and the problem is that we don't have enough beds. In fact, the Stollery is performing four times as many surgeries now as they did 10 years ago, and the number of beds has hardly changed. They simply aren't doing their job providing the health care for Alberta's children. Why? Why is that?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We continue to ensure that Albertans are getting access to timely and effective health care treatments. This is always a continuous effort to ensure that we are bettering the services for Albertans, but sometimes what is needed are suggestions that are constructive to actually make things better. We welcome them from the other side or doctors or anybody else at any time. We're moving forth to ensure that Albertans have the health care they need when they need it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Maintenance Enforcement

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. One of the ways to build for a better future is to crack down on the deadbeat parents so that Martha and Henry's grandchildren are getting the money to which they are entitled, yet according to Stats Canada 65 per cent of maintenance enforcement cases in this province are in arrears, so those kids don't get to play hockey or go on a school trip. To the Justice minister: why are 65 per cent of MEP accounts in Alberta in arrears?

Mr. Denis: Well, first off, Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of that question. I don't have the statistics in front of me, but I will tell you one other thing, that maintenance enforcement plays a very important role in dealing with child support. I know that this member agrees. But every case also has to be handled on an individual, case-by-case basis. It's a fundamental principle of justice.

Ms Blakeman: Wow. That was a non answer. All right. I don't think he knows.

Back to the Justice minister. Twenty-eight thousand three hundred and seventy-five maintenance enforcement cases have money owing at the end of the last fiscal year, a total of just under half a billion dollars that Alberta kids are not getting for food, for clothing, for recreation, for school fees, whatever. Why has this number not improved at all, almost, over the last decade?

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that with more and more people coming to this province, unfortunately, maintenance enforcement does require some more resources, and we have provided more resources. Maintenance enforcement is an incredible part of our child support program. But again I say to this member that every case must be decided on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Ms Blakeman: No. The year before there were 44,000 enrolled, and then there were 43,000 enrolled last year, so, no, not a whole bunch more.

Back to the same minister. Now, despite this minister consistently going over budget on the maintenance enforcement file, we continue to have kids in Alberta going without because the government couldn't collect for them. Why is that, Minister?

Mr. Denis: Again the same answer.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Provincial Grant and Loan Guarantee Programs

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has two seasons, winter and construction. Without the latter season our land and buildings would not be able to weather the winter storms, and, as we all know, Alberta is beginning to feel the effects of a very tight budget. Will we expect to see grants from municipalities cut? While there are some things that we can afford to lose or postpone, funding for roads, land, and building construction are not among them. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs. My municipalities are waiting. When can we expect to find out the recipients of the collaborative government initiative grants?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question, a very important question. I thank the member for asking it because this was asked at AAMD and C as well. Our stakeholders and partners, municipalities, want to know this. Our municipal partners can expect by the end of March – we're starting to roll out now. Alberta community partnership program applications have already been under review, and they'll be rolling out. In addition to that is the small communities fund partnership with the federal government. Application deadlines for those are April 2.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Fenske: Thank you. To the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. The Vegreville hospital sits on a flood risk area as it is right next to a large creek. It's only common sense to be able to deal with this issue before it becomes a bigger issue. Can we expect to see some funding from their request to the community resilience program for the Vegreville hospital?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you. Thank you, hon. member. The hospital itself is sited in an area that is above the 1 in 100 years flood level. However, as seen in past flood events, road access can be impacted during significant flood events. There are a number of programs available to help municipalities mitigate the potential risks of flooding to protect Albertans, and I understand from the Minister of ESRD that an application for flood mitigation funding has been submitted by the town of Vegreville under the Alberta community resiliency program. It's a long-term program that will help reduce floods and will be rolling out soon.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Ms Fenske: Thank you. My final question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The feeder association loan guarantee program has extended the amount that can be borrowed but demands 5 per cent, which is up to \$50,000 of the total value, to be paid before receiving cattle. Can we expect to see this percentage dropped in the future?

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In August of last year the minister did change the loan limit from \$500,000 to \$1 million, and that is the first action taken from the rural development action plan. In fact, a comprehensive review of the plan is in process right now, and we look forward to the results.

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

Allegations of Criminal Wrongdoing

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, this government seems intent on investigating itself. Despite allegations of bribery directed at the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie and former Associate Minister of Persons with Disabilities, the government insists that it is purely an internal party matter. Now the PCs have hired a former police officer to conduct their internal investigation. What they don't seem to understand is that allegations that would appear to violate sections 119 and 121 of the Criminal Code of Canada need to be investigated by the real police.

So to the Premier: will you do the right thing and forward the sworn statement that is . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice. The time for the question expired, so I have to recognize you.

Mr. Denis: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If this member has any information that he thinks would be of interest to a law enforcement agency, I highly encourage him to go and contact that particular agency. Any further answers have been done on Monday. I would suggest that he check *Hansard*.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. An interesting answer since the information that I am referring to was addressed to the Premier. Would you give the same advice to the Premier that you just gave to me?

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, this has been asked and answered.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. While I want to give the government one last chance to do the right thing and, frankly, to do their job, if the government won't appoint a special prosecutor or forward the evidence to the police themselves, then we will. Last chance, Mr. Minister. Will you do the right thing and appoint a special prosecutor or forward the evidence to the police? Yes or no?

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, to appoint a special prosecutor, what we would have to do is actually have a charge laid. To my interest there has been no charge laid. Again, if he has any information, this member should be declaring it directly to the police and taking it out of this Chamber.

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

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month the Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirmed a positive case of BSE in an Alberta cow. Now, the animal did not enter the human food or animal feed systems, and that's vitally important, but, as we all know, when it was first diagnosed in 2003, BSE caused a widespread export ban on Canadian cattle and devastated our beef industry. We've worked hard to reassure both domestic and worldwide customers that our beef is safe and to reopen our export markets. Now this. My question to the associate minister of rural development: what specific action is our government taking to support our beef producers?

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Mr. McDonald: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cow was identified through the BSE surveillance program and, as the member said, did not enter the food system, and there were no implications for human health. We continue to work closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as they are the lead on this investigation. Alberta and Canada have a comprehensive animal health food safety system in place to assist the situation and have demonstrated that it does work.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Dr. Starke: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that the U.S. lobby group R-CALF is using this case to justify the continuing requirement for very damaging mandatory country of origin labelling, that costs our producers millions of dollars, what specific measures is our government taking to refute these spurious and vexatious arguments linking BSE and MCOOL?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Mr. McDonald: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. As the member mentioned, there is no legitimate connection between BSE and mandatory country of origin labelling. The World Trade Organization has already ruled three times that the U.S. is failing to meet its trade obligations because of COOL. We are very confident that the WTO will once again rule in Canada's favour, and we expect that report to be released in the spring.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: given that we export over 1 billion dollars' worth of beef annually and given the vital importance of maintaining open export markets and given that China, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Peru, and Belarus have all placed a ban on imports of our beef, what exactly is our government doing to stop more countries from joining that list?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Mr. McDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few countries have temporarily halted their beef imports. Now, the total impact for Alberta is less than 5 per cent. Our major trading partners have indicated that they're confident in the processes that we have in place, and all steps are being taken to ensure comprehensive and effective investigations.

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

Legal Aid Funding

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It is well known that our courts, particularly family courts, are clogged with people self-representing because they can't afford a lawyer but, paradoxically, make too much money for legal aid. Now, this government's negligence on legal aid in effect makes the children of the Marthas and Henrys out there fall through the cracks with repeated delays in our family courts. To the Justice minister: why does the minister feel that it is appropriate to let almost 50 per cent of the children and grandchildren of Martha and Henry languish through family court with no legal aid assistance for parents to hire lawyers?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, the provincial government funds approximately 80 per cent of legal aid already, and through an intersessional deposit we provide an additional 5 and a half million dollars for legal aid. Of course, we have a budget coming next week. I would suggest that this member stay tuned.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Back to the same minister: given that as of the upcoming budget the considerable expense of any court-appointed legal counsel comes from legal aid coffers, thereby further diminishing their funds available for regular legal aid, is the minister committed to covering court-ordered counsel past April out of the department's resources?

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, this member will have to stay tuned for the March 26 budget.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. Well, can the minister share with us his reasoning for failing to approve, despite being required to do so, Legal Aid's revised internal budget for 2014-15, which they submitted back before Christmas? How come?

Mr. Denis: Again, Mr. Speaker, we have to act in the best interests of all actors, including taxpayers. Five and a half million dollars will be provided in addition to legal aid this year, and I also raised this at the national meeting of Justice ministers several months ago, about the federal government's lack of funding for this important program.

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

Postsecondary Education Accessibility

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the low price of oil, layoffs are occurring across many job fields and industries. Often when people are laid off, they choose to go back to school in order to update their skills or train in different fields of study completely. Given these concerns my question is for the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. Does the minister have concrete measures to accommodate the demand of this possible influx in enrolment?

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

Mr. Scott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can say that there is capacity across Campus Alberta, and the system is responsive to changes in demand. My department is working very closely with our Campus Alberta partners to determine how both short-term and long-term pressures can be addressed, and this is something that we do on an ongoing basis. Accessibility is extremely important and will be one of the biggest priorities in our postbudget consultation process across Campus Alberta. I look forward to the member's input as we work with all of our Campus Alberta partners to build a system that is focused on accessibility, sustainability, and excellence.

Mr. Xiao: To the same minister: given that students may have to live away from home in order to obtain the skills they require, are financial support systems in place for living arrangements?

2:20

Mr. Scott: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that Student Aid Alberta provides funding to help Albertans cover the living costs associated with pursuing a postsecondary education. When a student applies for Student Aid Alberta loans and grants, their living costs are assessed using a standard monthly budget based on their marital status and whether they have dependent children. We will continue to review these costs to ensure Albertans get the funding that they need to pursue their postsecondary education. The member will also be happy to know that outside of student loans, we invest \$234 million in student aid supports. These supports include scholarships, bursaries, grants, and debt management programs.

Mr. Xiao: Again to the same minister: given that the government has promised to rein in spending, how much funding is currently available to assist out-of-work Albertans with their postsecondary education needs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is right that we will be very fiscally prudent with government spending going forward. We know Alberta is facing a significant fiscal challenge. We will continue to support Albertans who want to further their training and their postsecondary education. In 2013-2014 nearly 61,000 Albertans received a total of \$775 million in combined federal and provincial loans and grants to support their educational goals. In addition, the Alberta government also provided \$74 million in scholarships and other awards. In recent years we made it easier to access student loan funding by streamlining processes.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, followed by Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Flood Recovery Funding

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is grabbing almost \$20 million from taxpayers to rebuild the Kananaskis golf course despite the fact that thousands of Albertans are still waiting for disaster relief claims to be addressed. Minister, you've missed your target deadline to complete 80 per cent of eligible DRP claims by over a year now. How can you possibly justify spending taxpayer money like a drunken sailor on this golf course when a hundred per cent of flood victims are not yet back on their feet?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. To start with, I'd like to correct an inaccuracy. Of 10,500 flood claim cases, 80 per cent of those files have been completed, and we've added 15 extra people to ensure that we'll have those completed by June. I want to also say that the estimated cost to rebuild is \$14.6 million, and \$2.3 million has been spent on work to date. The matter is certainly under review, and it is right now. The dollars that were spent, the \$2.3 million to date, for the golf course consists of flood cleanup and salvage.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's two years later, and Albertans from Canmore to Highwood are still waiting for disaster relief. I think Albertans have been patient, but when they see this PC government spending \$16 million, \$14 million on a golf course, whichever it is, when they're still trying to rebuild their lives, they have a right to be concerned, I think. Minister, is rebuilding golf courses really worth more to you than getting people back into their homes?

Mrs. McQueen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that the Premier shares concerns about this matter as well. No further funding will be spent on this, and the matter is under review right now.

Mr. Stier: Okay. Well, that's interesting. That's a new piece of information.

Minister, given that you're back on track to rebuild the golf course by June '16 but missed your target deadline to close eligible DRP claims by one year and counting, can you tell us when you will finally get around, then, to closing a hundred per cent of all

eligible DRP files and getting the money to the people that really need it?

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect, I'll say it slower. We have said that we've added 15 extra people. We have committed to have the outstanding cases, just under 2,000 cases, completed by June of this year. We've put the staff in place to do that, and we're on target to do that. As I also said in the question before, there is no further funding for the golf course, and it's under review.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, followed by Drumheller-Stettler.

Small-business Assistance

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Small businesses have a profound impact here in our province, making up 95 per cent of all businesses in Alberta. In 2012 Alberta small-business GDP per capita was almost \$20,000 while the Canadian average was about \$13,000. Last year I had the privilege of working on creating what became the small-business strategy for Alberta, a strategy to become an action plan that responds to the needs expressed by Alberta small businesses, making it simpler to do business in Alberta. My question is for the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. What's this government's plan in addition to the small-business strategy and the Common Business Number Act, which was introduced on March 11, to ensure the burden on small business is reduced even further, allowing Alberta . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

We'll have to hear the answer now. The time for the question has expired.

The hon. minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank this member for all his work on the small-business file. Well done.

Alberta is the best place in Canada to do business, and we intend to keep it that way, Mr. Speaker. As a key contributor to the small-business strategy the member knows that small business needs a big voice in government, and that's what we are giving to them. Deliverables from the small-business strategy allow us to have constant feedback from Alberta small-business owners and entrepreneurs. Our new business adviser service is also up and delivering on their goal to get small business the information they need with a hands-off approach, no runarounds, and no red tape.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: in light of the government's diversification economic strategy, what are you doing to ensure that those that work in Alberta's labour industry experience as little negative economic impact as possible during what are becoming very difficult times?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government of Alberta provides support to help employers and workers through these difficult times, including career counselling and resumé preparation. We are working with underrepresented groups such as youth and aboriginal people to connect them to the workforce and ensure that they have the skills to stay gainfully employed. In January, for example, we joined the federal government and Women Building Futures to announce funding for their online learning initiative to

help train women in construction trades in all corners of this province.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Quest: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what efforts, if any, will be taken to help companies avoid layoffs and to encourage continued labour investment here in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Scott: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Although we are seeing some short-term declines in new job openings across multiple sectors, we expect Alberta's labour market to remain strong in the years ahead. Employers considering layoffs are encouraged to take advantage of the federal work-sharing program, designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when business activity decreases. We're also working with employers to educate and train Alberta's workers through programs such as the Canada-Alberta job grant, through which more than 490 Alberta employers and 3,450 employees have been approved for a variety of training programs.

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

Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The former Minister of Service Alberta expanded the number of public board members at AMVIC and filled it with close friends. The present minister appears to be unaware of this. Take Andy Hayher; this member is clearly close to the former minister. On Twitter they bragged about selling memberships for this Premier. Minister, will you review the appointments at AMVIC and ensure these members are there because of qualifications and not connections?

Mr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question. What I want to assure you is that I have met with the AMVIC board. I want to assure the hon. member that the members of this board add value to AMVIC. The members of this board are passionate Albertans who care deeply about our consumer protection agenda, and we're very lucky to have these members onboard.

Mr. Strankman: Interesting information, Mr. Speaker.

Given that two other board members went to law school with the former minister and considering that they are personal friends, I continue to ask, Minister: are you ready to clean house and make merit-based appointments at AMVIC?

Mr. Khan: As the hon. member alludes to, Mr. Speaker, a number of members of the AMVIC board are lawyers. They're professionals. They care passionately about the consumer protection agenda that we have in Service Alberta. I want to assure the hon. member that all of our members on that board are passionate Albertans who are doing a very good job.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly not doing his job. He has a job to protect Alberta's consumers, but he is only protecting PC friends. Minister, you keep hiding behind a draft report. This report will tell Albertans everything they need to know about this agency. You know the report is ready. This House knows the report is ready. Will you do the right thing and release this report today?

Mr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, again, this member has asked this question a number of times, and my answer remains consistent. We have a draft review. We're working with the board on the draft review. Our intention is to make that report public, and we will in due course.

2:30 Support for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

Mr. Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, Edmonton's Zebra Child Protection Centre, which serves a good portion of northern Alberta, is literally bursting at the seams, so much so that they've had to make a public appeal for \$1 million so they are able to expand their space to properly serve the growing numbers of children needing their specialized help. My question is to the Minister of Human Services. What is this government doing to ensure that victims served by centres like Zebra are receiving the services they need and don't have to resort to public appeals?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No child should ever have to suffer sexual abuse or exploitation. The Zebra Child Protection Centre does excellent work, and we provide service to a lot of children and families. Currently we are working on a proposal with the Sheldon Kennedy centre, the Caribou, and the Zebra to develop a provincial practice framework for this, and I can assure you that in this department about \$26 million is spent every year to help these children and families.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General: why is this government not adequately funding Zebra and any other community organizations like them who do the heavy lifting to protect our children?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I echo the comments of the Minister of Human Services. One child being exploited or abused is obviously one too many. That's why our ministry provides a three-year, \$450,000 grant from the victims of crime fund to the Zebra centre. I've toured the Zebra centre. They as well as the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary do amazing work, and I think it's a good use of the victims of crime fund.

The Speaker: Final supplemental.

Mr. Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: how are you working with the representatives of the centre to ensure that these victimized children are not further traumatized in our courts?

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, both of these centres, particularly the Zebra centre, which the Member for Edmonton-South West talks about, provide very important work, but they also provide wraparound services in the context of the children's age and the circumstances they may have. The Crown prosecution service, the RCMP, the Edmonton police, the victim service providers: they all work together at this one place. It's a one-stop shop. Again, not only is it a good use of our tax dollars; it supports victims first, which is part of Alberta Justice's mission.

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

Electricity Prices

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The deregulated electricity system in our province has resulted in a number of middlemen profiting off Albertans, causing retail prices to remain among the highest in the country. More than this, we've learned that some customers of Direct Energy have been receiving faulty bills for property they don't even own or for entire apartment complexes. To the Minister of Energy: will you admit that the deregulated system, that your government sponsored, has failed wildly in providing Albertans with affordable electricity?

Mr. Oberle: Not at all, Mr. Speaker, because it just simply isn't true. In the time since deregulation, in which we introduced a private market for generation in this province, Alberta has built an infrastructure build as large as the province of Saskatchewan, all of it without one penny of public debt. British Columbia carries \$20 billion; Ontario, \$44 billion; Quebec, \$54 billion in public debt; Alberta, zero.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about consumer debt.

Given that even the Premier himself admitted last October that we've been paying more than we should for electricity in our province and given that these unnecessary electricity retailers add costs to Albertans' power bills, back to the same minister: will your government take action to save Albertans money on their electricity bills by removing these middlemen?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said no such thing, as a matter of fact, last fall. What he did say is that he would look into the regulated rate option to determine whether or not fluctuations were impacting consumers. We did exactly that, and we're moving to act on that right now.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, given that customers who have been locked into electricity contracts have not experienced the advantages that come with lower wholesale prices and given that some of the retailers have been investigated in other provinces for forging signatures on household utility contracts, when will this government finally do the right thing, re-regulate electricity in this province, and save Albertans money?

Mr. Oberle: It's just simply not going to happen, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member, rather than passing innuendo, has any evidence whatsoever of anybody forging signatures, I very highly recommend that he forward that to the police. Otherwise, the innuendo is not a useful part of the debate in this House.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood, followed by Banff-Cochrane.

Asia Pacific Trade

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Market access is crucial to the Alberta economy. One of the new initiatives, called the trans-Pacific partnership, or TPP, led by the Prime Minister of Canada, promotes free trade among countries like Canada, China, Australia, Japan, and other Pacific nations. My question is to the hon. Associate Minister of Asia Pacific Relations. How are we working with the federal government to capture this opportunity and advance Albertans' interests?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Woo-Paw: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Opening new markets for Alberta's goods and services is the most pressing issue facing our province. The trans-Pacific partnership holds tremendous opportunity for Alberta, representing a market of 792 million people and a combined GDP of close to 40 per cent of the world's economy. A strong working relationship with our federal counterparts is critical to our success internationally. I'm pleased to inform the member that since Canada entered into the TPP in 2012, Alberta has been invited to participate in 14 negotiating rounds to represent . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Let's hear the first supplemental.

Mr. Luan: To the same minister: given that China is paramount to Alberta's resources, however China is not part of the table for TPP, how is our government helping to resolve this?

Ms Woo-Paw: Mr. Speaker, China's fast-growing economy holds a lot of opportunity for this province. Our exports to China have more than tripled in the last decade, making it our second-largest trading partner, and 80 per cent of China's investment in Canada, \$54 billion, is in the province of Alberta. Some of the examples of things that we're doing in this area include the Ministry of IIR working with external stakeholders to offer Alberta's SMEs seminars to ensure that they have the competence to tap into this market. Our international offices are helping companies both ways, and we are also opening an office in Guangzhou, China, this year.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Luan: To the same minister: Alberta has the potential to export large quantities of agricultural products to Asia Pacific countries. What is our government doing to promote that?

Ms Woo-Paw: Mr. Speaker, like I said, a strong collaborative working relationship with our federal counterpart is critical. Some of the things that we're doing in this regard include working together to eliminate tariff barriers that impact our agricultural sector and active participation in trade agreement development such as the recently implemented Canada-Korea trade agreement. That all helps to enhance exports and trade to this very dynamic, fast-growing region, in turn creating jobs and creating wealth for Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, followed by Stony Plain.

Utilities Consumer Advocate Advisory Board

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week was the annual AAMD and C convention. This convention was a great opportunity for the provincial government to connect with our municipal partners. At this convention a number of municipal leaders brought forward concerns that this government is planning to dissolve the advisory board of the Utilities Consumer Advocate. To the Minister of Service Alberta: after our municipal partners have expressed their concern with dissolving the UCA Advisory Board, does this government still intend to take away their only method for stakeholder input into the unregulated utility market?

Mr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. member for the question. He's absolutely correct. We did meet with a number of

stakeholders at the recent conference of the AAMD and C. We met with some partners from AUMA, and we met with some members of the board. Traditionally the UCA Advisory Board has played a role of policy and regulatory advisement. Recently they've developed into more of a stakeholder group working with the UCA, and because of that I'm very happy to say that we will not be dissolving the UCA Advisory Board.

Mr. Casey: To the same minister: if the UCA Advisory Board was established to provide advice to the advocate when the market was deregulated, what will be their role moving forward now that the advocate is established?

Mr. Khan: Again, I'd like to thank the member for the question. That's a very good question. I've recently had a number of discussions with the chair of the UCA Advisory Board as well as members of the board. There's a commitment to work with our department to develop a framework for that stakeholder engagement piece, which we all recognize is very important in the success of the UCA and their office.

2:40

Mr. Casey: To the same minister: if the advisory board is still required to ensure that stakeholders can bring their concerns forward, is the office of the UCA doing an effective job?

Mr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure this hon. member and all members of the House that the UCA and his office are doing an outstanding job protecting consumers when it comes to issues around electricity and gas from a consumer perspective. I want to inform the House that last year the UCA received over 28,000 calls and has fielded almost 112,000 hits to their website. They do a remarkable job. We're proud to support that office.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The time for question period has expired. In 30 seconds from now we will continue with Members' Statements, and we'll start with Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Melinda Hunt

Mrs. Towle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday our family received devastating news. We were shattered, we were broken, and over the weekend we took some time for togetherness. Today I want to tell you the story of Melinda Hunt. Melinda is a vibrant, smart, amazing 18-year-old, who our family loves and adores. She is my niece, and her dad, Ron, was my brother. I felt strongly that I couldn't do her justice today, so I'm going to tell her story in her own words.

Last week my neurologist said: I'm sorry, Melinda; you have juvenile Huntington's disease. Of course, I broke down, and my world shattered. Then he opened the other envelope and said: you have 63 CAG repeats. The juvenile version means that the symptoms of Huntington's start earlier, and they're more intense, and they progress much faster.

I started to realize that I act exactly how my dad did when he was sick. At work it was 10 times harder for me than it should be, my short-term memory was messing with me, and I was having intense troubles counting money, making change, or counting anything. I would stop what I was doing, and I would

break down. My dad had a rare case of Huntington's and had high CAG repeats also. It came with the label that he's going to die young, and he did. My CAG repeats are higher. That means mine is worse than his.

With such a high number of CAG repeats and the term juvenile Huntington's, I'm terrified that my death isn't far into my future. I'll be 19 in three months. I've just learned to live life as best I can. I love it and make the best of it, like my dad. I don't hate my dad for giving me his disease. He's my hero, and he always will be.

However, that doesn't mean my world isn't shattered. I've never felt my heart sink so low into my chest. I haven't cried so much since my dad passed, and I feel sick. Having them look at your face and tell you that you have Huntington's disease and you're going to die is paralyzing.

Mr. Speaker, we have one job, and that is to live an extraordinary life. We share this story with all Albertans to help bring awareness and some compassion to those with such rare diseases as Huntington's.

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

Seniors' Supports

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government knows that Alberta's seniors are an essential part of our communities, who need adequate programs to support their needs. Through their many sacrifices they have enriched our communities. Ensuring that our seniors are well cared for and well looked after is something I am deeply committed to. Seniors make up 7 per cent of my wonderful constituency of Edmonton-McClung.

Like all great societies, we as Albertans are only as good as those who have come before us. Because of all the hard work they have done to help build this great province that we know and love today, it is our obligation, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that seniors across our communities continue to have the support they need to live independent and fulfilling lives and that they are provided with the right care in the right place at the right time.

That is why the government of Alberta has been acting quickly to provide more spaces for seniors and to enhance the safety of seniors' lodges and apartments across the province. Of the more than 26 new spaces almost 400 will be allocated for long-term care throughout the province and more than 300 for restorative care in Edmonton and Calgary. Supportive living provides a homelike setting where residents remain as independent as possible with access to services and care that meets their changing needs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful that we have a government which has made seniors a priority not just through words but by action.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Bill 21

Safety Codes Amendment Act, 2015

Mr. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 21, the Safety Codes Amendment Act, 2015.

The amendments will strengthen the administration, governance, and enforcement of the safety codes system throughout Alberta. The purpose of Bill 21 is to ensure that Albertans continue to be safe no matter where they live, work, and play. I look forward to

speaking more about the benefits of this legislation, and I'm confident that it will result in enhanced safety for Albertans.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a first time]

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

Bill 205
Police (Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence)
Amendment Act, 2015

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to introduce Bill 205, the Police (Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence) Amendment Act, 2015, on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

This bill will allow the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General to make regulations governing the procedures and processes for police services to follow in undertaking and managing investigations into sexual assaults. This will complement the work that's being done by the Minister of Human Services and the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. I invite you to join me in debating this important piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 205 read a first time]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Government House Leader, were you trying to catch my eye with respect to Bill 21, as moved by the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane?

Mr. Denis: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I would move that Bill 21 be added to Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Blakeman: Yes. Thank you very much. I do have two tablings on behalf of the hon. member. These, of course, are related to the questions that he asked today. The first is a book by Anne Geddes, *Protecting Our Tomorrows: Portraits of*—oh, I'm not going to get through this word properly. It's portraits of children who have suffered from meningitis. I will table that.

The second tabling on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Mountain View is the commentary by the C.D. Howe Institute, *A Shot in the Arm: How to Improve Vaccination Policy in Canada*.

May I proceed with my own tablings, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yes, please.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. Earlier I had introduced the president and the chief executive officer of the Edmonton Social Planning Council, who are celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. I'm very honoured to be able to table the appropriate number of copies of their most recent report, which is entitled *A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton*. This is an absolute gold mine of information, and the one on my desk is well thumbed. Just as an example, they talk about how the province and the region are producing a lot of jobs, but we still have over 59 per cent of Albertan children in poverty, living in families where one or both parents worked full-

time for the entire year. There's that and a number of other excellent observations and statistics complete with charts. I recommend that everyone take advantage of this report.

Thank you very much.

2:50

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others?

Seeing none, permit me, then, to rise and table today the requisite number of copies of the 2013 Legislative Assembly Office annual report, titled *Respecting Our Past, Embracing Our Future*.

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. Campbell, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, pursuant to the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Act the Members of the Legislative Assembly pension plan annual report for the year ended March 31, 2014; pursuant to the Insurance Act the Automobile Insurance Rate Board 2014 annual report.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. There are no points of order today. That's a good sign of progress being made in a harmonious fashion. Therefore, let us move on.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

Committee Membership Changes

23. Mr. Denis moved:
Be it resolved that the following changes to
- (a) the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services be approved: that Mr. McAllister replace Mr. McDonald;
 - (b) the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future be approved: that Dr. Starke replace Mr. McDonald.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, this is a debatable motion. Does anyone wish to rise? I see no one.

Hon. Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question has been called, so let us ask the Government House Leader if he wishes to close debate or go straight to the vote.

Mr. Denis: I would move that we close debate on this controversial motion.

[Government Motion 23 carried]

Government Bills and Orders
Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 18
Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wasn't going to rise to speak to this particular bill at Committee of the Whole previously, but due to some of the responses earlier today in question period I think it's imperative that we do discuss this.

In response to some questions from the Member for Livingstone-Macleod the Minister of Municipal Affairs had indicated that they were not certain that they were going to proceed with the fixing-up of the Kananaskis golf course. So she is now requesting sixteenish million dollars in the appropriation interim supply without knowing whether or not those dollars are going to be used. So my question here, of course, is: are you or are you not going to use these monies? If you're not going to use these monies, let's take it out of this bill. Clearly, it's not a priority. Wouldn't it be the safe thing to do, to just take this out of the bill itself if you're not going to use these?

I mean, Madam Chair, like, there's this massive inconsistency, and I think this is going to be the conclusion of it. I think this issue is not going to go away because Albertans right now, when they're going to hear about doom and gloom and the budget and how terrible everything is, they're going to at the same time say: well, why would you request upwards of tens of millions of dollars to fix a golf course if things are so bad, especially when the minister said that she wasn't certain whether these monies were going to be used? I just want to know whether or not this government is actually going to proceed with that.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. As I said during question period, there are concerns that we have about this. It is under review. If we don't use it, we won't spend it; it'll be left in there. That's very clear: if it's not used, it will not be spent.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

Are there any others who wish to comment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to rise again and speak around the issues that are brought to the fore by Bill 18, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015. I did have some time to do some checking. I was saying that previous versions of the interim supply had listed an end date of June. In fact, they hadn't. They've always listed the end of the entire fiscal year that's being addressed. So in this case they are talking about the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016. The outline and promise or plan from the government has always been given orally that the money is to be used and a budget will be passed before the end of June. I, unfortunately, was not able to find in *Hansard* where the government has indicated that this time. So I don't know if it's the end of June. It might be the end of July.

I was also really interested that the Minister of Energy was so taken with my speeches on this particular subject that he wanted to hear more and even different versions. You know, honestly, Madam Chair, I am more than happy to give him a different version if I can have a different government that actually delivers information in a different way, in a way that actually gives information.

I continue to be quite alarmed by the amount of information that this government won't release. It won't give us any kind of adequate information in budget documents. The written questions and motions for return are delivered a year after the fact, after they've agreed to produce the information. For my purposes, receiving something in March 2015 that was agreed to in April 2014, you know, you figure that they sat on it that long deliberately. I mean, the press releases were press releases, for heaven's sake. We could have had the background to this information pretty quickly, but the useful part of that was long past useful to me by the time I got the information.

It's a game that the government plays about what they're doing. I think for the public there is less and less patience for that hoarding of information because with the Internet, in this day and age, lots of people can get access. They can watch the live streaming. They can go back and see what people have said previously and how ministers are deflecting the questions. I think that's a real issue.

Of course, with interim supply, you know, every question we ask, the answer is: wait for the budget. So it's a bit of a frustrating debate because we're not given any information to go on, and then the government gets irritated when we stand up and say: there's no information here. So it's a bit of a mutual-loathing loop, if I could put it that way.

As well, the government has moved to this odd – I was going to say queer, but that's not appropriate – system of the four different categories. No, I don't have a problem with adding them all up. I just find it really interesting that the government itself can't manage to do that in its own documents. They leave it for everyone to whip out their calculators and, I guess, do it while we're standing here.

3:00

An Hon. Member: Where's your calculator?

Ms Blakeman: It's on my computer, but I'll get it for you if you really need it.

Of course, there have been a number of people that have noted the extra amount of money, quite a high amount of money, \$28 million, that is being allocated to the Chief Electoral Officer. I'm less exercised about this than some of my opposition colleagues because I've seen this one come around before. They always have enough money for the full election in the third year of an election cycle, and frankly this is why: if the government goes early. I've had one other election that was called early, by the then Premier Klein, who called one at three and a half years, but the rest of them were all around the four-year mark. It is extraordinary to have an election called almost three years to the day from the last one. I think the 2012 election was April 22. The bookmakers are telling us April 27 this time, so, you know, five days' difference.

We're looking forward to seeing the budget a week from now, and I really encourage the government to share some information. Given the budget process that we now work under, when I talk to people about, you know, why it is important to have opposition, why opposition matters, I talk about holding the government accountable, but I'm also showing how the government has moved the measuring sticks. What are they called in football? There are two guys with chains, one on either end, and they move it along for the downs. Help me. I just don't do the sports metaphors very well.

Ms Pastoor: Linesmen.

Ms Blakeman: Linesmen. Okay. So the linesmen. Thank you very much.

I'd like to see that move forward because we get so little time to debate this and almost no information to debate it with. I just don't think it's serving the government well or anybody else well when

we have to plod our way through: “Okay. Well, what is this covering? How many employees are there? What happened to this program? Is that program still there?” It’s not hard to put that information in, and I don’t think anyone in the public would begrudge a couple of extra pages in the budget documents in order to have that information be made available to not only the opposition but, in fact, the public at large and business and everyone else that uses those books.

It’s just a little cheap, a little churlish of government to continually refuse to do this, and I just loathe that budget process. It is almost a waste of time at this point. We can get so little information, and we’ve got so little time to ask. I mean, honestly, 10 minutes allocated to discuss the budget of Health at \$17 billion: you know, yeah, sure, that’s the worst example, but that’s one of almost every department I can think of where we’re trying to get information out of government ministers that should be easy to get.

Unfortunately, it’s all devolved into a rather tawdry and sad situation now. I hope that we can see some improvement, but you know, Madam Chair, I really don’t think we’re going to until the government gets such a scare that it will smarten up. We did see a bit of a scare when they thought the Wildrose was really going to cream them. All of a sudden there were better manners in the House and a bit more cordial reaction between people, a little bit more willing to co-operate, but after they ate most of the Wildrose, that disappeared, so I really don’t have very high expectations of this government. I’d love to be surprised, but I don’t have very high expectations.

You know, what am I supposed to say to this interim supply? Yeah – whoopee – we’re going to give a blank cheque to the government to spend billions of dollars without any idea about what they’re going to do with it? We, hopefully, are going to get a budget document next Thursday, but then I look at a number of other things that the Premier said were going to happen that didn’t happen, and I think: well, I guess that’s not for sure either because we could get to next Thursday and for whatever reason he’s decided not to put a budget down or lay a budget in front of us. I just hope that those are a few of the promises that the government can keep, and I look forward to actually seeing the numbers that are supposed to be in the documents.

Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It’s my honour to rise and speak here in Committee of the Whole on Bill 18, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015. I’ve got a few different comments and concerns about this bill. I will be supporting this bill because I do understand the intention and the necessity, so that the government can continue to provide services and meet its obligations from April until June. I do find it interesting, as the Member for Edmonton-Centre pointed out, that in previous years the interim supply has not been requested by government to go until June, which raises some eyebrows and confirms suspicions about, likely, a looming election.

Some of my concerns with the bill are because the spending is significant in certain areas, that I’m going to highlight momentarily, which causes concern if that is an indicator of the spending that the upcoming budget may look like. I mean, part of my concern – I’ll get right to it, Madam Chair – is the increase in spending in Culture and Tourism. If we look at what’s being requested in this bill, if that was to continue throughout the year, it would amount to a huge budget increase to Culture and Tourism. Now, this budget increase would be positive in the increase to tourism for the province, the

economic impacts. Obviously, we’re well aware that tourism is one of the significant contributors to revenue in the province and has a significant economic benefit to Alberta.

But our hope and my hope, Madam Chair, is that if there is this significant increase, there would be an increase to the funding of arts. We’ve been advocating for increased support to the arts for many years. We know that the arts also have a significant economic impact and value to communities, both directly and indirectly, throughout the province. We have been advocates of increased funding for the Foundation for the Arts, more support for television and film production within the province, and supports for libraries, et cetera. So if investment in culture and in the arts is actually increased in this budget, that’s something that is very positive, in our view.

A concern is that there is less capital investment in Health, Madam Chair. You know, we’ve been releasing and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona especially has been releasing much information in the last few months on the state of Alberta hospitals and the need for more hospitals because of the growth that our province has been experiencing for some time and continues to experience. This week, for example, we released documents that show that only nine months into the 2014-15 fiscal year 1,376 surgeries have been cancelled across the province because of capacity issues. That’s a grave concern to us. The number of surgeries postponed at the Stollery children’s hospital has almost already doubled last year’s numbers, and we’re still in the first quarter.

We released documents highlighting the number of times that the most overcapacity protocols have been activated, which is alarming. The highest risk level overcapacity protocol was triggered 43 times in September of last year in Calgary emergency rooms alone, including September 24, 2014, when every single one of Calgary’s ERs reported triggering high-risk overcapacity protocols. In Edmonton emergency rooms in October 2014 overcapacity triggers were activated 344 times.

We released documents on the need to expand the maternal child unit at the Northern Lights regional hospital, showing that this facility was already insufficient to deal with the current population of Fort McMurray, let alone if the population increases, as is expected.

3:10

It’s also quite alarming, Madam Chair, when you look at the state of and the ability of our facilities to keep up, especially when you look at the growth within the province. I’d draw attention to Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. As far as the growth rates and their birth rates, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie are the two fastest growing cities in the country. I mean, these are some examples of the serious need for more hospitals in this province, but from the indication in Bill 18 the capital investments in terms of interim estimates are not likely to reach the investment level that is desperately needed throughout the province.

Now, Madam Chair, our hospitals don’t only have issues with overcapacity, but unfortunately they are in a very pitiful state as far as their integrity and structure. You know, it’s evidenced here, clearly, that the PC government has squandered our resources and failed to invest in hospital infrastructure, which is very alarming. The Alberta NDP has released AHS preservation lists which show the projects that need to be completed to ensure our hospitals can continue to function. These lists show 37 incomplete projects, totalling \$10 million, at the Chinook regional hospital and 16 overdue projects, totalling almost \$5 million, at St. Michael’s health centre. For Calgary hospitals these lists outline \$100 million worth

of overdue infrastructure maintenance projects in three major Calgary hospitals.

On the 17th of March we released documents about the deferred maintenance at Edmonton area hospitals, and they outline \$225 million needed for critical infrastructure projects, which include 10 fire safety upgrades, including sprinklers, fire alarms, and long-awaited lightning rods; 11 unfunded asbestos abatements at the Royal Alex alone; multiple elevator replacements and upgrades; mould abatement at the Misericordia. Clearly, we are in need of more investment in health infrastructure, definitely not less.

Within the capital budget for Infrastructure we have schools, hospitals, among other things. Madam Chair, as I have travelled the province speaking especially with school boards from around the province, they are desperate for dollars for deferred maintenance. You know, they're getting to a point in their deferred maintenance price tag where schools are soon going to be in the category of being unsafe, or it is going to be unaffordable for school boards to do all the major infrastructure upgrades that are necessary just to keep the doors open. We're not even talking about modernizations. Considering there is such a shortage of school spaces, of classrooms, and of new schools, this is just going to exacerbate an already ballooning problem.

Again, to jump back to our hospitals, there's definitely a thread here going through all of our different infrastructure. I mean, I could go on about bridges and roads as well, but when we look at hospitals, they're already bursting at the seams, and there already is a shortage of beds. Again, it's been pointed out by my colleagues that we need a serious investment. We needed it many years ago. If this bill is any indication of the dollars that are going to be injected into our health care system and our education system as far as infrastructure goes, we are really in a lot of trouble here, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to mention that on February 18 the Edmonton Catholic school board reported they were going to be spending \$3.5 million for necessary infrastructure upgrades, money they could have otherwise spent or used directly on educating students. This PC government is forcing school boards to divert money away from the classroom, away from one-on-one instruction, away from educational assistance and supports needed in our schools to ensure that kids get the one-on-one support that they need. They will be forced to divert money away from the classroom to spend on updates and on necessary infrastructure like ceiling repairs because this PC government continues to inadequately fund our education system, our schools, and is neglecting the urgency with which we need to invest in our schools and hospitals.

Madam Chair, we have a document that was released to us through FOIP that outlines an \$850 million deferred maintenance price tag for schools alone across the province. That is significant. That number is going to continue to increase and will balloon. As that number increases and we fail to invest in the critical infrastructure that Albertans deserve and need, that price tag is going to be exacerbated and grow very quickly as things like roof repairs lead to leaks, you know, and water damage within these very buildings and are going to be much more costly to repair than if they had been caught early on.

Our roads and bridges are desperate for investment. The Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, AAMDC, estimates that \$70 million a year for 10 years consistently is needed for bridges and bridge repair alone. I mean, that is again something that is critical for trade and getting goods to market. Many of the roads and bridges throughout the province are used by the oil and gas industry, our forestry industry, our agricultural industry to move products to market. You know, when a bridge is forced to be shut down because of potential issues of safety, that has a huge economic

impact on families and on the Alberta economy. Failing to invest in infrastructure, which this PC government has done year after year, is not the solution and is going to have a very significant negative impact on the Alberta economy and on Alberta families.

Madam Chair, the challenge is that a few years ago we had record-high prices for oil. We've had incredible resource wealth in this province, yet this PC government has managed to squander it all away and failed to invest in critical infrastructure and has left Albertans with a very serious infrastructure deficit.

So those are my concerns with this bill and with the indication that this government has given on how they're going to fund things from our critical infrastructure to our health care system to our schools.

I do want to flag a couple of things, Madam Chair, in my last few seconds here. The \$28 million that is appropriated for the office of the Chief Electoral Officer: I find it quite rich that members opposite had stood up and spoken when the former Premier, three Premiers ago – we seem to be going through them very quickly – stood up and introduced a bill that would provide Albertans with a fixed election season. Now, the opposition pushed for an actual fixed election date. We didn't quite get that far, but we had an election season. Members opposite from the PC caucus stood up and spoke about how this would provide stability, how this would provide the opposition with the ability to plan for an election, that they're not going to use their status as government to make a bunch of election promises prior to an election. Yet this seems to be going completely out the window.

Clearly, this current Premier has no problem with going back on bills, and neither does his cabinet, clearly, who thought that this was a good idea and trumpeted the fact that this bill was being brought forward. You know, I'm curious to hear an actual answer from a minister as far as how and why \$28 million is being allocated right now for Elections Alberta if our election is not supposed to occur for another 12 months.

3:20

As well, I appreciate the fact that earlier today the Minister of Municipal Affairs talked about how the dollars allocated for the golf course would be under review. I think many Albertans find it quite outrageous, you know, that critical infrastructure needs like a cancer institute in Calgary or, again, repairing the massive infrastructure deficit around the province, cutting down on wait times, et cetera, seem to be less important than reconstructing a golf course and getting them up and going. Again, as other members have pointed out, there are still families devastated from the floods from years ago, that are waiting for remuneration, waiting to get back on their feet, yet that seems to be less of a priority than building a golf course.

Madam Chair, we will be supporting this because of our understanding that this is necessary for programs and services to continue, but we do call into question some of the dollars being appropriated and what this means as this bill is a window into the budget for the rest of the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members who wish to speak in Committee of the Whole on Bill 18?

Are you ready for the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

[The clauses of Bill 18 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That's carried.
The Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. At this time I would move that we rise and report.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

[Motion carried]

[Mrs. Jablonski in the chair]

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

Mr. Weadick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 18.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.
Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Concur.

The Acting Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 16 Statutes Amendment Act, 2015

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Donovan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise and move third reading of Bill 16, the Statutes Amendment Act, 2015.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Just to recap, this act will amend the following pieces of legislation: the Provincial Court Act; the Court of Queen's Bench Act; the Police Act; the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act; the Land Titles Act; and the Post-secondary Learning Act. These updates will ensure that provincial legislation is clear, consistent, and effective. There will be no more amendments to this bill during Committee of the Whole, and I would like to thank all hon. members in this House for supporting it.

The Provincial Court Act amendments. The three amendments to the Provincial Court Act will improve the civil procedure and other processes for the Provincial Court to clarify its jurisdiction. First, it'll increase the maximum monetary jurisdiction that may be prescribed by the cabinet in civil matters in the Provincial Court from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The second will update the civil matters section of the Provincial Court Act by repealing provisions governing civil procedure. The third provides a procedural foundation for the court to stream disputed civil claims to the resolution track, which will be part of a pilot project in Edmonton and Calgary later this year.

The Court of Queen's Bench Act amendments will create a second Associate Chief Justice position to help the Court of Queen's Bench deal with increasing case files and give the strategic leadership needed to effectively serve Albertans. It also gives the Chief Justice the power to issue directives limited to the jurisdiction

of masters, who are judicial officers appointed to the province, sitting on the Court of Queen's Bench.

The Police Act amendment, the next act, has necessary changes to it for potential inconsistencies between the act and the police service regulation which have been identified. It is in regard to the definition of those who can be designated as presiding officers governing or disciplining the performance of the detail of a police officer in the regulation. This proposed amendment will address a potential inconsistency. In addition, there is another small amendment in the alignment of the legislation to require the police service and the police commissions to notify the director of law enforcement about police complaints and how the complaint was addressed.

Next is the amendment to the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act. The foundation was established in 1994 to develop activity partnerships in sports, recreation, active living, parks, and wildlife programs. The amendment to the act officially changes the name of the foundation to the Alberta Sport Connection, which it has been operating under since 2013. It also includes provisions for the transfer of land previously owned by the foundation as it has not been actively engaged in the management of the lands donated to them or purchased since 2013. In the meantime the lands will continue to be managed by Culture and Tourism.

Next, the amendments to the Land Titles Act. The Alberta land titles system and its supporting software are undergoing significant upgrades. A key addition to the system will be the ability for groups of subscribers to submit documents to the land titles registry electronically with unique digital signatures. The amendments to this act are required to enable the use of these digital signatures. In addition, the amendments will prevent title insurance companies from making claims against the titles insurance fund, which is intended to compensate individuals where there's a true loss suffered due to defect in title.

Lastly, the amendment to the Post-secondary Learning Act shall be made. It consists of the legal status of the board of governors for both Medicine Hat College and SAIT. They were established by an order in council in 1970 and 1982 respectively. A number of years later both of these orders were rescinded by new orders in council. In the interim it was a simple rescind, expiring the board appointments and appointing new members. In some cases, due to the drafting errors, the entire order in council was inadvertently rescinded. The errors were discovered, and the information was required in respect to the establishment of one of the institutes. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General has reviewed the file and concluded that rescinding the orders in council left it unclear as to the status of the boards of SAIT and Medicine Hat College. Therefore, to ensure there's no question about the legal establishment of these boards, a retroactive amendment is required. This amendment is a simple, straightforward way to clarify the legal establishment of the boards of the two southern Alberta institutes, and it will resolve unequivocally the peace of mind of the students' facility and the instructors.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Bill 16 was developed with input from a number of stakeholder groups, including the judiciary, Alberta legal communities, and the public and with the support of these amendments among these stakeholders. It reflects the work that we are doing here in government to ensure Alberta laws are clear and consistent and that the provincial legal system is kept up to date for everyone's benefit.

I want to thank everybody in the Legislature for reviewing and considering Bill 16, and I ask for their support in third reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I first wanted to thank this member for carrying his first bill in the Chamber.

Secondly, I just wanted to mention a couple of other things. The addition of a second Associate Chief Justice in the Calgary area will have a significant impact on the operations of the Court of Queen's Bench. I've had many meetings with judges in that regard, and I'm sure that they will be pleased that we are taking this step.

I also just wanted to mention, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the work being done here in the Provincial Court of Alberta is actually groundbreaking in this entire country. We increased the limit of the Provincial Court from \$25,000 to \$50,000 effective August 1, 2014, which gives us the highest limit anywhere in Canada with the exception of Quebec, which has a different legal system, of course. The new limit will allow the minister by way of order in council to go up to \$100,000.

3:30

But perhaps most important, Mr. Speaker, is the bringing in of resolution tracks. What are resolution tracks? Well, I don't believe that anyone should have to have a lawyer to go and settle a small matter. Sixty per cent of the disputes that are in this level of court are small debts. They don't require full trials. With the consent of some of the parties involved, you're going to really speed up their access to justice and their experience with the system. I would fathom to say that more people will have experience with the Provincial Court than any other court in the province, and being able to address their concerns in a timely and efficient manner is going to speed up other levels of the court. It'll improve access to justice. As the Supreme Court of Canada has often said, justice can't simply be done; it must be seen to be done. These people are going to see justice be done and leave with a better experience of our judicial system.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak to Bill 16, the Statutes Amendment Act, 2015. I think it's important to point out at the start that, you know, when the PC government brings forward bills like this, there's a real concern. Again, it's often put to us as: this is mostly housekeeping. But really we're talking about omnibus bills that group together significant pieces of legislation that should be given their due course for debate in this Chamber. You know, it definitely provides a real concern and hinders our ability to get into each of these bills as separate issues. I'll try to go through and speak to this.

I believe I did speak to this bill in its second reading, but I'm happy to speak to it again because one of my major concerns with this bill is around the issue of legal aid. Mr. Speaker, access to legal aid is extremely important to ensure that Albertans have access to justice. Now, it's interesting that around 1 in 3 Canadians will experience a legal problem in a three-year period. In British Columbia their legal aid provider found that 83 per cent of B.C. residents with incomes under \$50,000 were likely to have a civil law problem. Of these, 11 per cent retained a lawyer, 44 per cent dealt with it themselves or left it unresolved, and 22 per cent sought nonlegal assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the Court of Queen's Bench Chief Justice Neil Wittmann stated that there's certainly connectivity between the legal aid issue and self-representation. That affects our whole

system. It's a systemic problem that gives rise to more and more time being spent on the cases where there isn't legal representation for all parties. Now, clearly, the dearth of funding for legal aid is having an impact not only on those Albertans who cannot afford legal representation and are being denied legal aid but on the court system as a whole.

This government, I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, has shown considerable failures when it comes to legal aid. In October the government announced that Legal Aid in Alberta was going to receive a one-time payment of \$5.5 million and that there may not be any funding for them in the next budget. We've long been advocates, especially the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, for better access to justice, and we've been critical of this government's failure when it comes to legal aid.

The \$5.5 million we're voting on today is simply not sufficient, Mr. Speaker. Who knows what's going to happen down the road, in the future? You know, Legal Aid predicts that they'll need another \$8 million a year and will have a deficit of \$15 million by 2016-2017. They've had to reduce their services, which means a drop in services. They've cut 35 jobs in regional offices and 12 in Calgary alone as a result increasing obligations in Alberta courts for government-appointed lawyers for individuals denied legal aid. I also want to say that there have been 33,000 more applications made for legal aid services. So this is a significant concern for us, especially, you know, that legal aid is a right, and it needs to be adequately funded for access for all Albertans for justice and access to the courts.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, in light of the \$7 billion hole in the province's revenue cuts, legal aid should not be one of them. There are numerous examples, time and time again, of the positive gains that occur when legal aid is adequately and properly invested in. In the U.K., for example, researchers found that the social return on investment on debt and housing cases was over \$9 for every \$1 invested. In the U.S. there's a 2007 study on Nebraska, and they estimated the benefit of legal aid at \$13.5 million whereas the cost was only \$3.4 million. The benefits included benefits awarded to litigants, benefits and cost savings to improve the quality of life, tax savings, and an increased economic opportunity, which is significant.

I'm going to change gears now and talk briefly about the modernization of the Land Titles Act. Now, we recognize the importance of modernizing that act, and most of the changes allow the use of electronic documents in bringing our practice up to speed, up to date, and allowing the streamlining of this process. So for that section of this bill, Mr. Speaker, I'm in favour of these changes and view them as positive. You know, I also understand the need for administrative changes in addressing issues like those that mandated the amendments to the Police Act and the Post-secondary Learning Act. So those two are quite positive, but again the concern is the act's omnibus status, and again that is largely because it doesn't allow each separate piece of legislation to have its own due course through this House and time allocated for each piece.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning of this, I will be supporting this bill in this third reading, but I have tried to highlight some of my concerns and areas where we, the Alberta NDP, have been strong advocates, as I have said, of investing in legal aid and ensuring that all Albertans have access to justice in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I see no one rising under 29(2)(a).

Is there anyone else who wishes to enter the debate?

If not, are you ready to close debate, then, hon. Member for Little Bow?

Mr. Donovan: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'll close debate on that and call for the question.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 16 read a third time]

**Bill 15
Securities Amendment Act, 2015**

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

Mr. Scott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the President of Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance I'm pleased to rise today to move third reading of Bill 15, the Securities Amendment Act, 2015.

As we heard at second reading, ongoing review of and regular amendments to Alberta's Securities Act are required to keep pace with industry developments and to support the ongoing reform of the Canadian regulatory system. As a quick recap, the proposed amendment relates to four areas: enforcement-related amendments, point-of-sale related amendments, amendments that support the continued harmonization of derivatives regulation, and house-keeping amendments of a technical nature.

The proposed enforcement-related amendments are designed to improve the Alberta Securities Commission's enforcement capacity.

The proposed point-of-sale amendments will facilitate the development of a summary disclosure document for exchange-traded funds. This is similar to the new fund facts documents that are now being prepared for mutual funds and segregated funds, which provide concise information about a fund in an easy to understand format.

3:40

The proposed amendments relating to harmonization include the prohibition on front running and the creation of a new definition of associate. These amendments are intended to curtail insider trading and tipping.

Finally, there are several technical and housekeeping amendments to Alberta's Securities Act, which are intended to clarify or update existing provisions.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments will ensure Alberta honours its commitment under the 2004 memorandum of understanding through ongoing securities regulatory reform and to meet international commitments. Regardless of what happens with the national regulator initiative, the reality is that it will not yet be operational. So it is incumbent upon Alberta and the other provincial governments and their securities regulators to continue to work co-operatively on improving securities regulation to ensure the fair, efficient, and effective operation of our capital markets and improve protection for investors.

I ask that members of this House support the bill, and I move third reading.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, are there any others who wish to enter the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll keep my comments fairly brief. I just want to highlight the fact that, you know, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has been calling

on the need for a national regulator and a need for tougher regulation on securities for years now. I do want to just cite the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina are the only countries in the world besides Canada without a national securities regulator. Most other countries around the world see a need and a role for it. I know that there are other provinces that are pushing for it, and of course it's this PC government that's been resisting the need and the call for a national regulator.

Calls for one date back to 1935 and actually include the 1964 Porter Commission, a 1979 study by the department of consumer and corporate affairs, among the 1994 memorandum of understanding between the Atlantic provinces and federal government, the 2003 Wise Persons' Committee report, and the 2006 Crawford panel. So as it stands, to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, only B.C. and Ontario and the federal government are going to be entering into a co-operative regulatory system, and once again by choice this PC government in Alberta will be left out.

We have in this House, because this is the revamp or the second coming of a bill from the past, to continue to use resources and time in updating legislation, in harmonizing it with other jurisdictions across the country as opposed to just having a national regulator that could deal with this for our whole country. I think it's important to know, Mr. Speaker, that capital markets are increasingly integrated and increasingly global. It's inefficient and in many cases impossible for a provincial regulator to be able to handle these complexities. It's also not the best use of resources when we can deal with this on a national level.

I think part of our concern is the fact that a system with 13 different territorial and provincial regulators leaves us fairly vulnerable to fraud or to just increased regulatory failure. When you look at the crisis that occurred back in 2007-2008, the asset-backed commercial paper crisis, it cost billions of dollars to Canadians and was a symptom of this problem. I think that if we truly want to protect the citizens of this province and protect the integrity of our system and ensure that the industry is properly regulated, we should be moving toward a national securities regulator.

Again this bill continues to come back to the House in various forms and needs to be updated every couple of years. I think we should deal with this once and for all, move forward, working with other provinces and our federal cousins, and ensure that Albertans are protected and that we are less susceptible to fraud and other potential problems that could occur if we try to deal with this solely within our own province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others who wish to join in? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise and, like the other members here, am going to support the bill. But the bill is, I think, a haphazard attempt at regulation that doesn't quite fit the current state of affairs in our financial industry. Maybe it is the answer that we have a national security regulator. There are arguments both for it and against it.

One of the things that I picked up out of this bill, which is carried on from the previous act, is that the commission by any order can exempt any person, company, trade, distribution, security or derivative from all or any provision of Alberta securities laws. Now, that to me is a massive hole in our regulation. I don't know how a small jurisdiction – when I say small jurisdiction, when we're dealing with derivatives, derivatives are a world-wide phenomenon in the financial industry, and Alberta is a player in that. It's in many ways a small player but a player nonetheless. So I don't know how

it puts us at an advantage or a disadvantage when the regulator themselves can take a specific deal and exempt it from our security laws.

You know, dealing with over-the-counter derivatives like puts and calls, various options, is one aspect, but the over-the-counter trades are the majority of derivatives trading. They have caused tremendous problems in our financial industry. They are the cause of the 2008 financial collapse in the world. They are the cause of the 2012 issue that we dealt with around the world. If you go back, you can look at other situations where derivatives have impacted the world financial system in a very negative way.

I realize the ministry is trying to figure out how to regulate this or how to control it in what, I would hope, would be in the best interest of the public, but in all honesty, it fails miserably if we're not negotiating on a national or an international level to come up with solutions. We cannot solve this problem alone.

I would like that to what's happening in the oil industry today. The price of oil is dropping, yet the price at the pump is rising, and we are told that that is somehow a world market situation. Oil and gas is probably one of the major derivatives traded on the futures exchanges in and over the counter. How that impacts the daily price is always an interesting phenomenon. Whether that's a manipulation, free market, or collusion is always a question.

Here we are on a local jurisdiction level, a province trying to regulate, and to be perfectly honest, I think we're blowing a lot of hot air into a hurricane. There is a bigger problem here, much bigger than Alberta, and I think it needs to be dealt with on an international level. So with a local securities regulator taking this on, I'm not sure how they can possibly do this.

What I don't know and I don't think anyone in the government can tell me is how this is affecting our capital markets here in Alberta, whether it affects the raising of capital or infringes upon that and is an impediment to raising capital. I don't know that. I just know that it is problematic. It's problematic on a local level, which is provincial, a Canadian level, and an international level, and it needs to be addressed. But it can never – never – be addressed on just a local level.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to support the bill.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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

I see no one. Is there anyone else who wishes to chime in on the debate?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education on behalf of the Minister of Finance to close debate.

Mr. Scott: Yes. I move to close debate, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The question is then called.

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a third time]

3:50

Bill 13 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today and move third reading of Bill 13, the Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 13's proposed amendments will enable mandatory watercraft inspection and other risk mitigation measures, give law enforcement officers greater opportunity when dealing with containment watercraft and greater clarity regarding the role in ensuring compliance with the law and providing

education about it, and include a controlled invasive species list in the act, including aquatic invasive species of concern to Alberta. At present the term "invasive" is not found anywhere in the Fisheries (Alberta) Act, and we have very little specified authority to address harmful aquatic invasive species.

Mr. Speaker, this approach is based on what is working to keep the western states below us mussel free. Increasing authority will allow designated fishery officers such as the RCMP, fish and wildlife officers, conservation officers, and forestry officers the ability to stop vehicles transporting watercraft that fail to stop at designated inspection stations. Watercraft inspectors are also proposed to have limited authority in inspecting and cleaning watercraft on-site at an inspection station. The watercraft inspectors must request fishery officers to be present if there is any need to take additional steps beyond inspection and cleaning. While the initial focus will be on watercraft, fishery officers and guardians will have the authority to inspect, detain, and quarantine any conveyance, container, or equipment that may be harbouring aquatic invasive species.

I would like to address some of the questions that were raised in Committee of the Whole yesterday. The main intent of the legislation is to allow authorities to address all circumstances where there are reasonable grounds that there is a potential contravention of the fisheries act or, specifically, that there are invasive species present. What constitutes reasonable grounds is not set out in the legislation. In this respect the legislation defers to the courts to determine whether the conditions for reasonable grounds are met. Section 28.02 ensures private dwellings are not to be entered or inspected by officials without first having permission from the person in possession or responsible or unless a warrant has first been obtained.

There are some specific reasons why the use of "any place" is captured in the legislation. An example would be to inspect a pond if there was a report of invasive plants or other invasive aquatic organisms in an area. Another would be to inspect retail fish markets where live aquatic species are routinely held. If reasonable grounds exist to inspect a container on a train, it would be done in a manner that would not conflict with federal transportation regulations.

Mr. Speaker, this is good legislation that will make a big difference in the efforts to protect our precious water resources. During Alberta's 2014 watercraft inspection season we inspected over 3,700 boats and intercepted four mussel-infested boats. Unfortunately, only 50 per cent of the boats stopped for voluntary inspection. Increasing authority for designated fishery officers will give them the ability to stop and detain any vehicle transporting watercraft that fail to stop at a designated inspection station, thus greatly reducing the risk of infested boats entering Alberta water bodies.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't take action on this, the cost of invasive mussel infestation would be upwards of \$75 million annually. These amendments ensure we have sufficient compliance authority and mechanisms to manage the potential introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. As promised, I did make contact with that incredibly powerful and knowledgeable group of people called old guys that fish and was able to get some really interesting and useful feedback, I think. One of the main points that they raised was that we don't have very many officers that are working in compliance. The member talked about: well, it

could be the RCMP; it could be a warden; it could be all kinds of people. But what I'm hearing from old guys that fish – that's a powerful group; I wouldn't go messing with them if I were you – is that they're not generally stopping vehicles. Now, they don't have enough time to. There are not enough of them to actually follow through on that.

So the concern and the question is: well, okay; we see what you're trying to do with these invasive species, but you don't have enough people doing the job right now, so how are you going to add more to their job and expect that we're going to be able to keep up with all of this? If you can't keep track of what's happening now and you don't have enough people in the field, how are we possibly going to manage it when we heap even more on their plate? I think that's a real concern. You know, I think: oh, well, maybe they're going to start using RCMP. But when you come through the border, they don't have time to look at that. They're just not looking at that stuff. Of all the times that I've gone back and forth with a snowmobile trailer, they've looked at it exactly once. They just don't have time. If you're going through Coutts – yeah, Coutts – that's a really busy border crossing. They've got a lot of stuff going on there and a lot of traffic going back and forth. They don't have time to stop these vehicles.

I didn't hear the member talking about a lot of increased staffing being put into this, and that may not be appropriate. Times are tough. Friends are few. Government is looking to cut positions. But this is what happened last time. We cut a lot of the people that do the monitoring and the compliance and enforcement, people like park wardens and licensing officers and the like. As a result, we basically lost control of poaching and, you know, clean, safe campgrounds and all that kind of stuff because there was just nobody there to do the work. So certain things fell into disrepair. There was certainly some pretty blatant flaunting of the law around hunting licences and poaching, et cetera. We might be in the same kind of situation here.

The second question was around training. I know the member mentioned that there was going to be a new kind of officer, a water specialist or something, a fishery guardian or a fishery officer, which is a new position that can be created under this act, but it's not giving us a great deal of detail about how they get trained. I think a lot of us would be kind of hard-pressed to be able to tell you exactly what a pumpkin seed looked like or a bighead or an orfe, or an ide, or a tubenose goby, a ruffe or a zander. So how are we training these people to be able to recognize these invasive species that they're supposed to? Like, what is the training program that's involved there? Having enough officers to actually perform this, what kind of training are they going to get?

The final piece. I think the hon. member sponsoring and I were talking somewhat at crosspurposes. She was talking about that no one can enter a private dwelling. That's true, but in sections 25, 26, 27, and 28 there are all kinds of powers that are being doled out here, and that includes the power to stop and order movement of the conveyances, which is literally to stop somebody pulling a trailer and say, "Move over," and the person is supposed to comply. That makes sense.

4:00

But I was asking the member about section 25, which says: "enter on and pass over land." Now, that's not a private dwelling. That can be done without a warrant according to section 25, so they can come onto your land and go across it in order to ensure compliance here or to ascertain the presence of any invasive organisms. They are entering private property there although it's not where you actually live.

Later the term "inspect any place or conveyance" – so "any place or conveyance" starts to turn up repeatedly. When I went and checked the definitions of that – and this appears on page 3 if anybody is following along here. The definition for "place" is a "building, structure . . . a tent or . . . temporary shelter." That could be a garage, could be a shed, could be a boathouse, could be one of those Quonset hut things that people have on their property for machinery. It's basically any structure that doesn't have someone living in it. They have the power to enter and inspect. That's the power of entry in section 26.

But in section 27 they have the power to enter and search any place or conveyance, again, without a warrant. Then you get to section 28, and they have the power to seize. Cross over, inspect, search, and seize: they can do all of that in any kind of structure except where you actually live on a permanent basis but not on a temporary basis. A lean-to or a tent, that kind of thing, they can go into without a warrant and enter, cross over, search, and seize, all of those things.

Again, when those kinds of powers are given and the power of discretion is given to officers on the front line, you want to know and feel very comfortable that they have had absolutely top-notch training and that you really can trust that they're going to come on and do exactly what they're supposed to do and that they're going to do a good job of it. That I am not seeing in this act.

So those were the problems that were specifically raised by old guys that fish: the number of staff that are available, the actual time in their jobs. That is the last piece that was raised. What is the ranking? We already have a number of other wardens and park people and wildlife licensed officers and monitoring officers that are out there, and they've already got a lot of jobs to do, and this is now being added to that. What's the hierarchy? Is the hierarchy that they're supposed to do this first and wildlife poaching second? Where's the hierarchy spelled out about exactly the way they're supposed to be approaching their jobs? I think that's important to know, not only for us as citizens or people who potentially will comply with these requests but also for the people doing the job, and I would hope that we could get that kind of information from the sponsoring member.

Once again, the number of officers available, how their time is ranked as to what they're supposed to do, training, the fact that we're giving them the power to cross over, enter, investigate, search, and seize, all of which are, you know, significant powers, and that they can come into every structure we have and cross our land except for the actual place where we live permanently: I'd be interested in hearing how those questions get answered, and then I can cut out the *Hansard* and mail it out to old guys that fish.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there others who wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I am a supporter of this bill – to deal with the issue of any invasive species, I think, is honourable. It's what the government should be doing, taking measures to actually do something about it, which I support, but where I have difficulty with this bill is the power of the search without a warrant. There are times in any type of law enforcement when this is tolerable, when it is necessary: when we're dealing with issues like first responders, and in this case under section 27 it talks about circumstances of danger to human life. Well, that makes sense to me, but what doesn't make sense to me is when we extend that privilege, where there is no threat yet we still don't require a warrant to enter onto someone's property.

That's what we're doing right here. We're actually legislating the ability to abuse. Now, I'm not going to say that anybody is intending to abuse power, but I think the safety margin that we should be taking any time we draft legislation is to never actually give the ability to abuse power. There need to be checks and balances.

The Member for Edmonton-Centre brought up the issue of training. We're creating this new position here of a fisheries guardian, and it's an interesting title. I don't know exactly what it is any more than anyone else does, yet the same title may or may not have the ability to enter onto private property without a warrant. When I think in terms of warrants, I'm thinking in terms of a qualified law enforcement officer, who has been trained, versus somebody who has been appointed or just anointed with the new title. It's really important that we have clarity in legislation to make sure that we don't abuse the power that we give to these law enforcement officials.

Because of that issue, I'm not going to support this bill. I'm going to take a principled stand on it, as much as I support – it will pass. We need to do something about protecting Alberta from invasive species, but in terms of allowing unfettered access to property and abuse of power, this one section, 27(1), does not protect the innocent, does not protect the average citizen for due process of law. What it does is that it gives the ability of abuse of power and the exercise of that abuse of power without very much of a recourse for the innocent citizen.

With that, I still support the government's effort to deal with the issue of invasive species. I will not support the violation of fundamental rights, things like freedom of speech, freedom of association – now, I know Bill 45 is coming back; we'll discuss that later – also the idea of the freedom of the enjoyment of your private property. To have some arbitrary authority say, "I can come onto your property" and that they can basically make it up and justify it as being reasonable: I think that's wrong. There has to be just cause, and it's not listed there. The onus is not on the law enforcement to prove their issue; it is now on the landowner to defend and prove that the entry was somehow unlawful. That's wrong. The onus of proof is on the wrong side of the equation.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I see no one wanting to take advantage of that.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

4:10

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments from my two hon. colleagues ahead of me, and I can certainly concur with some of their concerns. I'm sure, as everybody knows in this house, I'm not really someone that takes orders well either or being told what to do. However, I come from southern Alberta. I have irrigation. This could destroy our irrigation. This could destroy the largest sustainable resource in this province, and it's called food. So if you'll permit me, I'd like to do just a little biology lecture here, and I think it's probably even lower than 101. Anyway, let's go for it.

Zebra and quagga mussels are virtually impossible to eradicate. They can cause millions of dollars in damage to water-operated infrastructure, disrupt natural food chains, and create toxic algae blooms. They can kill fish and birds, decrease property values, and reduce recreational enjoyment of natural areas. Any freshwater mussel that is attached to anything – that can be hip waders, kayaks; it doesn't have to necessarily be a motorboat. Anywhere that someone has spent time in water where there already exists mussels

can easily have those attached and then spread them. They spread quickly. One female mussel can produce up to a million eggs in a year. The population estimate for quagga mussels in Lake Havasu, Arizona, is 3 trillion while an estimate for zebra mussels in the Great Lakes is exponentially larger than that. Those numbers are pretty scary. I know they're little, tiny things, but when they start building on each other, it's like a concrete wall.

Ecologically speaking, zebra mussels, as I've mentioned, can wipe out entire populations of other species as they dominate a body of water. One of the harmful things these mussels do is deplete the water of calcium, which they absorb. Zebra mussels are filter feeders. That means that they strain water to absorb the food and nutrients they need from their environment. Mr. Speaker, a single adult zebra mussel can filter upwards of one litre of water per day. Nearly all particle matter is removed from that water. That includes microscopic plankton organisms, which form the basis of the entire food chain in a body of water. Other species depend on this food source for their survival. Zebra mussels also require calcium in order to build and maintain their shells. They absorb this calcium from the water around them, therefore depleting the calcium levels and certainly depleting that calcium level that is so necessary for all of the other species in that body of water. They literally can choke the life out of an ecosystem.

We should be very concerned, and I am very pleased with Bill 13 because it does say that we are concerned. The fact that we are having mandatory boat inspection, I think, speaks volumes to how important this is, and we will be able to get started on this right away. The boats that are coming in from the south, where there are huge infestations, will have a chance to be inspected properly, because of the snowbirds that are coming back with their boats.

As I've said before, irrigation is fundamental to farming, and ranchers require water transportation in order to care for their livestock. Pipes figure heavily, not the XL but pipes, in the work of irrigation, and they frequently draw from natural resources. Irrigation pipes are different than in the old days, when we had irrigation canals. They are now enclosed pipes. The difficulty would arise when zebra or quagga mussels got inside those pipes and proliferated. They could clog them and actually close them, and they're very difficult to get at because it's closed.

Again, Bill 13 is an exceptionally important bill, particularly in southern Alberta but certainly to any body of water that people enjoy as a recreation facility, so having it in third reading and being allowed to speak to it, I think, is a nice way for me to wind down a political career. I've worked very hard on this bill for two and a half years through PNWER and also brought it up as an issue with the Can/Am Border Trade Alliance, that I sat on for a couple of years.

Back to my former colleagues and what they had to say: this is an important first step. Better to take a first step than no step. I'm pleased to say that we are – well, I'm assuming that this will be passed, and we can start doing the educational portion, that will be so important.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. No one taking advantage of it?

Let's move to Drumheller-Stettler, then, and hear his words.

Mr. Strankman: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope to be brief and coherent. Some of the members opposite will disagree with that. The Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015, is an important piece of legislation. I happen to live along one of the interprovincial borders in western Canada, and I know it's one of the most porous borders. Certainly, the regulation isn't necessarily going to talk about this border – I understand – but the idea of ultimate control

was tried a long time ago in China, and it didn't really work out very well either, and it didn't work out very well in portions of Germany either. I certainly understand as an agrologist or a producer of food the importance of this. I understand the importance of water, but some of the legislation spoken to by the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre about rights of entry and improper legal access is of great concern to me.

I think it would be important if that was considered to be an amendment or something forward. I don't think that it's a hill to die on, but I hopefully would present that information to the Assembly so that if there are issues in the future, it's recognized. This may be a form of cutting one's nose off to spite their face. It could well be possible overkill, so I just wanted to recognize the severity of some of the legal implications there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see no one.

Is there anyone else who wishes to enter the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll weigh in very quickly and, first of all, just commend the member for this bill. I know this is a very serious issue. My only, you know, question and I guess concern is that if this is as serious as the mover of this bill has articulated, which I don't disagree with, then I hope that the government will be allocating resources because I know that the officers that work very diligently to protect our wildlife and natural resources are stretched quite thin. I mean, it's important to bring forward regulations in this area, but if they aren't enforced, then there is little point to bringing forward legislation. So my question to the government is: how will this be resourced, and will there be resources to ensure that we continue to protect the natural habitats of this province?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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

Seeing no one, is there anyone else who wishes to speak at this time?

If not, then let me go to Bonnyville-Cold Lake to close debate.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you. There are just a few things I want to say to close the debate. We will have enough manpower to staff the 11 stations 10 hours a day, seven days a week. There are also five roving crews that will be sent to secondary roads to respond to emergencies in events that draw a lot of boaters like fish derbies,

water board tournaments, and so on, so staffing is not going to be an issue there.

Training. We all hope that – as with anything, when we train, you hope that you're training to the best of your ability. There's never any guarantee in any type of training or any type of profession whether the individual is going to be to the calibre that someone may expect. They found out that the trained dogs can inspect the boat in two to three minutes, and they've been tested that they've been a hundred per cent correct every time.

The inspection. We can inspect your pond without warrant but not without reasonable grounds. We hope that all officers of the law will follow the law and have reasonable grounds when they inspect.

I encourage all members to support this bill. Like the member to the left of me said: the first step is better than no step at all. This is the first step to educate the people, and if we don't do anything, the cost is just too, too tremendous.

At that, I hope that everybody will support this bill, and I close debate.

4:20

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 13 read a third time]

The Speaker: I believe you have unanimous consent on that, so we'll move forward. So ordered and so carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just before we end today, I would like to ask the Assembly for unanimous consent to revert to Notices of Motions.

The Speaker: You've heard the request from the Government House Leader to revert to Notices of Motions. I'll ask this question.

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Speaker: There has been an objection, so no unanimous consent is offered.

Let me return to the Government House Leader.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As it is near 4:30, I would move that the House stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:21 p.m. to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to March 19, 2015

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

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

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

1 Respecting Property Rights Act (Prentice)

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

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

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

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

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

2* Alberta Accountability Act (Denis)

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

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

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

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

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

3 Personal Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014 (Quadri)

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

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

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

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

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

4 Horse Racing Alberta Amendment Act, 2014 (Campbell)

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

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

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

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

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

5 Securities Amendment Act, 2014 (Campbell)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 7 Chartered Professional Accountants Act (McIver)**
First Reading -- 159 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 275-76 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve.), 319 (Dec. 2, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 425 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 480 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2014 cC-10.2]
- 8* Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 (Kennedy-Glans)**
First Reading -- 159 (Nov. 25, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 276-77 (Dec. 1, 2014 eve.), 319-21 (Dec. 2, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 425-28 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 480 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c13]
- 9* Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2014 (Olesen)**
First Reading -- 237 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 336-38 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft.), 428-33 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 470-75 (Dec. 9, 2014 aft.), 477-80 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 495-500 (Dec. 10, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2014 c10]
- 10* An Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children (Jansen)**
First Reading -- 238 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 300-18 (Dec. 2, 2014 aft., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 338-55 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft.), 357-66 (Dec. 3, 2014 eve.), 367-74 (Dec. 3, 2014 eve., passed with amendments), 538-548 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft., recommitted, passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 536-38 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft, recommitted to Committee), 548 (Mar. 10, 2015 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 19, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 1, 2015, with exceptions; SA 2015 c1]
- 11 Savings Management Repeal Act (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 334 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 433-41 (Dec. 8, 2014 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 468-70 (Dec. 9, 2014 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 494-95 (Dec. 10, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c16]
- 12 Common Business Number Act (Quest)**
First Reading -- 562-3 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft.), 698 (Mar. 17, 2015 aft.), 733-4 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
- 13* Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2015 (Leskiw)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft.), 668-71 (Mar. 16, 2015 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 730-3 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 754-57 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)
- 14 Agricultural Societies Amendment Act, 2015 (Olson)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 619-20 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 15 Securities Amendment Act, 2015 (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 563 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 620-21 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft.), 667-8 (Mar. 16, 2015 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 730 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 753-54 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)
- 16 Statutes Amendment Act, 2015 (Donovan)**
First Reading -- 563-4 (Mar. 11, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 621-22 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft.), 666-7 (Mar. 16, 2015 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 727-9 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 751-53 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)

- 17 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2015 (\$) (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 597 (Mar. 11, 2015 eve., passed)
Second Reading -- 612-19 (Mar. 12, 2015 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 659-66 (Mar. 16, 2015 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 687-9 (Mar. 17, 2015 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 19, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 19, 2015; SA 2015 c2]
- 18 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015 (\$) (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 698 (Mar. 17, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 716-22 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 748-51 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)
- 19 Education Amendment Act, 2015 (Dirks)**
First Reading -- 635-6 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
- 20 Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2015 (Weadick)**
First Reading -- 636 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 722-7 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
- 21 Safety Codes Amendment Act, 2015 (Casey)**
First Reading -- 746-47 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)
- 201* Electric Utilities (Transparency in Billing) Amendment Act, 2014 (Anglin)**
First Reading -- 86 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 125-28 (Nov. 24, 2014 aft.), 238-52 (Dec. 1, 2014 aft., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 406-08 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 408 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Dec. 17, 2014 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 17, 2014; SA 2014 c11]
- 202 Safe and Inclusive Schools Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 (Blakeman)**
First Reading -- 86 (Nov. 20, 2014 aft., passed), 335-6 (Dec. 3, 2014 aft., withdrawn)
- 203* Safety Codes (Sustainable Structures) Amendment Act, 2014 (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 192 (Nov. 26, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 409-18 (Dec. 8, 2014 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 639-42 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 642 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 19, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force 3 months after date of Royal Assent; SA 2015 c3]
- 204 Traffic Safety (Distracted Driving Demerit) Amendment Act, 2014 (Amery)**
First Reading -- 388 (Dec. 4, 2014 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 642-51 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., adjourned)
- 205 Police (Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence) Amendment Act, 2015 (Cusanelli)**
First Reading -- 747 (Mar. 19, 2015 aft., passed)
- 206 Childhood Comprehensive Eye Examination Act (Jablonski)**
First Reading -- 636 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
- 207 Independent Budget Officer Act (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 636 (Mar. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
- 208 Alberta Human Rights (Commission Accountability) Amendment Act, 2015 (Saskiw)**
First Reading -- 713 (Mar. 18, 2015 aft., passed)

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