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The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, December 5, 2018

Day 59

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m. Wednesday, December 5, 2018

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning.

Let us reflect. Hon. members, as the end of this sitting approaches, our staff from all across the province are gathering in Edmonton for their winter constituency seminar. Let us reflect on these dedicated individuals. For most of them, like for all of us, they view their roles as one of great privilege and responsibility, and they carry it out with great integrity on our behalf in our constituencies representing us. They're truly part of our team, and we greatly appreciate their role, so let's recognize their contributions to each of us and to the institution that we represent.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 32

City Charters Fiscal Framework Act

The Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments with respect to this bill? Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Yeah. I want to take this opportunity to speak to Bill 32, the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act. As we look at this bill and everything, I think there are some good things in this bill, of course. I think that the cities, Edmonton and Calgary, you know, should have stable, predictable long-term funding. I think that's a good principle though I also think that the other municipalities should have that same expectation, too. Of course, this bill doesn't address that, and I would hope that the government is working on that at this point, too, though I haven't heard what the government has in store there or what they're planning to do or if they're actually in any kinds of discussions on that. I guess, maybe to start off with, I would like to ask the minister on that: is the government in any kinds of discussions with the other municipalities, RMA or AUMA?

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak?

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just asked a question. I guess I'm not getting a response on that one. Like I say, I was concerned about whether the government has been talking to the other municipalities as far as some sort of stability in long-term funding. I think all municipalities in Alberta are concerned about their funding going forward as they make their budgets now and try to decide where they're going in the future. I think it's good to have some sort of framework in place on that issue.

Maybe in the future – I'm not sure what's going to be happening, but I'm guessing that since we have this Bill 32 that deals with Calgary and Edmonton specifically, maybe there'll be more different funding agreements with the other municipalities. I don't

know if that means there will be three or four or more different funding agreements with the other municipalities, but it would be nice to find that out and find out what direction this government is going on that.

Right now the government is using, you know, a funding model here that provides basically a base, I guess, amount of income. Some of their revenue is dependent on different incomes within the government. I guess there's maybe in some parts of it somewhat a stable funding model, and other parts of it are maybe a little more fluid, so I wondered if there wasn't a more stable revenue stream such as corporate or personal income tax to be basing this funding model on. Maybe I'll pose that question to the government again to see if I get an answer to this one. Why did the government not use a more stable revenue stream such as corporate or personal income tax?

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 32, City Charters Fiscal Framework Act. Just on the point of whether we're in consultations with other, smaller municipalities, of course, we've been able to reach an agreement with the two larger cities, the two big cities, which is very important in terms of stable funding moving forward. We recognize that all municipalities require stable, predictable infrastructure funding, and, as was mentioned, we were able to reach an agreement with Edmonton and Calgary through the charter process. We will now move on to the next phase in partnership with municipal associations. As the minister, I believe, stated, we are in discussions with the AUMA as well as the RMA right now, and we are committed to coming up with a funding agreement with them as well.

It's also important to note that other municipalities will have stable funding until 2022 under the current MSI framework while Calgary and Edmonton did take a \$456 million cut over three years just to ensure that we're able to reach our budgetary constraints or that we do address those. We're committed to making sure that Alberta's mid-sized cities, towns, villages, MDs, and counties are able to meet their infrastructure needs. We do believe that a legislated capital funding framework will allow these communities to continue to build and thrive, and we're committed to seeing that happen.

As I mentioned, we are currently in negotiations with the AUMA and RMA. We weren't able to come to an agreement at this point, but we are very sure that we will be able to make that happen in the future. We've also said that, as part of the city charters we developed for Edmonton and Calgary, there will be a fiscal framework based on provincial revenues to support capital projections.

On the question of stable funding in terms of where the revenue stream is coming from, I think that on the transit funding side of things using the money put forward by the carbon levy and the climate leadership plan is as stable as it gets. Using that money to build important infrastructure projects and transit, like the valley line LRT moving towards my side of the city, the west leg: I think it's a good plan. Obviously, we'll see emissions reductions with more people taking transit and also just more opportunities for people to be able to move throughout the city without necessarily having to use their vehicles. Obviously, smaller municipalities will have different needs than the big cities, but that's something that we're hoping to address through the ongoing consultations with the other municipalities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Well, thanks for the answer. I appreciate those comments there. I did have kind of one quick comment here. You said that part of the funding was going to come from the carbon tax, of course. I understand that the idea of the carbon tax is to reduce emissions. If the emissions are reduced, then I would presume that there would be less consumption of carbon-based fuels. I'm wondering if the government is predicting a reduction in income from the carbon tax, thus affecting the funds going to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary as the consumption is less. If the point of the carbon tax is to reduce emissions, obviously that would mean less carbon tax being paid, less revenue, so does that mean less money to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary?

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak?

Mr. Carson: Just quickly, to address that, I don't necessarily have a perfect answer for you, but I don't see – the changes in terms of the funding that we would receive from the carbon levy: I think that they would be somewhat negligible. But I will try and get you an answer for that.

Thank you.

9:10

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much for that. You know, I think, when we look back at the MSI, I mean, that seemed to be something that was working fairly well. I'm sure it wasn't perfect, but the municipalities have worked together to decide how that money was going to be split up and everything from the beginning. I think, like I say, it was probably complicated. Admittedly, I don't know that this one maybe is much less complicated as far as the formulas that they use to calculate the money. But I think, like I say, it's good. Like, we support the principle of this bill, of course, having the stable, predictable long-term funding. I think that's good.

Now, of course, when we see that part of this money is going to be dependent on other different things and relies on special formulas and some of these formulas will be changing as we go on as each year there's different percentages and everything, I guess I would hope that the government, as they go forward with this, will be able to ensure that the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, since that's what we're talking about in Bill 32, will have that stable funding going forward and be able to keep that money somewhat steady. I know that when I'm in discussions with the local municipalities and towns in my constituency, they sit down and try to make up budgets, and of course they're looking two, three years down the road because some of the commitments they make are multiyear commitments. That makes it very necessary that they have a proper funding model that has that predictability and long-term funding.

But I appreciate the answers to those questions so far this morning, and I may have some more later as we go through this morning session. Thank you.

The Chair: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just on the point of MSI being a good program used over the years, I would tend to agree with that. I think that it's been able to build some important infrastructure throughout our province. Obviously, the main concern is the sustainability of it moving forward. Obviously, we've seen a reduction to the MSI for the cities, so moving forward, as we look at budgetary constraints and returning to a balanced budget in '23-24, we had to make some hard decisions. I think that

through the negotiations with the big cities, both Calgary and Edmonton, they also recognize that, which is why we were able to come to an agreement the way that we did. I know that the city of Edmonton – I can't speak for the city of Calgary – is currently in their budgetary consultations, and they were greatly concerned with being able to come to an agreement before those proceedings ended.

Here we are today with Bill 32, which I think is very important for them to be able to commit to their long-term sustainability. Also, of course, as has been mentioned, MSI was planned to end or conclude in '21-22, so we had to come to a new agreement, which is why we are here today.

I've had many conversations with my city councillor of ward 1, Andrew Knack, about the concerns moving forward and the potential for them having to create a budget without having this funding or framework for the funding. I'm very happy that we're able to move forward on this, hopefully with the will of the House, to make sure that they're able to build the things that they need to build moving forward.

Thank you.

The Chair: Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Yes. Good morning. Thank you, Madam Chair, for recognizing me this morning. Good morning to everybody. Suddenly we're on to Bill 32 this morning, I just understood, so I'm just putting things together here at this moment in time. Anyway, this is an interesting topic that Bill 32 has brought forward. It's actually a new agreement between the province as the parent and its children, the municipalities, particularly the two main municipalities, the cities of Calgary and Edmonton.

As I had said in my earlier remarks a couple days ago in second reading, in 2007 the Stelmach government actually put together the municipal sustainability initiative. I can remember those days as a councillor. There were an awful lot of circumstances that led to this new initiative, and it was not something that happened overnight. It was a long, long era of constant battle on behalf of municipalities, who came literally with their hat in their hand every year to try to figure out how they could manage their infrastructure funding requirements and their needs for grants to keep managing their municipalities. Just imagine a small municipality, Madam Chair – a small village, a hamlet, a town – who did not have the tax base to bring in the thousands and thousands and millions of dollars to support the upgrades to their utility systems, to their roads, maintenance, buy new equipment. In those days costs, just like today, were going crazy in terms of buying equipment and paying their skilled labour forces, et cetera, et cetera.

In those days the government finally realized that they would have to put together some sort of a fair system, and it was called MSI. It really doesn't have a lot of strings attached to it as it has been. It has been something that they have gone over and over and over and tried to look at each year in some way or form of speaking, and they tried to hand out to municipalities, as the budget would see fit, sufficient monies to satisfy the needs of the municipalities.

Unfortunately, a few years ago municipalities were required to do three-year and five-year financial plans. This put a little bit of a problem into the whole system because MSI has been something of a moving target every year. Like a cork on the water, it's floated around. Different amounts of monies were distributed over the course of the past few years with it. In fact, as I mentioned the other day, even though \$11.3 billion over 10 years was promised, only twice did it meet its goals, in 2007 and '14. The full commitment was never realized until the last promises of this current government, where they extended the program.

Here we are today with a bill called 32, and as I said the other day, we are more or less supportive of this, but we do have a lot of questions. What we have here, for the first time in my experiences so far in the past seven years, is actually, basically the general idea and principles that were decided in the months of negotiation between the two major cities and the province, and it deals with a fair number of topics. Just if you look on the first page of the bill, it talks about the authority to provide funding, the amount of funding, the payment plan, how the money is to be used, eligible expenditures, transit, accounting for the use of the funding, and other kinds of terms.

Yet the whole bill is called the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act. It encompasses an awful lot of big dollars, and it's based upon a formula that was agreed to years and years ago with the help of municipalities from every portion of the province, who had to try to work together, both AUMA and, at the time, AAMD and C, in determining what would be fair to work with in terms of a formula, if you will, to make sure that this would be something that could be utilized across the whole base. If you look at page 8 in the bill, you'll find that the funding for Calgary is described, and that basic formula is used for Edmonton as well. It's in section 4(2). It looks like I've been taken back in time to my math classes of 1973, when I took extra courses just to get a little handle on calculus. It is very complex, this whole system that they've put together. It has worked reasonably well over the years.

But now the government has decided, I guess, after months of these negotiations, to release it in a new way, and that new way is to participate in revenue sharing. That's a very open statement, but it basically means that instead of assigning a certain number of dollars in the budget every year from a fixed standpoint, they're now going to have a little bit of a variable in there. In good times, as the system works out, the province will be providing a little extra funding, and in tougher times the province will be providing a little less. When times are good, we all do well; when times are bad, we don't do so well, I think, is the basic concept. I don't want to get into specifics because if you look through the bill, you'd have a lot of trouble getting into specifics.

9:20

I suspect that for months and months and over the course of the past three years, while this government has been in power, we all know there's been an awful lot of discussion between the municipalities and the associations – it goes from small towns, big towns, mid-cities, the two main cities – on how all this could be done. In fact, what we find is that this bill is only regarding the two cities and how they're now going to be allowed to work with different mechanisms within this agreement and through the regulations to adjust and change the way cities are basically financed. That's what the city charter system was all about.

Just a couple of years ago I had a whiteboard with a number of us working on about 15 to 20 topics. If you remember Bill 20 or Bill 8, I identified at one time 55 different topics in those huge MGA amendment bills that were of concern: you might remember the 5 to 1 ratio, you might remember the intermunicipal collaboration, you might remember the requirements to do municipal development plans. Of course, all of those kinds of needs were really having to be based upon budgets. How could municipalities work with all these new costs? Naturally, they had their own tax bases to work from, and they would have to look for extra support to the government, which the government did in fact offer, to some extent, for those new requirements. Nonetheless, these new funding models that we're seeing now are a result of all of those discussions.

I suspect that department managers and the people that we call – and I hate the word, frankly – bureaucrats, the people that we have working in Municipal Affairs, some of them for many years, some of them that I know and have known for a long time, were probably scratching their heads and talking to the legal world and the accountant world. Compared to our two people that we have for staff that have helped me with this, they have reams of people in the backrooms. You people probably know about them. They probably have reams of people back there or reams of paper being used every day, dozens of people that have talked to their counterparts in the two cities to try to come up with something that makes sense.

I guess, from our standpoint, it's hard for us to dig into this in any great detail this morning with respect to all of the different things that this really entails. Nonetheless, we do have a few questions. I did the other day raise some concerns, and I'd just like to pore over some of those this morning if I could because we had a few observations that day. I might say, first of all, that the amount is less in the initial few years than what the cities have been used to getting. We've done some graphs, and we've run some numbers, and in the first three years, up to 2022, it certainly looks as if there's going to be, you know, a bit less.

It makes us wonder if, with the variable that's involved in this agreement, when times are good, this will affect how the formula works, this will affect how funding is coming forward. When times are good coming ahead, then the numbers for a few years later will be good. But what if at that time the numbers aren't so good for other things? How is this variable going to work if it's going to look like a sine wave? I'm wondering if the member across the way that was responding earlier could speak to that variable and how the system of future payments to the two cities will be affected. Do they have concerns about something being based on two years in the past, that could bite them later on in the future when times are bad?

I'll wait for the response, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak?

Mr. Stier: Well, Madam Chair, in the absence of a response to my question I guess I'll move forward. Those fluctuations in the provincial revenues, obviously, from our side anyway, in the absence of a response – and I notice that we have the Minister of Finance here as well. Perhaps he could assist. Calgary and Edmonton have huge operating budgets, which he was involved with in the past. We think that this bill seems to commit the province to solid numbers, regardless of the situations. Transit funding is another one that is in there, and that's always a huge number. With these variables, perhaps I could ask the Minister of Finance: does he have any comments to make with regard to our concerns about the province committing to these funding levels, regardless of the current fiscal situation at the time in the future?

The Chair: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to go back to the funding framework here, of course, monies are calculated based on revenue growth, as was mentioned, from three years prior, and the percentage change in revenue is multiplied by a constraint factor. The factor will be 50 per cent for the '23-24 calculation, increasing by 5 per cent each year until it reaches 100 per cent in '33-34, after which it will stay at 100 per cent. I think that's something that's been addressed through the House.

Of course, last year we saw our GDP growth be the highest across the country, of all provinces. We're projected to be somewhere around there again this year as far as I know. As far as we can see, the projected revenues are to rise in the future. I mean, really, this framework is about predictability. That was something, as was

mentioned by the member, that we weren't necessarily seeing under MSI, whether it was a change in government or financials changed for the province. I think we need to move away into something more sustainable. While I do appreciate the questions, I think that this new framework is more predictable than what we were seeing.

I believe there was a question of whether the cities were in support of this entirely, and they are. We saw Mayor Iveson standing with the minister a few days ago, I believe, in support of this. Once again, I mean, they're going through their budgetary process, and they were very concerned about whether they were going to be able to have a number in front of them, so we committed to that. After some tough negotiations from both sides, we were able to come to an agreement.

Thank you.

The Chair: Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your response, Member. As we have looked at the way this is to be funded, we have got a question related to what we just were discussing, and that is that there are some portions of the revenue stream for the province that we think were not perhaps considered to be in this revenue stream that this is sourcing. I'm wondering if the member would have a comment as to why the government did not use a more stable revenue stream, such as corporate and personal income taxes, in these arrangements. While those two seem to fluctuate up and down as well, it's one of the more stable revenues, I should think. I'm just wondering if the member could respond as to why those items weren't considered, please.

The Chair: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Chair. CIT and PIT are in fact included in the revenue model. Yeah. Thank you.

Mr. Stier: Thank you for that clarification. Through the chair again, Madam Chair, another observation we had – I mentioned it briefly here just earlier this week and today – this amount of money is going to be coming out of the budget, more or less, each year. It's dollars that will be assumed to be spent, I should think. I'm just wondering. This particular agreement with the two cities: will this have any impact, will this have any bearing or be taken into consideration in discussions, I believe, as the minister said the other day, between the municipal associations and the municipalities they represent? Will it have any impact or any effect on a potential new deal for municipalities throughout the province that are not the two cities, please?

The Chair: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

9:30

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's an important question, indeed. Of course, Edmonton and Calgary have worked with us to achieve our path to balance. They saw their funding reduced by \$456 million over three years to help us achieve those savings. No other municipality in Alberta, I think it's important to recognize, saw a reduction in their MSI over the last few years, and they were able to enjoy constant funding. That was a conversation that we had to have with the bigger cities, and we appreciate their willingness to help us get back to balance.

I think, once again, it's important to recognize that though the major cities or the big cities saw a reduction in their funding, none of the smaller municipalities did. We do remain committed to legislating a replacement for MSI for all municipalities. No, the agreements that we've made with the city of Edmonton and the city

of Calgary do not have any bearing on the negotiations that we'll be having around MSI with other municipalities.

Of course, we do recognize that all municipalities do require stable, predictable, and permanent capital infrastructure funding, and that is why we continue to be in negotiations with both the AUMA and the RMA regarding a long-term revenue-sharing agreement.

Thank you.

The Chair: Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the member that has responded, thank you for your response once again.

Madam Chair, there are a number of other implications that come from this. Because this is the funding and it is partially being legislated in some degree regarding other matters, which includes a lot of those that are controlled by the regulations that we've already had – as a side note, I should say that when city charters were first discussed one and a half to two years ago under the previous Municipal Government Act amending bills – I think it was 21, 20, and 8 – some topics like inclusionary housing and a lot of topics to do with off-site levies came up. As I said earlier, in those bills there were a lot of topics, and we didn't get into the roots and evils of all of them. Nonetheless, it was intended that when the city charters were going to come forward, there was a great amount of concern from the building industry, from the development industry, from the contracting industries, from all points of the province regarding what the implications may be when the city was granted certain powers.

Today we're seeing, as we discuss the bill, some answers on some of the things we have, but while I recognize that regulations are not normally debated in the House, the government chose to release the new regulations, that are tied to this legislation in some respects, on how the cities will be responding, in turn, when they set up bylaws and other things to be able to comply with the new regulations. I understand these regulations are not in place yet. There's a 60-day window yet for comment. Members of this Assembly, constituency offices all across the province are now receiving an awful lot of concerns from those industries in our e-mails, et cetera, et cetera, phone calls, what have you.

To the member: I'm wondering if he could respond with regard to these two topics in any way. While we don't discuss regulations, they are directly – directly – involved in this legislation. We know that in these regulations municipalities are required to put together bylaws and an awful lot of other things to work with developers on these two critical topics, and those are inclusionary housing and off-site levies. Developers are working and acquiring land for their developments and are going to the municipalities to see what the rules are going to be. The administrative costs and fees, as time goes along, and commitments for roads and all the other things that they have to put in – and it varies in different municipalities – are extremely costly. It gets down to the point where if you're a developer and you're going to be creating a whole new subdivision, a place for people to live, for thousands to live and recreate and enjoy, there's a cost to doing that, and it's a huge cost. The city sets density rules and the city sets all kinds of guidelines and principles that have to be met before a developer can proceed. Taking into account what has happened in the years gone by without some of these new requirements, developers have had to struggle with increasing costs for materials and all other kinds of extra administrative expenses.

Nonetheless, now they're being faced with a release of control, to some extent, in terms of where the rules came from. Originally, you know, in land planning you have the regional plans, which

affect the municipal development plans, which affect the intermunicipal development plans, which affect all these things in the hierarchy of planning, but now the developer has to look at a new risk venture in his idea. If he wants to come and put in an area structure plan that will involve several hundred homes, parks, he has to consider whether there's going to be a municipal reserve being taken from his property, whether there are going to be other hindrances, and one of the biggest worries they have is that it won't be predictable. We're talking about predictable funding in this discussion.

So what I'm wondering, hon. member, if you can respond to some extent here: do you know why this regulation was released at this time and if the government would consider extending the time for proper discussion on these regulations for public input? These have been announced just prior to the Christmas season. There's been a lot of focus these days on different priorities that people have this time of year. Why was this brought out at this time, and when will these regulations possibly be put into place?

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will do my best to address some of the points that were brought up by the hon. member. First, I would like to recognize that while the city charter framework was put into place in the spring of this year for the big cities, any time that they do want to make a change, it must be posted for 60 days, as I believe the member did recognize, before a regulation can be amended.

I think we have to recognize that Edmonton and Calgary are home to 53 per cent of all Albertans and that they have to be able to make decisions on their own as well. I do want to recognize once again, as the member stated, that these regulations aren't within this bill, but they are important questions that go along with it.

I just want to first of all touch on the eight regulations that were proposed. The amendments do give the ability to define types of development that qualify for off-site levies, which was mentioned; develop their own inclusionary housing programs; manage their own debt limits; more time to impose local improvement taxes; more flexibility in how they advertise or notify residents about large-scale rezoning; clarification for disposal processes for school properties that have been acquired at no cost; and the ability to work with school boards to develop broader uses for the lands around school sites.

It's important once again to recognize that these cities have to have the ability to make these decisions, and I think that modernizing these regulations is an important move forward. I believe that there is an ability to comment on these changes until January 28, I believe, so if people have comments, they are able to do so online.

I do also recognize that there are stakeholders, industry stakeholders who have concerns, and those are things where we need to be able to sit down – those consultations or conversations have begun already – and come to an agreement, just as we did on the entirety of this framework.

I'm not sure if I addressed some or all or none of his concerns, but we will do our best to do that in the future. Thank you.

The Chair: Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Well, thanks again, Madam Chair. I note that the minister perhaps will be able to respond himself, I suspect, at this time if I was to redirect a couple of questions his way. I had mentioned this, Minister, to the other member that was responding this morning with regard to a lot of concerns we had in relation to

this, but for your benefit, just to let you know, I did recognize that there must have been a lot of discussion with a lot of important people to come to the complex agreement that you've arrived at that is contained in the legislation.

9:40

But I would like to say that I'm a little concerned here that the regulations – they are sort of not normally discussed in the House, which I recognize, but are sort of tied to this bill – were released at the same time. Would you like to speak to that, and could you perhaps clear up a couple of things for me here?

There's a great amount of concern about what's contained in the regulations. The updates were made at the same time as the new bill for funding came out, and therefore I believe it is a fair topic to discuss, to some minor degree, in the House. I'm just wondering if you could speak on why these regulations have come out now. Could this consultation period be extended, perhaps, beyond what is now in the midst of the Christmas holiday season? Could that be extended? Why did they come out now?

As well, I'm wondering if you could speak, in addition, to this. It seems like there's no limit, if I could use that term loosely, sir, with respect to the power that the city would have in terms of quantifiers on just how much inclusionary housing, just how many off-site levies. How much does the developer perhaps have to be worried about in his risk assessments when he's doing his development plans with such open-ended clauses that appear to be in these new regulations?

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair. The member is right: it is a complex piece of legislation. It's something that we've been working on for – I can't say – a long time with the cities and a lot of experts that know a lot more about some of the things you're talking about: inclusionary housing, off-site levies, and these types of things. These are the types of things that the cities have been asking for for quite a long time, actually. In fact, when you talk about the off-site levies, what we're doing here is basically codifying some of the stuff that Calgary already does. They work with the developers on their communities to build sustainable and smart communities that people want to move to. What this does, with all of these provisions, in fact, is that it allows them to work with the city to develop the bylaw with them or to be consulted on the bylaw, to have public open houses on the bylaw, to make sure that they have certainty on where they're going to go.

Really, it's making sure that all parties are accountable and that they work together on this. I think that, as I said, this is something that Calgary already tends to do a fair amount. The big cities need to make sure that they hold these consultations and talk about these in a broad-based way with as much public input and developer input as possible. I know that some of our members spoke to developers last night about that, and I know that some of the developers were concerned and were kind of unsure. But, like I say, it is something that is already done in Calgary. It's just codifying it. The same with inclusionary housing: they're going to have to work together on this.

Sometimes when we put parameters on the 342 municipalities, they work in a broad-based sense, but the two big cities are kind of a bit of a different animal now. Working together with the developers, I think, is a smart way to do this. They have a lot more complexity to them in the big cities, so that's why we want to give them that ability and to make them accountable for themselves and to the public. That's kind of where we're at right now. That's why

we did that. It was something that was asked for. We spoke to the developers about this, too, and they understand where we're going with this legislation.

If there's anything specific, obviously I will try to answer that for the member.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Stier: Madam Chair, thank you, and I appreciate the response from the minister this morning. As I've taken a fair amount of time this morning in discussing the bill, I will probably be concluding here shortly on my portion of this. But I would just like to say that there were a lot of conversations we had, Minister, prior to your attending. We discussed the RMA, the AAMD and C, and the other associations and how those discussions are probably ongoing. I recognize that there are a lot of people in the department with their pencil over their ear and their sleeves rolled up doing their job, trying to get that together.

Nonetheless, as you and I have discussed before and some may know, I spent quite a few years in Municipal Affairs and worked on appeal boards and subdivisions, and in our planning committee we discussed municipal reserve. Municipal reserve over the years has been taken from developers when land is subdivided and worked with or developed. Municipal reserve normally does not have any compensation attached to it. Developers have to supply land for municipal reserve. It's right in the act. I can't remember the number, but I believe it's in the 650s somewhere. It's also in the subdivision and development regulations, which is a smaller pamphlet, but nonetheless it's regulations. It says that most of the time municipalities may take up to 10 per cent of the original property in terms of municipal reserve and that it's at the discretion of council. Now, a lot of municipalities would take the full 10 per cent. If a guy was coming in with 120 acres, he would therefore be acknowledging ahead of time that he was going to probably lose 12 acres.

That land would be held in reserve by the municipality and had to be used only for certain things: schools, parks, et cetera. That was in the act. Municipalities, however, could do something with that land as they chose, including selling it if they decided to do so in a proper process. Nonetheless, when developers are looking at this inclusionary housing and when developers are looking at land reserves that they're having to give and other costs, if they can set aside a clause in the act of up to 10 per cent, it would make sense to me that in the regulations you might consider – or they may have considered and decided against; I'm not sure which – to put in some sort of a percentage to have a quantifier or a limit on what these developers and/or landowners may have to look at in terms of the risk potential of their projects.

Would the minister have any comments on that, please?

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Sure. I appreciate where the member is coming from with that. During our discussions with the cities and with the other folks that we've included in these conversations, inclusionary housing did come up in a big way because we know that in Alberta we need more of that. Again, when we talked about the percentages, what kept coming up over and over again was the ability to work with the developers on it long before that development was started. That's what was worked on with them, that every situation is going to be a little bit different. So if we set a certain number on it, then you have to meet that threshold or be above or below it, whatever the case may be. It wasn't something that the people, when we talked to them, and the cities were in favour of. They wanted the accountability to work with the developers because if some

developers wanted to go higher than that, they wanted that ability, too, just depending on the developers. We wanted to use that I guess flexibility is the word I'm looking for. There was the need to do that. That's why we left it that way, so that they can work together on that and make sure that they collaborate in the best way that's going to fit the community in whatever part of the city they're going to build.

Mr. Stier: I thank the minister for his response, and I believe that one of my colleagues will be following up.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning. I just wanted to stand and speak to this bill. I would not assume to know even a tenth of what my colleague who just spoke knows about this bill. I received correspondence from BILD, which I think probably the minister is aware of. I just wanted to be able to bring this to the attention of the House so that those members in the House realize that once again we have an issue here, I think, of transparency that has been lacking and also consultation that has been lacking.

9:50

Now, from what I understand, "the Premier committed to working with industry and meeting with BILD Alberta in a letter dated November 20" and "failure to consult with industry on Bill 32 will be addressed." They talk about how they're going to address that in future days. What they say is that BILD "was notified . . . moments before a joint press conference with the Municipal Affairs Minister and the Mayor of Edmonton." Here's the association that is going to be building the homes, the communities, the subdivisions, and they are only addressed and notified moments before a joint conference with Municipal Affairs. As they put it, BILD Alberta is extremely disappointed.

Now, it goes on to talk about their concerns, but I don't need to stand here and talk about their concerns because I believe the Member for Livingstone-Macleod has done an adequate job with that, but it once again smacks at the concern that I've been hearing from Albertans for three and a half years now, which is that there is an agenda and that the government is pushing the agenda at breakneck speed and that there are unintended consequences.

You know, this is a big bill. It's a complex bill. I will readily admit that I have not dived into this bill as deeply as I would have liked just because of some other labour bills that came forward, but it is concerning when you think about the ramifications of this bill, the potential ramifications of this bill to Alberta and to the ability of a potential NDP government balancing their budget, their ability to provide . . .

Mr. S. Anderson: What does this have to do with anything?

Mr. Hunter: The minister just asked what this has to do with it. I'll explain it if you'll indulge me. It looks like he hasn't had his coffee this morning.

The issue here is that this government can promise a whole lot of stuff, thinking that they're going to be able to get into government by promising those things, but the question that Albertans all have on their mind is: if they promise something, can they fulfill it, and can it be sustainable? With this government's past record, I can't see how Albertans would agree that they have the ability to be sustainable in their promises.

They're either going to balance the budget in 2023 or they're not, but Albertans have to make an electoral decision in 2019. They can

make all sorts of promises to Albertans, saying, “We’re going to give you this; we’re going to give you that, and we’re still going to balance the budget,” but, in reality, it’s about as good as their forecast to be able to balance the budget in 2019. I think that was the first time you guys said you were going to balance the budget, and now it’s 2023. So it seems to be a moving target. I’m wondering whether or not this is one of the components that is going to knock off their budget, just as the differential is, just as all of the other factors that they’ve brought in that are destroying the revenue streams for any future government.

This is the reason why I have concerns about this. Again, I haven’t looked into this. I will say that in terms of the positive – I don’t want to leave on a negative. It is Christmastime, so I’ll leave with a positive. I imagine that being able to come to a consensus on this was very difficult, so I give the government and the minister credit for being able to sit down with both of the two largest cities in Alberta to try to draft an agreement. I do give him credit for that. I applaud his efforts. I just think that in their haste to be able to get something that they can take to the electorate and say, “You know, Calgary, we are better than you think we are; come vote for us” – perhaps they could have thought this thing through and had some meaningful debate and consultations with someone as substantial as the BILD Association of Alberta.

That’s the only thing that I wanted to say here today. I do appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill, but once again, as I said, the Member for Livingstone-Macleod is the guru on this issue, so I will abdicate to his better wisdom on this.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’d like to start with a quote from Mayor Don Iveson.

This new funding formula recognizes the key role our city and region have in driving growth in the provincial economy. It offers a sustainable funding mechanism that will allow us to plan our upcoming budgets more effectively, and continue to build out critical infrastructure that will benefit over a million people living in the Edmonton Metro region. Most importantly, this is a deal that respects our taxpayers, by fairly balancing their interests as Edmontonians and as Albertans.

To address the previous member’s comments, you know, the municipal sustainability initiative was never meant to be a long-term solution. It had an expiry date. We had extended that. Our minister has worked in-depth with both large cities and the AUMA and the RMA and is coming to agreements on all of those things with the different parties involved. There’s been a lot of consultation on this bill, Madam Chair.

For the first three years the funding amounts are specified, and after that they’re subject to changes in provincial revenues and provincial fuel sales. Those can go up and down, so the cities are putting that on the line. They think that they are going to be able to handle that as large cities. You know, we’ve heard consistently from the cities that their long-term capital planning is held back by not knowing how much money they will receive from the province in a given year. The lag ensures that the information required to calculate the funding is available long before the funding is provided, so we’re not doing this in last-minute stints. This will provide certainty to the cities about how much they can expect to receive, enabling more informed decision-making.

Madam Chair, you know, this is a permanent program. This is the reason that we have to replace MSI. It’s historic. It’s the first of its kind in our country. It provides funding tied to provincial revenues, which will ensure predictability and sustainability for our large-city

funding. It’s a much better program for municipalities and Albertans. That’s why we didn’t just extend MSI again.

Provincial revenues. They’re going to include all of the province’s consolidated revenues as published in the annual report minus the revenues associated with the climate leadership plan, and that means all revenues other than the carbon levy and contributions to the Climate Change and Emissions Management Act. Simply put, this is designed to make sure that municipal funding isn’t dependent on policy choices of the provincial government, to address the previous member’s comments. One of the goals of this process was to give our cities more predictability in their capital funding so that they can make more informed fiscal decisions. This section further strengthens that predictability by making sure that provincial changes do not ripple through to the cities, so they can make needed investments in their communities even if the province reduces its own revenues.

The minister and this government recognize that all municipalities require that stable, predictable infrastructure funding. You know, they were able to reach an agreement between Edmonton and Calgary through the charter process and now move on to the next phase in partnership with the associations as stated, the AUMA and the RMA.

Alberta has the highest provincial funding of municipalities in the country because we understand the importance of local infrastructure to all Albertans. During the depths of the recession we resisted calls from the opposition for cuts and maintained strong supports for each of our municipalities. I know that in my local municipality it made a big difference. There are projects that were on and off the books for almost 20 years, Madam Chair, that had never been accomplished, and now those projects are moving forward in a timely fashion.

This is all about their long-term funding sustainability and predictability, which MSI has never given to any of our municipalities. There was a commitment made in the spring to have the new system operational by the time MSI expires and to legislate that system, and that is the commitment that the minister has continued to make.

It’s important to note that all other municipalities have stable funding until 2022 under the current MSI framework. While in Budget 2018 Calgary and Edmonton took a \$456 million cut over three years, we’ve committed to making sure that Alberta’s mid-sized cities, towns, villages, MDs, and counties are able to meet their infrastructure needs. We believe that a legislated capital funding framework will allow these communities to continue to build and thrive, and we’re committed to making sure that happens. We’re taking the time that is needed to get this right. There’s been a good amount of consultation, and there will continue to be consultation as the current MSI program, again, doesn’t expire until ’21-22. We won’t rush the details of the important agreements that the minister is working on.

10:00

This funding is going to allow neighbouring municipalities to partner on projects that benefit the entire region and recognizes that all residents of a region utilize the same infrastructure, whether they live in Calgary or Airdrie, Edmonton or Sherwood Park. I know that the EMRB has had some discussions with the minister on this as well. This program will help communities work together to build the type of province that Albertans expect and avoids the costly duplication of infrastructure within the same region. We can all work in our little silos, Madam Chair, and we can have something good in every small community and every mid-sized community and have something really good in each city, but when we work

together as a region, we get something great when we pool our resources and we no longer work in silos.

It's important to notice that neighbouring municipalities can take that collaborative and co-ordinated approach to local infrastructure. It supports jobs, creates a regional economy that offers more opportunities. This is something that I see in my region every day. The trimunicipal region of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and Parkland county is much more successful because they work together so well. Details of this new regional program are going to be developed and released closer to when the program launches in 2022, but we expect eligible projects to be of regional significance that support the economic development of an entire area.

You know, Edmonton and Calgary have worked really closely with this government to help us achieve our path to balance. They were reduced in funding, again, by \$456 million over three years. No other municipality in Alberta saw their funding reduced. All other municipalities have enjoyed constant funding throughout the downturn, and they will continue to do so until 2022.

We remain committed to legislating a replacement for MSI for all municipalities, and there's lots of time to do that. We're working very closely with the AUMA, the RMA, and the municipalities themselves. You know, everybody needs sustainable, predictable, permanent capital funding, and that's why we're engaged in continuing these discussions, so that we have a long-term revenue-sharing agreement with the province. The infrastructure needs of Albertans in mid-sized cities, towns, villages, MDs, and counties are important. Our commitment remains to form a legislated capital funding framework so that these communities can continue to build and thrive.

Madam Chair, as a rural MLA I will say that I am very impressed with the work that the minister has done on this file working with our big cities and that he continues to do working with the RMA and the AUMA every single day.

I will end with one more quote if I can find it. I just wanted to have a conversation about – I can't find it, unfortunately, so that is all I have to say.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 32 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? Carried.

[The voice vote indicated that the request to report Bill 32 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:04 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For:

Anderson, S.	Gotfried	McCuaig-Boyd
Babcock	Gray	McKittrick
Bilous	Hanson	Miller
Carlier	Hinkley	Miranda
Carson	Hoffman	Orr
Ceci	Horne	Piquette
Coolahan	Hunter	Pitt

Cortes-Vargas	Kazim	Rosendahl
Dach	Kleinstauber	Schreiner
Dang	Littlewood	Starke
Drever	Loewen	Stier
Eggen	Loyola	Sucha
Feehan	Luff	Sweet
Fitzpatrick	Malkinson	Turner
Ganley	Mason	Woollard
Goodridge		

10:20

Totals: For – 46 Against – 0

[Request to report Bill 32 carried]

Bill 30

Mental Health Services Protection Act

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to bring forward the next important step in ensuring that Bill 30, Mental Health Services Protection Act moves forward to indeed protect the mental health services that so many Alberta families are counting on these days.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

I am incredibly proud. As has been mentioned, there are two main sections to this legislation, one that regulates health professionals that are billing themselves as counsellors or therapists and the other that regulates residential treatment facilities. Both are incredibly important in making sure that we address the mental health crisis and substance use challenges that we are facing in our province. I've had the honour of discussing this bill with many of my colleagues both in this House, in the hallway, and in my office. It's incredibly important legislation.

I heard a desire to ensure that this doesn't impact peer-support programs, including 12-step programs, and I want to assure all hon. members that I completely agree. Those are important, valuable programs, and it's important for peer mentors to have an opportunity to continue to support each other without fear that a college could negatively impact that. It's my understanding that it wouldn't, but to ensure certainty, I have the following amendment and the requisite number of copies to provide that absolute clarity to all hon. members and all Albertans.

What I'm proposing is that we amend the bill as follows: that section 29(3) be amended by adding the following after 3(3) of this proposed schedule 3.1.

(4) For greater certainty, in this section, "counselling relationship" does not include providing emotional, social or practical support between individuals who share a common lived experience.

I think this is fundamental to what my colleagues have been saying. I don't believe that the legislation would have negatively impacted that as the college will be defining the role of therapist and counselling therapist, but I appreciate the concern that they had in wanting to ensure and enshrine that that would not be the case, Madam Chair. That's why we've proposed this amendment as it is.

Some might say that we should remove addiction counselling from this bill entirely. I don't believe that that's the solution. In fact, this morning I was reading – and I'll be happy to table this piece during tablings later in the day – in the *Vancouver Sun* piece The

Missing Harm-reduction Measure? Regulating Mental Health Professionals. I'll just read a few sections. It says:

For more than 20 years, mental health professionals have warned that unqualified or bad practitioners are killing British Columbians. Finally, the overdose crisis may have pushed their concerns on to the public agenda.

The journalist goes on to say:

Anyone in British Columbia can build a website and sell their services as an "interventionist" promising to rescue people from the throes of addiction and get them into care.

In fact, without government regulation, anyone can claim to be a mental health professional, use the name "counsellor" or "therapist", set up a private practice and charge whatever they want.

The problem has festered [in the last] two decades. But now, it has taken on more urgency as the province [British Columbia, this being] enters the third year of a public health emergency due to the illicit-drug overdose crisis, and an increasing number of grifters are taking financial advantage of desperate families willing to pay anything if it helps their loved ones.

Madam Chair, it is with that same thrust – and this is very timely. Just this morning in British Columbia this piece came out calling on the federal government to indeed regulate addictions therapists and folks working in that space. That is why I think it's really important that we do regulate it through our bill, which is the case in the bill as proposed, but that we do provide that certainty to folks working on a 12-step program and a peer-to-peer program. That's why my amendment didn't go further. That's why my amendment specifically outlined that the counselling relationship doesn't apply to peer support or people with lived experience working in a mentor-type way.

I believe that Albertans seeking relief from substance use have a right to know that the people supporting them are held to a high standard and that they are regulated health professionals. People who are counsellors or counselling therapists have called on governments to do this for a number of years, and I am proud to be acting on that. So have the family members, as we mentioned when we introduced this bill, called for that greater oversight. With this amendment I believe that we will ensure both, that peer support, like 12-step programs, is supported and that counselling therapists are regulated, including addiction therapists, which I believe have the ability to save lives, Madam Chair, and help Alberta families. What's more important than that? I don't think much. It's hard to think of anything more important than saving lives and helping families. That's why I'm proposing this amendment, to give that clarity to all Albertans and to my hon. colleagues and to make sure that we do move forward with that as our utmost focus.

With that, I'd be happy to address questions or concerns regarding the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the Health minister for this amendment. I do think it improves the bill and provides for that. I guess I just do have one question, though, and it's a clarification. The last few words of the amendment include the words "who share a common lived experience." Certainly, we know that the folks who do share a common lived experience are very valuable in terms of their expertise and that lived experience. But what about those who do not share the common lived experience? Are they then disqualified from providing these services? I just want to make sure that we're not being unnecessarily too restrictive. I mean, I certainly agree

with the value of people who have a shared experience, but I know there are also people that provide counselling that don't necessarily have that common shared experience. Would they be unable to provide those services? If I could get some clarification.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. Certainly, if they want to deem themselves to be in a counselling relationship, if they're there to counsel, they would need to become part of the college and become counsellors. The lived experience piece speaks to the 12-step programs like AA, NA. Those are all peer-support programs that are run by people who have lived experience. Our intent is to specifically carve this out in terms of addictions expertise and say that the legislation, and specifically the requirement to become part of a college and a regulated health professional – if you're coming to this through those avenues, through your lived experience, then you're not billing yourself as a counsellor or as providing that counselling therapy relationship.

That's why if people that don't have lived experience want to work in that field and want to do it as a profession in a trusting relationship, they should indeed become part of the college, regulate, and make sure that they are providing that assurance to the public and to their clients. But for people who are part of programs like NA and AA and other community-driven peer support, faith based and non faith based, they're not billing themselves as being health practitioners, and therefore they shouldn't have to be part of the college if they don't choose to act in that way. That's the rationale.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Chair, and through you to the minister. Minister, I appreciate the effort with this amendment in terms of peer-support groups, which I think is what this addresses in the amendment. What is not addressed specifically is counselling services provided by a minister or a pastor in a church setting in terms of addiction or mental health treatment not going under the banner of the college. The question is: will the pastor or minister within a church be able to provide counselling services to their members?

10:30

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to start by addressing the Member for Airdrie, who spoke about her constituent – I think his name was Mike – in previous iterations of this debate. It's exactly for people like Mike, who are coming to this from that angle as, you know, a peer mentor with common lived experience, that we crafted this amendment, this wording to specifically make sure that we had carved that piece out.

Just to reiterate, this is about people who are talking about themselves as counselling therapists and using that title to bring in folks from outside. In terms of the religious relationship with somebody who's your spiritual adviser and who may be counselling you from that angle, spiritual counselling isn't part of the legislation. Certainly, when you're working with somebody through a religious organization, that is the focus of the counselling that they're providing. The legislation isn't intended to address that relationship with somebody who's working spiritually. It's around people who are billing themselves as being health professionals,

counselling therapists, and using that health title, essentially, and making sure that it has a parameter around it, just like a paramedic or a pharmacist or a doctor has a title around it.

You might go to your spiritual adviser, your priest, your pastor, somebody else in your spiritual community, a mom to get advice that relates to those types of things in your life, maybe even health advice, but you wouldn't go to them with the same level of relationship as you would to your physician. That definitely is a unique kind of relationship that this piece doesn't apply to.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other members who wish to speak? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's an honour to rise and speak to the House on this Bill 30, the Mental Health Services Protection Act. I want to take this opportunity, and I'm hoping the government side will listen . . .

The Deputy Chair: Just to clarify, we're on amendment A1. I just wanted to make sure that you're aware of that.

Mr. Yao: Yes. On this amendment.

The Deputy Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Yao: I appreciate the fact that we have been trying to work together to get this bill good. We have been relaying information back and forth. With all due respect, I don't believe that this amendment addresses the issues that we're trying to accomplish. This is a good bill. Mental health is a serious issue, as we all know. I guarantee you that when this session is over, there are going to be 87 people who have fewer issues with mental health because of getting out of this House here. Honestly, Madam Chair, I was pretty jaded coming into this session, and then I see this bill. Up till now we get no answers to questions in the House. The government side ultimately outnumbers us on everything, gets everything through. Then I saw this bill, and this bill gives me hope that we can work together and address these issues surrounding mental health.

What my references are in regard to this bill are learning lessons from other jurisdictions, learning from Ontario, as an example. Ontario, as your staff mentioned, did this back in 2007. There are some interesting things to note about Ontario's legislation. It started in 2007; it doesn't get finished and proclaimed until December 31, 2019. Why? They recognize that it was a very comprehensive bill, that it captured more people than they recognized, so much so that they felt it necessary that they had to put in a buffer to allow the college to evolve and develop. That's another aspect of this bill, that any time we're asking a college of professionals to develop their own institution that will be self-managed, we aren't necessarily sure about what rules they're going to impose.

When you have the 14 groups come together with all their representatives, they're looking at anything that touches mental health, and they're going to be bringing all that into their jurisdiction. The problem with that is that our society still doesn't understand mental health. We are still evolving, we are still learning, and we will be doing that for a long time because, you know, it is complex. Those are the concerns.

But what we can do is that we can learn from other jurisdictions. Again with Ontario, they started theirs in 2007. It won't be finished until the end of next year, but if you were to look on their psychotherapist website, you would see information pertaining to things like a draft policy. These draft policies – they have a couple

on there – are quite firm in their language because they've taken 11 years to develop this. They only released this information this year. I will be tabling this later. They provided a list of activities that may be deemed to be outside the control of active psychotherapy.

A registered psychotherapist

may do some of these activities as an ancillary activity within the scope of their psychotherapy practices, but providing only the services below would not constitute the controlled act. These activities include, but are not limited to . . .

and there's an entire comprehensive list of descriptions of some of the services available that they have excluded from their bill that they figured out after 10 years, after a decade of studying this, after a decade of working through, after a decade of imposing rules on a lot of these groups and then finding out that there's a bit of kickback. We can learn all the lessons from them, or we can experience them all ourselves. I don't want to go through – I'm someone that learns from our history.

This is so important. If you look at this list, it describes everything from 12-step programs and problem-solving to rehabilitation to spiritual or faith guidance and counselling to teaching social skill development, emotional regulation, from counselling and support, advice giving to instruction, assisting in resolution of dilemmas. The list goes on. I will table this. It is a very comprehensive list of all the groups that they recognize they had to exclude.

Again, mental health is something that we're still learning about. We're still evolving to that point where we can grasp everything surrounding our mental health, and it is so important that we get this bill right. This minister has to understand, this government has to understand that by instituting this bill, you are planting a seed, a seed that will develop and grow. It is a bill that is responding to the needs of a good portion of our community as well as a group of professionals that want regulation so that we don't get the very same things that you said. But it is so important that we can learn from Ontario on these issues.

Again, with that in mind, we're trying to make the bill better. In discussions with counsel, I'd like to add a subamendment to this amendment.

The Deputy Chair: Hon. member, if you can just wait until I have copies at the table before you speak to it so that I can make sure it's in order.

Mr. Yao: Certainly.

Now, we only have a few minutes to absorb this, so I hope I get this right when we discuss it.

The Deputy Chair: Just wait.

Mr. Yao: Yeah. Absolutely.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member. Your amendment will be referred to as SA1. Please go ahead.

Mr. Yao: I move that amendment A1 to Bill 30, Mental Health Services Protection Act, be amended by striking out part A and substituting the following:

A Section 29(3) is amended in the proposed Schedule 3.1 as follows:

- (a) in section 3 by striking out subsection (2), and
- (b) by adding the following after subsection (3):
 - (4) For greater certainty, in this section, "counselling relationship" does not include providing emotional, social or practical support between individuals who share a common lived experience.

10:40

What I'm trying to do is that I'm trying to capture the essence of Ontario's policies that they are finalizing right now, putting some buffers in to ensure that so many of these groups don't get affected. If we're concerned about a lot of these groups providing some of the services that they require, I would certainly consider and recommend that we send that aspect of this bill to committee to discuss it further. Again, when you're discussing spiritual groups and crisis intervention and just overall case management, clinical follow-up and discharge, coaching, co-ordination services, parental co-ordination, mediating, problem solving, psychometric testing or assessment, there's a reason why they thought that these things need to be excluded from the psychotherapy bill in Ontario. They recognize that it is complex. They recognize that people are complex, that mental health is complex, and that we can't necessarily address all issues immediately through this legislation. We have to give some aspects time to evolve and to grow.

As I stated previously and other times I've spoken on this, I mean, at the heart of mental health is the ability to talk to somebody and to be able to vent and express your concerns and have someone listen and understand, and for 99 per cent of the issues, for 99 per cent of the people that is more than enough. How many of the members of this Legislature walk out of here and talk to a loved one or a friend about what they have experienced in this Legislature today or yesterday or for the last four years? We all do, I hope. Even as a young paramedic student these are the things that they emphasize with us, that the one thing you need to understand if you're going to deal with the stresses of the stuff that you're going to see is that you need to be able to have someone to talk to. Okay?

Since people have been around and we have had civilization, the institutions that have actually been providing that kind of support have been our religious institutions. People who need someone to talk to would be able to talk to their pastor, their priest, or their holy person, whatever they may be. That's what they're there for. That's what we emphasize in our religion, the ability to help one another. I mean, that alone, the spiritual and faith guidance counselling, is quite specific in this draft policy that's been proposed by the Ontario psychotherapists.

I can't preach enough about how important it is that we get this bill right, because it does affect mental health. We need to just adjust it. These are just slight variations to this. Again, it's not to say that we ignore the aspects that you identified that we learned from British Columbia as well, but we need to send that perhaps and study it further. There's nothing to say that we can't take portions of this and study it through a committee and do proper outreach and try to come up with some more firm professional credentials for people that would say that they are mentors or counsellors.

Madam Chair, I truly hope that the government will consider this, that we will fix this bill to make it better than what it is. As I've said, we have been working with your Health ministry to figure this out, to draft it. I provide them with all this information, I provide them with my amendments, and in turn you guys provide me with an amendment. But, again, that amendment that you're providing doesn't quite address it. So I'm really looking for your support in approving these amendments that I'm trying to provide. They are not spiteful. They are not vengeful. They are not partisan. This is about getting it right for our mental health workers. Again, it is about learning from our peers. It is about learning from Ontario, who have been studying it since 2007, and only in 2018 did they come out with some draft proposals and say: we need to exclude all these things because we were overreaching and we were overbearing.

Again, when you develop a college, we are making assumptions about what this college is going to accomplish. We are trusting their professional instincts to provide that guidance and that structure for mental health workers. But with that, they are going to embrace all of them. They are going to take them all under their jurisdiction. They are going to be telling groups that they cannot provide certain therapies or provide certain counselling. Again, a lot of those groups don't necessarily work with your description of those who live a common lived experience, as the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster has identified.

We need to get this bill right because this is about mental health. If we do not, we risk exposing many people who would ordinarily get supports from certain groups, and they may be discouraged from that. At the same time, I recognize what the minister is saying about what's happened in British Columbia, where you get a lot of fly-by-nighters. In Fort McMurray, with the fire, I saw hints that there are a lot of unregistered therapists and whatnot. Their intent was good, but again we ultimately don't know what quality they're providing. I understand what this bill is trying to provide. We are trying to ensure that quality. But, again, we can't knock out so many other groups that provide the type of counselling that the majority of the population can absorb, manage, and feel good about afterwards.

I would certainly like to hear from the minister on what her thoughts are on this subamendment. Again, this is part of some subsequent amendments to address the issues that we're trying to accomplish here, and that is to learn from Ontario and figure things out.

You know what? There are other issues surrounding this bill that I have concerns about. Again, it's about consulting. How many times do we have to teach you how to consult?

If I just might point out one group that this bill will affect, and it's called the Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation. This is a group that has managed to get nation-wide certification for their counselling sector. I guess what is affecting this is the fact that this is the group that manages all of the counsellors that are on our federal military bases and in all of our indigenous communities. With our indigenous communities and our military bases, this bill can potentially knock out those people from getting the counselling that is presently being provided to them.

I've received information from the Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation. They have over a thousand members in this province operating as counsellors. They are concerned that this equates to one-fifth of the total counsellors that are certified here in this province. They are concerned that because of this bill a thousand of their members are going to be excluded, that every indigenous reserve in our province and every military base in our province is going to have counsellors knocked off their premises, that they won't be able to function legally due to this bill. This is a big concern.

Let us be clear: this group does support regulation. They were the first ones to be able to accomplish that at the national, the federal level. But this bill, as they've identified, could potentially knock them out because they have not been included in this college. They have not been asked to participate. This is a group that represents one-fifth of the official members in this province. So that is concerning.

It is interesting to note that of all the associations that are a part of this bill, none of them are addiction counsellor associations, unless you can clarify that for me. I did not see anything in that list that indicates that there are specific addiction counsellor groups in there. They weren't even included in the discussions.

With that, I thank you, Madam Chair, for this opportunity to speak to this House about this very serious issue that I believe we're all working together to come to an arrangement on.

Thank you so much.

10:50

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I know that when some people use the term partisan, they mean it in a derogatory way. I just want to clarify that I absolutely did this work thinking about the values of the party that I was elected to represent: the values of working people, the values of ordinary families. It was in that effort that we crafted this legislation, working with folks who were incredibly negatively impacted by people who took advantage of them in a time of extreme need.

I want to clarify that, absolutely, we talked to people that work in this field. The Health Sciences Association, which many paramedics are members of and also represents many people who work in the addictions world, has been lobbying successive Conservative governments to make this change, to protect their profession, their title, and the work that they do, for years. I'm glad that as an NDP government we worked with them to make sure that we are helping protect the profession and protect patients.

I also want to add that I think that the proposed amendment would weaken the legislation. I think that not only are we learning from things that have happened in Ontario over the last decade – it's true that they passed their Psychotherapy Act in 2007 – but we also have Nova Scotia who had the Counselling Therapists Act in 2008. New Brunswick has the Licensed Counselling Therapy Act. Quebec had marriage and family therapists incorporated into their order of their legislation as well, Madam Chair.

Definitely, I think that we need to retain addictions counselling in this legislation. Taking it out would be incredibly dangerous to the profession, to people who work in this field, who we have absolutely worked with to make sure that we get this right, but also dangerous to people who count on people who call themselves addictions counsellors to be held to a high standard, to make sure that they are conducting themselves in a way that is regulated, that is professional.

When I think back, again, to the bill that we just passed, I believe unanimously in this House, not that long ago around protecting patients from regulated health professionals who may violate them through sexual misconduct or sexual assault, if we pull this section out, if we exclude people working in the addictions field, we don't provide that same level of protection to those patients, and I think there would be real harm to the people of Alberta and to the legislation.

Not only are we learning from what I'd see as the gaps in these other jurisdictions that pass legislation, but again we are learning from the extreme hardship that is being faced by families in British Columbia right now. There are calls ongoing in that jurisdiction for people to act before more people are taken advantage of, by creating a college and a regulatory body to govern people working in the addiction counselling field.

I am speaking in strong opposition to this proposed subamendment. I believe that it would undermine the intent of the bill and the protection that we've been called on to bring for people working in Alberta, but I appreciate the interesting arguments that were put forward by my hon. critic.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the subamendment. The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Okay. I guess, Madam Chair, just to clarify the lessons that they did learn in Ontario. Even the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster pointed out that the government's description regarding those who live a common lived experience still excludes a lot of groups in here. Again, without taking the time to go into the nuances and understanding the very details of the bill – I know that the government has received this list, the draft policy, of activities that do not constitute the controlled act of psychotherapy. There's a reason why they came up with this list after 10 years in Ontario, that only now, this year, did they release this list. It was because of all the issues that they addressed.

Again, this government has the right intention – the legislation, legislators have the right intention – but it is the college that is ultimately going to create the rules and regulations. They are the ones that are going to look at anything in mental health. Think about that: anything that reflects mental health, which is virtually everything. Any type of medium where you're talking to another person about an issue would be under their purview.

I mean, if we have to look at this list, if I have to read this out, just so you understand some of the things that they recognize, that are only descriptions because they don't even have titles for so many of these things – and there's a reason for that. It's because of all the issues that they found were impairing the process. Advocating – simply advocating – was out. Applied behavioural analysis is out. Case management is out. Clinical follow-up, care, and discharge planning is out. Coaching is out. Co-ordinated services, including parental co-ordination, is out.

Counselling and support includes advising and advice giving, instruction, assisting in resolution of dilemmas, assisting in improvement of coping strategies; with subheadings for crisis intervention and management, including de-escalation, safety planning, referral to other services; information, advice, and knowledge transfer; instructing; intake and referral. Even hypnotherapy is knocked out of this, and mediating, milieu therapy. Just so you guys understand what that is – and I don't say it with a very good French accent – it's the psychotherapy in which you control their social environment, who they interact with, right? Addicts: sometimes you want to keep them away from their regular friends, who might bring them down a certain path. Then monitoring; problem solving, including information, advice giving, 12-step programs, social skill development; psychometric testing or assessment; rehabilitation; single-session counselling; spiritual and faith guidance; and teaching are in here.

I guess the point is that in 10 years – sorry; 11 years because this has only been released this year, and they started the process in 2007 – they recognized that there are so many nuances to all these issues, that they couldn't put a descriptor for a lot of the people that were providing these services. But they also recognized that it's a step-by-step process, and this government can also recognize that it's a step-by-step process. The intentions are good, but what you're doing is planting a seed that will grow into a beautiful, beautiful bill. They recognized that they were overreaching on a lot of their stuff.

What we're trying to do is confine the descriptions of the people that we're impacting to give it a little bit more flexibility. Again, these things are going to evolve and grow, but the variable that we cannot control is the college that you are creating with this and the rules that they are going to impose on so many of these groups. By not including them in the discussions and now creating a group that

is going to oversee them, this is going to create great difficulties for a lot of these institutions that I just described. These are institutions, these are groups that are in every one of our 87 constituencies, and every one of them is going to be affected by this, depending on what the rules are that the college creates.

You can't tell me that you can't – our obligation is to allow that college to grow, those professionals to develop it based on their understanding. But, again, when addictions counselling isn't even included in the group and you have a federal group that wasn't even consulted on this, you know, that's tough. There's nothing to say that we can't study these things, send that portion to committee, and try to figure it out with the college that is being developed. There's nothing to say that we can't do that, that this government doesn't have it within their abilities to do that.

I implore you guys to consider this amendment and help me with the definition of addictions counsellors. That's what this is about. We're trying to influence the definition of addictions counsellors with this amendment, okay? If not, again, we risk pushing out a lot of groups with that. I don't know if I can convince you guys any further of this. Again, this isn't a spiteful change. This isn't partisan. This is about ensuring that so many of the groups that help our community aren't knocked out.

11:00

We need to learn from another province. We need to learn from the biggest province in our nation, the province that is considered to be the most progressive, the province that only this year released a list of things that: "Jeez, you know what? We were overreaching. We were overbearing." They recognized that they still have to study these things, as we all do, because we still don't understand mental health.

If anyone says that we have perfected the science of mental health, they're daft. Okay? We are so far away from understanding all the nuances of our brains and how we all work and how we are wired, and we need to get this right.

This is a good bill. The intention is fantastic. Again, these mental health therapists have been asking for this for a long time, but so have all the other health professionals. You know, this minister prides herself on the fact that they approved the paramedics, which I was, to become a proper college, and some other health professions. The thing is that we took a long time to evolve to that state, and I agree that we had to take time because we had to develop our own repertoire of skills and stuff like that, just so we understand how these colleges work. Those are my peers. Those are other paramedics saying: "You know what? We have the skills. We have the knowledge that we can do pericardiocentesis decompression, that I can stick a needle into someone's chest and I can pull those fluids out or that air out and save that life." That is something only a doctor could do. We had to prove that we could do that in the streets.

We had to get a doctor to say: "You know what? I've worked with you guys. I understand your quality and your skills. You guys know how to do landmarking. You understand anatomy and physiology. I know that you can do this truly life-saving treatment that only physicians can do." We had to demonstrate that over years, that we could do chest decompressions, that we could do a cricothyroidotomy, that I could do an RSI, that's rapid sequence intubation, where I could give a patient a lot of medications and drugs to sedate them in order that I could breathe for them.

It took time because before that we were ambulance drivers. Our job was to get people into a vehicle and get them to the hospital as quickly as possible. It was only after the Vietnam War, when all these medics from Vietnam, American soldiers, came in and joined their fire services, that they recognized that, hey, they can provide

medicine in the streets. You know who they were inspired by? A good Canadian, Bethune, a physician who went to China and Asia and helped out providing medical services in the field during some bad wars. But I digress.

The point is that colleges need time to evolve and develop, and if we impose these rules on them now, we may be enabling, even though their intentions are good, that they're actually restricting a lot of the services that we need in our communities, that we don't have quite that definition for. With that, I implore this government to please consider this recommendation and limit the colleges' ability to embrace all aspects of mental health, which is everywhere – so many groups provide that – that you consider this and that we do an evolution on this, evolve.

With that, I'd ask for any help on that. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Just very briefly, I want to ensure that the hon. member is aware that actually addiction counsellors are captured by the Ontario legislation. They just fall under the definition of psychotherapy or psychotherapist. They are actually encapsulated in this, and taking them out of our legislation would not just be a harm to the international comparator, who the hon. member's leader, I think, said was the heartbeat or economic engine. I forget what the word was.

This member talks about the most progressive province. I'm pretty proud of Alberta and the work that we're doing here with our health professionals to make this work, align with the needs of Albertans and with the people working in the field. Again I recommend that we vote against this. The amendment is indeed pulling out – for anyone who's looking at the hard copy of the bill, it's page 23, the left-hand side of the page, subsection (2), which actually talks about the actions that addictions counsellors take. I think it's incredibly important that we keep that in the legislation for certainty of the profession and for public confidence. I again strongly recommend that we vote against the proposed subamendment.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the subamendment?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on subamendment A1-SA1 lost]

The Deputy Chair: We are now on the original amendment, A1. Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to refer to this amendment. I will say that mental health issues are extremely important. It is an issue that all of us need to be concerned about and aware of. Quite frankly, it probably affects everybody's family, all of our families, extended families in some way or another. While I applaud the amendment that has been put forward by the government to include peer counselling, I am concerned maybe a bit more about the implication partly with regard to the newspaper article that the minister used to support the movement going forward.

I guess some of my questions to the minister on this would be, first of all: does the minister have any figures or facts with regard to how much counselling occurs in this province? How many

clients are served by government medical addictions treatment versus what I would call nongovernmental – in other words, private – whether they're for profit or nonprofit? The majority of them are probably nonprofit. What's the percentage? How many people are actually being treated by either those currently under the authority and regulations of the government and those who are currently not, which this bill would hope to achieve?

Then following up on that, the newspaper article that was cited gives the implication that all of those services that are not under government control and mandate, all of those private services, are somehow disreputable, somehow dishonest to clients, that somehow all of them are providing terrible services. I will agree that there are some individuals out there who are providing inadequate and inappropriate services, and they need to be addressed. But to advance the bill on the implication that all other services that are not government-controlled are somehow terribly defective, terribly abusive, I think, is a mistake, and I don't think it will do anyone any good.

I guess I would ask the government, then, in that regard: does the government have any actual, real statistics on the government-controlled and -mandated individuals and facilities that actually report to us on how well they are doing, how successful they are in their treatments? Generally government reporting gives us procedural reporting, it gives us statistical reporting, and it gives us busyness reporting. But I'm asking about real health outcomes, real recovery results. How many people that go through government facilities are actually successfully able to overcome their addiction and stay unaddicted for a year, two years, five years, whatever the number might be? I guess in that regard I just felt the urgency to rise and ask these questions.

With regard to a story – actually, it's more than a story – a letter that we received from an Albertan just recently, it says:

Our journey started with my son in grade 7, we visited many doctors and psychologists . . .

To be clear, these are the government-approved and -authorized ones.

. . . who either wouldn't share with me what was going on in their discussions . . .

Here's a family with a child. Family support is extremely important in any kind of mental health intervention.

. . . or [they were] prescribing Vitamin D and another prescribing nausea medication that those on chemotherapy take. This ultimately led to a suicide attempt . . .

under the management of government-authorized addictions counsellors,

. . . and being admitted to ACH mental health unit for 3 weeks where they focused on sleep therapy and referred to youth addiction. Youth Addiction is a voluntary program and they were unable to provide any meaningful treatment to a youth in active addiction. Things continued to spiral out of control as his addiction condition continued to progress – we landed back at ACH mental health unit for another 3 week stay. This time when he was released we were under the care of a [government-authorized] psychiatrist from ACH who saw my son once a month basically to renew his prescription for anxiety and sleep medication.

Not a lot of help and counselling there.

She even told me after about the [third] followup appointment that she believed that he was [fully] recovered. In hindsight nothing could have been further from the truth. She did refer us to the Youth addiction outpatient program at Foothills. After many months waiting [that's helpful] for our assessment, Dr. Chang advised that my son had two choices, go into treatment at [a] Youth Addiction site out of town or Woods Home voluntary program. My son ran and it took us many terrifying hours to finally find him and with the help of the police he was admitted

to Foothills [again] and after a night in emergency he was transferred to Unit 26. While on Unit 26 they put [my son] through extensive testing and [the doctor again] advised us that we only had one option – The Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre. Our lives felt like we were on an out of control merry go round in a [real] horror movie! It was at [Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre] that we finally found a treatment centre and counsellors who understood the situation and how truly sick my son was. After 10 months of treatment and no government funding, we graduated.

11:10

So here's my question to the minister: how is this legislation going to guarantee effective and adequate real treatment to truly help people so that we don't end up with more stories like this under government-approved, -authorized, and -mandated medical help and control? We need a broader, wider, fuller solution.

I'm not advocating that we should allow people who are scammers and abusers to exist, but I also want to know: in the process how are we actually going to create a system that isn't just about busyness and bureaucracy and creating a monopoly for a certain group of professionals so that they can have their profession protected and have a franchise on something that excludes everybody else when, in fact, it's the other people that probably provide the majority of counselling services in this province and in many cases do the best amount of work?

In this case, the government-authorized person had a terrible experience and had to go to a nonprofit with no government funding, no government authority in order to get the kind of help they needed. Those are just some of the questions I have. Again, I'm in favour of the bill, and I'm in favour of the amendment, but what I really want to see in Alberta is really effective treatment, and just government authority will never, never do it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thanks very much. I'll be happy to respond to the questions.

The first question that the member asks is about the percentage of people that are in facilities that are run by AHS or contracted by AHS versus facilities that aren't. This is the exact reason why we need this legislation, because there is no way that there is any kind of reporting or evidence given to the people of Alberta to be able to make those kinds of decisions. They operate in their own silos without any oversight or accountability.

One of the pieces that this legislation will enable is the ability to answer that question once all of the residential treatment facilities are registered. It will be about a year, probably, for that process to unroll. By this time next year they should all be registered, and we should be able to have some better accountability to the people of Alberta, particularly people who are making choices that are literally life and death in trying to save the lives of their loved ones and themselves.

I just want to tell about one more piece that relates directly to the member's question. It was actually a facility in the member's own riding, where the family that stood with me on the day we brought this legislation forward talked about how they took their son to that facility because they trusted that he would be safe there. What happened is that he went to a storage shed, I believe the mom said, that was unlocked, and he consumed what was essentially poison. She thought it was antifreeze or windshield washer fluid of some kind.

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

Having some oversight would say things like: poisonous substances need to be controlled, they need to be locked up, they need to be secured. If somebody does consume a poisonous substance, you have an obligation to call EMS and to bring in health professionals or to take that person to a health facility to get them help. Instead, what happened, according to the mom and according to the fatality review, is that this young man, Taylor, suffered for many hours. Eventually he was brought to a hospital, but it was too late, and he died.

There was a fatality review, that was completed in 2010. He died in 2007, so it took a number of years. They said that regulating and having oversight of these facilities potentially could have saved his life. That's my summary of it. Those weren't exactly the words, but that was the recommendation from the fatality review, that there be oversight on this. The government of the day said: "Yeah. We get it." And now it took a new government for us to bring in this protection. This is really about giving answers to the questions that the hon. member has asked.

The original amendment – I think we're still dealing with A1 – is about making sure that peer support programs can continue on without nervousness that they might be hampered in some way. That's why we brought forward this amendment, to make sure that there was absolute clarity. We've looked at other jurisdictions and at what's been done there, and we certainly believe that peer support programs – AA, NA, 12-step, and others – have a role to play in society in making sure that people are connected and have supports outside of residential treatment facilities or other types of substance-use treatment facilities in an ongoing way.

Again, I'm still hoping that everyone will support the amendment. I'm happy to have been able to address the questions, and I look forward to being able to answer them when this bill passes and there's some information that is brought in and able to be shared more publicly to give that certainty to all Albertans.

Thank you.

Mr. Orr: I thought I'd just respond briefly. Yes, I'm fully aware of that situation, and I'm not surprised it got raised. I will say, though, that part of the situation there – and I agree about the importance of locking up controlled substances – is that it was supposed to have been locked up, but it was accidentally left open. The reality is, too, that the individual actually did not notify anyone that he'd even taken anything. Nobody knew, and he was hanging out in his room.

While I sympathize with the family, I think it's a little bit unfair to blame the facility overly much because they have actually gone on over the years. They have become fully accredited with a number of different agencies. They've grown and spread. They have instituted all kinds of practices that actually have made them into a very good facility, but still the government will not – they've tried for 12 years, quite frankly, even though they're accredited, to be cited on the Alberta government website as a treatment facility that is accredited. They're continually refused.

There are many facilities that have made mistakes, and quite honestly government facilities sometimes make them, too. So my real plea is: how do we focus away from just the bureaucratic process and actually create effective, safe health care that produces, really, health outcomes and not just numbers outcomes and statistics? That's my real concern.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1?

Seeing none, we'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to Bill 30?

Mr. Yao: On the main bill?

The Chair: Yes. Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. We need to ensure that this bill is good and has an adjustment period to ensure that all the aspects of this bill are firm. Again, it is about learning the lessons from other jurisdictions. In Ontario they put in a transition period of 12 years. The Ontario Psychotherapy Act was proclaimed in 2007, but they were given a 12-year buffer, which they call a transition period, which ends on December 31, 2019. The reason is that they did recognize that by empowering a college, they didn't necessarily have all the assurances as to who it was going to impact, because mental health is such a broad subject. Again, we see the result of their review and research and real-life experience over 11 of those 12 years. They came out with that list, which I read out to this House, that talked about a description of activities that were excluded but empowered to continue on.

With that, Madam Chair – and I'd be looking at any friendly amendments to this – I'd like to move an amendment.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A2.

Go ahead, hon. member.

11:20

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. In this amendment I move that Bill 30, the Mental Health Services Protection Act, be amended as follows. In part A section 28 is struck out, and in part B section 30 is struck out and the following is substituted:

Coming into force

30(1) This Act, except section 29, comes into force on January 1, 2029.

(2) Section 29 comes into force on Proclamation.

What we're trying to do is recognize that we as bureaucrats, as politicians may not understand all the nuances, all the idiosyncrasies of the mental health profession. Though we are empowering this college to be developed and to set out rules right away – and there's nothing to say that they cannot set out many of the rules right away, immediately. But it does give a buffer, a 10-year buffer, for them to work out all the aspects of it. Please recognize that Ontario gave theirs 12 years. We're that much more efficient here. We can do it in 10 in Alberta, right?

Mr. Ceci: We can do it in one.

Mr. Yao: We can do it in one? Well, you know what? That's another aspect. I'd be looking at any friendly amendments to this, but the point is that we need time. A year might not be enough, quite honestly, because it's the unintended consequences, sir. It is the unintended consequences that we get with this. In Ontario they figured it out. They put in 12 years, and only in year 11 do they come out with amendments. We need to give our health professionals, our mental health professionals, time to figure this out.

Again, you know, one group that is very prominent that has concerns about this is the one national/federal mental health group that we have, the Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation. They weren't even included. That's one-fifth of the members in this province that could potentially be knocked out.

With that, Madam Chair, I certainly ask that the government side consider this friendly amendment adding some sort of buffer in order to allow the college to evolve and develop without impairing

so many other institutions and groups that we have a hard time putting into a box, putting into a descriptor.

With that, Madam Chair, I thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to the House, and I hope that the government side truly considers this amendment. Thank you.

The Chair: Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've been listening for the morning. I have a couple of comments, specifically to this amendment. I can't support this amendment based on, well, actually, quite a bit of what I've been hearing this morning. We talk about the importance of mental health. We talk about the importance of supporting Albertans and addressing the concerns around addictions and mental health and the urgency that is attached to it. For me, to see an amendment that says that we should wait 10 years until we put legislation in place to actually address the urgency of the issue is a little counterintuitive.

Just to give you a little bit of background, I've worked in addictions and mental health most of my career. I actually did my very first practicum as a social work student at AADAC, before it became Alberta Health Services, a long, long time ago. I understand the dialogue that is happening around ensuring that the people that are supporting Albertans through their addictions and mental health are actually people that are certified.

The reason for that is that this isn't about government versus nonprofits versus private health care. This is about the fact that we need to ensure that the people that are working with people with mental health and addictions are trained in the areas that they're working in. Coming from that background and coming from working in social work – I worked at Boyle Street in the inner city, which was primarily a hub for addictions and mental health – there wasn't a single person in that nonprofit or any partner that I worked with in youth mental health, in youth addictions that wouldn't be willing to be registered and willing to, like, be held accountable to their profession.

People that work in this area understand the importance of being educated, understand the importance of having that expertise. They understand that they need to be continuously upgrading their training and learning about the new drugs that are being introduced into the community, the different strategies around managing behavioural and social counselling. There's also recognition in the profession that people have different expertise. I'm a registered social worker, but I don't do clinical social work practice because I don't have the expertise to be a clinical social worker, which means that I don't do one-on-one counselling. Even within our professions there's a recognition of skill-based education and being able to do the work that we're doing.

So, for me, having an amendment that says that we should wait 10 years to figure out who should be included in this and who shouldn't doesn't address the issue that we are talking about today, which is that we have a responsibility to support the area of addictions and mental health, and that includes supporting Albertans that are needing the support. But it also supports the workers that are in that area because it gives them a guideline around the expectations of their profession, and there is nothing wrong with that.

When we hear the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo speak about when he was working as a paramedic, the importance of them being registered and being part of an association, well, this is the same thing. Addiction counsellors, mental health workers want to be part of an association. They want to have those guidelines, those expectations. Unfortunately, I can't support us waiting 10 years to set those regulations in place.

The Chair: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like to clarify. All those things that the Member for Edmonton-Manning has expressed: I'm not saying that those things get knocked out or are delayed by 10 years. Again, it gives the college 10 years to figure out unintended consequences.

Just so we can clarify what unintended consequences are, in looking at that draft policy that the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario figured out and put on their website, again, it is everything from advocating to teaching, with spiritual and faith counselling and co-ordinating services and peer-to-peer supports and everything else in between there. Those were the unintended consequences that they discovered were happening, that were impacted by this college. Eleven years it took for the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario to release this list and say: "You know what? These are all excluded from our purview." Ontario's won't even be finished till 2019.

The work will still start. The college will still develop. There's nothing to say that they can't put in some of their rules and regulations almost immediately, especially if they have some things developed and figured out. But we need to give them time to understand all the unintended consequences. Again, we're empowering one institution now to develop everything regarding mental health. The consultation didn't include every group, specifically the Canadian addictions counselling group, as one example, one federal group that manages one-fifth of the therapists in our province currently.

Again, I just implore this government to consider this 10-year option or if you choose to have some other wording in there that would still address the issues of ensuring that they have a buffer of 10 years or some time to figure out the nuances, that no one in here is an expert on. Okay? Let's be clear about that. There's no one in here that is an expert on mental health, and we're putting all our weight and resources into one group, experts. I would question that.

With that, I'll certainly say thank you very much, Madam Chair, for this opportunity to speak. I would certainly ask the government if they would consider any kind of a buffer to develop this, or, as Ontario put it, a transition period. They put in a 12-year transition period. Surely, we can do a 10-year.

Thank you very much.

11:30

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2? Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a very brief comment. The Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo has made a few references to the CACCF not having the opportunity to be involved in this conversation. I just wanted to note that FACT-Alberta, the Federation of Associations of Counselling Therapists in Alberta, has been listening to the debate and the conversation, and they have made a comment online via Twitter noting that they have on a few occasions invited the CACCF to join with FACT-Alberta and work together with them but that there hasn't been mutual interest in that. They do also note that two of the members of the CACCF do in fact sit on the steering committee for FACT-Alberta. So they are indeed involved in the conversation. They are indeed part of the group that's been discussing this, perhaps not quite in the way that the member might have wished or feels that it should have taken place, but I felt it was important to have some clarification on the record that they have not indeed been shut out of the consultation. They have the opportunity to participate

through their involvement on the steering committee and through an ongoing offer of collaboration with FACT-Alberta.

Thank you.

Mr. Yao: Just to clarify where my comments came from, Madam Chair, I only spoke with the head of the Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation and expressed their concerns through the head of the institution. Obviously, there might be discrepancies even within their own organization. Again, we spoke to the head of the organization, who expressed concerns about this bill, who expressed concerns about the thousand people that they represent, who expressed concerns about the thousand members that they have who are going to be knocked off every indigenous community as well as every federal institution, which includes our military bases.

Ms Hoffman: Don't make stuff up.

Mr. Yao: I'm sorry; what?

The Chair: Hon. members, though the chair, please.

Mr. Yao: Oh, no. This is directly from them.

The Chair: Through the chair, please.

Mr. Yao: I'm going to bite my tongue on that heckle that I got from the Minister of Health. I could say that about everything that she's ever done in this House.

I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Orr: Madam Chair, I would just like to clarify a comment I made a few minutes ago. I think I may have misspoken or misheard; I don't know which. I did not intend to say that organizations should not be held accountable for what happens on their site. What I do mean to try to suggest is that all organizations across the spectrum, whether they're government or not, should be held accountable. There needs to be a fair and equitable assessment of that, and it shouldn't be used as a way to sort of attack private or nongovernmental institutions. As the Member for Edmonton-Manning has said, this isn't about that.

I think it needs to be kept clear that there needs to be a fair and equitable accountability across all, and the assumption that's implied that nongovernmental organizations are somehow unaccountable or irresponsible or out there creating all kinds of havoc is not entirely a fair statement. I'm going to want to assume that the government isn't trying to imply that, but sometimes it almost comes across that way. I'm just asking that there be a fair and equitable approach. Some of the institutions are actually doing a lot of good out there.

In response to the minister's point – and it's a valid point; it is an important issue – I think, though, that we should also point out that that very same facility has done a massive amount of good work in many people's lives. They have hundreds of people who actually are in support of what they have done, who have been helped, who have gotten off their addictions, who have learned how to manage their lives and manage the issues. I think we need to keep a balance there. Accountability is always extremely important at every level, but let's also give credit where credit is due.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: We're back on the main bill. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments? The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 30 this morning. Again, as I said during debate on second reading, I'd like to thank the hon. minister for bringing this forward.

I'm not wanting to dwell too much on the previous amendment, but I would say that while we are always endeavouring to craft the best legislation we can in this House, I think sometimes we have to also apply the 80-20 rule, and that is that if you get it 80 per cent right, to try to get that last 20 per cent perfect is, sometimes, in fact, like Voltaire said, perfect can be the enemy of the good. Or as another old philosopher said, better to have a diamond with a flaw than a perfect pebble. This may well be a flawed diamond, but I think we should proceed with the flawed diamond. There is still one flaw that I'd like to get my jeweller's tools out to fix. So I do have an amendment. If the pages will pick it up, I will wait until it's distributed before I read it into the record.

In prefacing my comments, Madam Chair, I do want to say that I think balance is something that I've talked about in this House before. In speaking again, as I did in second reading, about my conversations with the Thorpe Recovery Centre, we talked a lot about the balance that's required. It is, I think, absolutely necessary that there be some regulation of counselling and addictions treatment services in our province. You know, the fact that there is really nothing there currently and that many of the organizations and institutions that provide these services are doing it on a voluntary basis does leave the potential for some, shall we say, abuse or the potential for some people who are not skilled or not properly trained to enter into this very, very important area. Certainly, we know that the whole issue of addictions has been brought into greater focus in recent years as a result of the opioid crisis.

Specifically, in my conversations with the Thorpe Recovery Centre there was concern expressed when I spoke with the executive director about section 12. Just to reiterate, section 12 deals with inspections of accredited facilities. Section 12(1) deals with inspections that occur as part of, shall we say, the general assurance of compliance with the act. So I would call that a routine inspection, if you like. Section 12(2) deals with inspections that occur as a result of a concern over a possible breach of the act or, as my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View mentioned during second reading debate, the potential that there is some unsavoury practice going on. Certainly, this is something that we would want to see rooted out as quickly as possible.

I mentioned during debate on second reading that I felt, especially when we're dealing with an addictions treatment facility, that the residents in that facility deserve some degree of notice that an inspector was going to be coming for a visit. The Health minister justifiably asked me why an addictions treatment facility should be any different from, say, a long-term care home or a group home and said that, in fact, language in this bill was being lifted essentially word for word from the acts that govern those institutions. The difference, Madam Chair, is that for people who are in a long-term care centre with, for example, dementia or some other specific health needs requiring long-term care, there's no stigma attached to that. There's no stigma, and in fact in many long-term care centres people come and go and visit on a very regular basis.

But if you're in an addictions treatment facility, in a residential treatment facility like the Thorpe Recovery Centre near Lloydminster, you have an addiction, and you're addicted either to alcohol, drugs, gambling, or sex. Those are the four areas that are

being treated at the Thorpe, and I can tell you that there's a considerable amount of stigma attached to all of those. The people who are receiving treatment for any of those addictions I think have a justifiable concern about their privacy. So one of the things that the Thorpe Recovery Centre always does when someone is going to visit the facility is make sure that the residents who are currently there are aware of that so that if some residents would prefer not to be seen in public areas, they have that opportunity to stay in their room. You know, it's just so that people are aware.

11:40

Now, there was some concern expressed that perhaps an institution that was doing some things that were against the regulations or against the law would hide something. I tried to assure people that a four-hour notification was nowhere near enough time to cover up things that are unsavoury. But in speaking again with the executive director at the Thorpe Recovery Centre, I suggested: how about a two-hour notice for a routine inspection only, not for an inspection covered under 12(2). I'm not suggesting that we should amend 12(2) in any way. If there is suspicion of some improper activity going on within a residential detoxification or addictions treatment facility, then I fully agree that the inspector should be able to enter that facility without warrant or without notice. But in the case of a routine inspection visit, I think that in those situations it is reasonable given the sensitivity of addictions treatment and given the need for confidentiality especially, I am going to say, in a small community – I mean, again, it may be a little bit difficult for someone living in a larger centre to appreciate this, but when you're living in a smaller community and you walk into one of these facilities, the chances are pretty good that you will see somebody that you know, and they may not want to be seen by you.

Because of that, I'm going to introduce the amendment that has now been distributed. Madam Chair, you have the original. I move that Bill 30, Mental Health Services Protection Act, be amended in section 12: (a) in subsection (1) by adding "subject to subsection (1.1)," after "at any reasonable time" and (b) by adding the following after subsection (1):

(1.1) An inspector or a person authorized in writing by the inspector shall give at least 2 hours' notice of the time and place of the inspection to the owner of the facility, location, premises or place that will be the subject of an inspection under subsection (1).

Madam Chair, again I stress that this is for a routine inspection that is being done to ensure compliance with the act. I know that the frequency of those inspections is going to be dealt with under regulation, and there are different arguments as to how frequently that should occur. I think this is a needed change that recognizes the unique nature of an addictions treatment facility and the unique nature of the need for the residents of those facilities to at least have the option of having notice and not being in public areas or being seen. People guard their privacy. These institutions do not have a lot of visitor traffic; in fact, they have very little visitor traffic.

Again, I return to what I said in debate on second reading. The Thorpe Recovery Centre has an outstanding 40-plus years track record of treating people with addictions. I think that we should draw on that experience to try to perhaps remove this small flaw in the legislation. I do think that this improves it, and I do think that it strikes the balance between the need to be able to inspect institutions that are perhaps engaged in activities that are not compliant with the regulations or with the act but at the same time providing a balance such that residents of that institution are given appropriate notice that their privacy is being protected.

I would ask for support of the amendment.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and to the member for the amendment and for bringing this notion forward in second reading and having further dialogue with us on it over the last few days. I think that what he's asking for around the ability for folks to be able to guard their privacy is fair and reasonable around routine inspections. Obviously, if it's a safety concern and it's a focused inspection, this section doesn't apply to those. The hon. member understands why we won't be able to give prior notice to the facility and to the residents because we want to ensure their safety. I think that this is a reasonable and fair amendment. I'll be keen to support it.

I just wanted to clarify with regard to some of the information that was shared previously. There are approximately – and we say approximately because, again, not everyone needs to report to us because there is no official oversight or regulation regarding residential treatment facilities. But we believe there are approximately 16 on-reserve that we know of. They don't employ thousands of people. The bill does not impede operations of facilities on First Nations. A person working in those facilities may choose to become a member of the college, particularly if they use the protected titles that the college will have with regard to a counselling therapist or addiction therapist. Elders and peer support are exempt. They are federally funded and are required to meet standards that exceed those in our act that we're proposing. That's a little bit of fact to connect back to the previous speaker.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A3?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A3 carried]

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The remaining clauses of Bill 30 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Mr. Feehan: I move that we now rise and report bills 32 and 30.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 32. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 30. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official record of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? Say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, say no. So ordered.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 32 City Charters Fiscal Framework Act

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise and move third reading of Bill 32, the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act.

This historic legislation will help Edmonton and Calgary build the infrastructure they need in a way that will move the province forward. This framework also delivers certainty to the cities by recognizing that they are partners in our growing economy and should share in both the good and the tough times, and this framework respects the province's path to balance and is fiscally responsible. It will improve the quality of life for families who rely on rec centres, pools, arenas, and parks. It will increase the safety of residents with more fire halls, police stations, and water and waste-water systems, and it will reduce emissions through stronger mass transit systems. Bill 32 would also legislate historic long-term transit funding for Calgary and Edmonton so that they can build out their transit networks, create jobs, reduce greenhouse gases, and make our cities better places to live and work.

I want to thank opposition members for sharing their questions on a few key items related to this bill. They are legitimate questions, so allow me to speak to a few of those. There are, in fact, 340 other municipalities that also want a permanent and predictable funding program. I represent three of those municipalities, and I would like to reiterate that we are working closely as we speak with RMA and AUMA on a long-term funding framework for all municipalities. This is because we recognize that all municipalities require stable, predictable infrastructure funding.

11:50

The associations wanted more time to review the approach and talk to their members before they signed on, and I would certainly respect that need. The good news is that we do have time. MSI does not expire until 2022, and all municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, will continue to receive MSI up until that point.

Now, turning to the details of the city charter regulations. As has been noted on all sides, these are not part of Bill 32 in a formal way, but as the Member for Livingstone-Macleod has rightly noted, they are related. Let me just make some comments about off-site levies and inclusionary housing.

Proposed off-site levy reforms would allow Calgary and Edmonton city councils, via bylaw, to identify the types of infrastructure for which an off-site levy may be imposed and establish the method for calculating off-site levies. As I've noted, this is already practised in the city of Calgary. Inclusionary housing reforms would allow Calgary and Edmonton city councils, via bylaw, to design and establish their own inclusionary housing program. Bylaw changes to off-site levies or to establish inclusionary housing programs will be determined by city councils, not the government of Alberta, and councils will have to work with developers and hold public hearings to institute any changes as part of a public and transparent bylaw process.

Processes to change off-site levies or establish inclusionary housing programs will have to go through a public bylaw process, and that means ensuring industry input on any changes. There will

continue to be transparency on these issues, and cities will be compelled to work with developers. This is about building smart, sustainable cities that balance the needs of everyone.

City charters, at their very core, are about empowering Alberta's largest cities to better meet the needs of their citizens. I'll remind this House that Calgary city council and Edmonton city council are elected bodies. Councillors are elected in larger wards and represent more people than any member in this House. I believe that these councils deserve the right to work with developers and their citizens to ensure they can grow their cities in smart, sustainable ways, and I believe that they are best positioned to implement inclusionary housing programs to create more affordable housing spaces.

Finally, I believe we should respect locally elected officials and the fine people who work at the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton to make the right decisions for their communities and their economies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the minister's speech for third reading. I only have a few brief comments. I'd like to say that this has been a complex issue that has been an ongoing situation for many years in Municipal Affairs, and it's good to see that we're making some progress. I'm just not sure how well this is going to turn out, frankly. Funding Alberta municipalities has been a struggle faced by successive governments, and I think it will likely continue to be the case given the current state of the province's finances.

We've always talked on our side of the House here about moving to some sort of revenue-sharing model for municipalities that all municipalities could work with and have – as the minister has said as well – predictable and sustainable funding. Hopefully this will address that, and I look forward to being able to work with this in the future, and perhaps as we return to a better revenue stream in the next few years to come with this province, we can somehow rely on some sort of municipal funding program like this, whether it needs amending or not, and make sure that municipalities receive the funding and stability that they require.

Those are all my comments. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just have a few brief comments on this. Overall, I have to say that it's a good framework, and I'm pleased with the bill on the whole. I do represent a riding in Calgary, and certainly, you know, it provides predictable funding and the ability for Calgary to move forward on key transit initiatives that are important to my constituents, key transit initiatives like the green line and the 52nd Street Max bus transit, and that predictable transit funding is something that's really important and something that I appreciate and residents of Calgary appreciate in this bill.

However, in the short term I do just want to note that I have heard from councillors in the city of Calgary that this does actually represent a cut to municipal funding for the city of Calgary, and it will make it difficult for Calgary to do some of the things that it needs to do over the short and medium term in planning for a growing city. While I appreciate the collaborative nature of how this came about, and I appreciate the predictability of the funding, I do just want to make a note that it does in the short term represent a cut to funding for Calgary and for things that Calgary wants to do.

Ultimately, when I speak to my constituents, municipal issues are some of the things that come up the most often, things like snow clearing, transit, road maintenance, bylaw maintenance, all of these things. The things that really matter to people on a day-to-day basis

are often things that happen at a municipal level. A bill like this really does affect everybody who lives in the city of Calgary, who lives in the city of Edmonton, because it affects how those cities have the ability to pay for the things that residents of those two cities – most of the residents of Alberta live in the two cities now – need and want.

I appreciate the effort that's gone into this bill in order to, you know, work collaboratively with the two cities and provide predictable funding that both municipalities and cities have looked for over a long period of time. I think it's important that we are enshrining this in legislation because what that does is it does provide the predictability and makes it more difficult for subsequent governments to change these rules that are laid out.

Overall, I'm supportive of this bill. It does, I think, have a few shortcomings, but I appreciate the minister for bringing it forward. That is all I wanted to say right now.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any others wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to close debate, please.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a third time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Noticing the time and the good work that has been accomplished this morning, I would recommend we call it noon and adjourn until 1:30 this afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:57 a.m.]

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