



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta

## The 27th Legislature

### First Session

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[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 28, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Pleased be seated.

### Motions Other than Government Motions

#### Personal and Corporate Tax Reduction

502. Mrs. Forsyth moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to introduce legislation to lower personal and corporate taxes by 1 per cent.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise before the Assembly and open debate on Motion 502. Alberta is a world leader in many areas. We're a leader in the development of energy resources. We're a leader in innovation. We're a leader in the development of progressive social policies. Motion 502 is about continuing Alberta's tradition as a leader and making this province one of the most affordable places in the world to live and to do business.

For many years Alberta has been, arguably, the most progressive and forward-looking jurisdiction in North America in terms of fiscal policy. We have invested wisely, eliminated our debt, and made considerable progress in personal and corporate tax reductions. I'm delighted to see that in Budget 2008 the Minister of Finance and Enterprise has given notice that we will continue to lead in these areas. It's especially good to see that the health care premiums will be eliminated by January 1, 2009, and the minister should be commended for her excellent work and vision. These types of policies have made our province an excellent place to invest and facilitated unbelievable rates of economic growth.

Alberta's economic prosperity has had many positive effects, Mr. Speaker. It has contributed to high rates of employment and allowed us to develop cutting-edge industries and technologies. Even with all the positives we need to realize that rapid growth can have some negative effects for Albertans. One ramification of Alberta's growth that may be negative for some Albertans is the erosion of affordability. This past election campaign when I was out door-knocking in my constituency, I heard time and again from people and businesses that costs for basic goods and services are arising quickly. This is to be expected when you have a strong economy. Erosion of affordability can be detrimental to competitiveness and make it difficult for some families to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

I have decided to sponsor this motion because it's important to listen to the voices of my constituents. I believe that it's an opportune time for our province to act to make life more affordable for Albertans. Lowering taxes by 1 per cent will ensure that Alberta's prosperity benefits Albertans and the industries that operate in our province. It would put money in the pockets of our families and give our business communities more resources to develop a skilled workforce. It will allow investment in the technologies that will power our economy in the world of tomorrow.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the world economy can change very quickly. We have seen the American economy go from relative prosperity to hard times in less than two years. I also understand that changes in the world economy can have great impacts on

Alberta's economy and cause conditions to change in a hurry. To meet these sorts of challenges, our government needs to be flexible and able to adapt quickly to these changes.

I've chosen to put this idea forward as a motion as opposed to a bill. I know that considerable thought will need to be given to how to implement changes to Alberta's tax structure. It will take time to make the appropriate adjustments. Where a bill can mandate specific targets that must be met, a motion will set the overall goal and allow our government to draw upon expertise both from within government and from outside to make changes.

Mr. Speaker, lowering taxes in Alberta can benefit the entire province. A prosperous economy and more money in the pockets of Albertans is good for everyone. Lower taxes could benefit Albertans in concrete ways. For example, some single parents in Alberta have a tough time making ends meet at the end of the month. Basic necessities such as food, utilities, and housing can take up a lot of resources. It can be difficult for Albertans who must support a family on just one income to get by. The difficulties of this situation are compounded by increasing costs for basic items. Lowering personal taxes would help single-parent families by leaving them more money at the end of every month. We can ease the pressure that inflation is placing on our single-parent families.

Lower taxes will also help other types of families in Alberta. Senior citizens and families which derive their income from traditionally lower paying occupations are susceptible to price increases for daily necessities. Lower taxes will leave more money for families to enhance their lives today and secure their future. This is money that can be spent on environmentally and economically friendly home retrofits, invested in a registered education saving plan for a child's future, or used to participate in sports or other types of activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. By allowing Albertans more disposable income to use for some of these purposes, we are in fact helping to promote some of the government's goals, goals such as promoting healthy living and responsible environmental stewardship.

I've just spoken about some of the potential benefits that lower personal taxes will have for Albertan families. Now I want to touch on some of the positives that lower taxes can have for businesses. When I'm out and about in my constituency, I frequently run into business owners who tell me that the inflation and a shortage of labour are making it difficult for them to carry on. In Calgary and around the province the labour market is very competitive. Finding help for small business can be costly. Add the rising costs for utilities and low vacancy rates for commercial space, and we can see that a strong economy can have some negative implications for business owners. Business, Mr. Speaker, is the lifeblood of our communities. Helping them helps Alberta retain its vibrancy.

Lowering personal taxes gives us an opportunity to help Albertans, to help the single-parent family, the senior, the small-business owner, and other people that we meet every day in our constituencies. Lowering taxes would leave more money for Albertans to promote and make innovative choices which may help Albertans for decades. We live in a competitive world. Other jurisdictions that have traditionally lagged behind are now making strides and catching up with Alberta. Passing this motion, Mr. Speaker, will show that Alberta is committed to remaining a leader.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the members of the Assembly for allowing me to put this idea forward, and I look forward to their input during the debate.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just here to put my two cents into the situation. I really will not be supporting the motion. If we look around, the reasons are fairly clear and evident to me although they may not be so clear to other people. If we look around just where I come from in Calgary, we have 4,500 homeless people who are currently living on the streets, primarily in Calgary-Buffalo, many of them. We have over 40 schools that need to be built. Right now we have people on AISH who could use a little more funding. We also have an affordable housing crisis.

You know, the second thing on this thing. We also look at some other things here. To cut personal and corporate income tax by 1 per cent will mean a \$1.2 billion reduction in revenues. Let's even take the numbers of the government, albeit they're only numbers. The surplus projected for 2009-2010 is \$362 million. Now, we all know and I think this motion sort of suggests that it's going to be more than that. Nonetheless, let's use the numbers as they stand right now in the government's own proposed budget surplus for next year. If we're looking at that, we're going to be in a deficit situation right now. That would force the government, then, to break its own law, which I believe is to not spend any more money than it takes into its coffers. I think that's one reason why many members of the other side may be also voting against this. I can't speak to that.

I think there's also another side to this equation that I'd like to bring up. Do we pay for anything ourselves as a society anymore? Seriously. Are we all just going to do it on the back of nonrenewable resources that are eventually going to run out, or are these just simply funds that we can spend now, give back to people, and let's keep on our merry way? Let's spend this once-in-a-lifetime inheritance that we have all on having more capacity to consume goods to allegedly spur the economy.

That was another thing I think I learned. I didn't take that much economics in school, but my understanding was that you have a tax cut when you need to prime the pump. I see no pump that needs priming right now. In fact, this government is spurring it on by having continued oil sands development. Really, if someone can point out the argument where this is going to be a panacea for employment and the other things like that, well, you know, I just don't see it.

7:40

Also, Mr. Speaker, just to touch back on one more thing. I would suggest we should be saving at least one-third of our resource revenue for future generations to be put in the heritage trust fund so we can have some sort of lasting legacy, so that we can keep competitive taxes, so we continue in the future to be able to fund research and development, fund schools, and fund hospitals. If these are good things, you know, we should be fiscally prudent and keep tax rates the way they are, which are fair and competitive across any jurisdiction in Canada. In fact, I don't have the exact numbers, but I believe in Alberta right now if you file your income tax here, it's \$3,000 cheaper than anywhere else in this country. You know, to me that's eminently reasonable.

We should pay for some things ourselves and realize that the nonrenewable resources eventually run out. So I will not be supporting this motion.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I want to commend the Minister of Finance and Enterprise on delivering Alberta's 15th consecutive balanced budget. Particularly, I wish to thank her on behalf of my constituents for eliminating health care premiums this year, three years ahead of schedule.

Today I also wish to speak in support of the motion of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek to lower Alberta's personal and corporate tax rates to a flat rate of 9 per cent. As the hon. member stated, doing so is good for families, working families, it's good for business, and it strengthens the Alberta advantage. It would benefit the economy in that it would spur economic growth. I would beg to differ with the member representing Calgary-Buffalo on his assessment that lowering income taxes will restrict the amount of revenues going into government coffers. That may be true in the short term, but history has shown in other jurisdictions that it will actually result in a net increase in revenues over the mid to long term.

I wish to share three historical examples where this has been the case. The first is Ireland's recent economic turnaround. In the mid-90s Ireland was one of the poorest nations in Europe. Today it is one of the wealthiest. There are several reasons for this turnaround, but it is almost universally accepted that the biggest reason was the lowering of personal and corporate income taxes dramatically. Unemployment fell from 18 per cent to 3.5 per cent during the turnaround. That's 18 per cent to 3.5 per cent. Imagine that. Average industrial wages and the standard of living grew to be one of the best in all of Europe after being one of the worst for many years. Despite massive reductions in the income tax burden over this period, the result has been a dramatic increase in actual tax revenues to government from the resultant increase in economic activity, which in turn has led to a great expansion of needed public infrastructure in Ireland. The Ireland of today is living proof that putting money back in people's pockets results in more wealth for everyone, including, ironically, the government treasury.

The second example I would use is Ronald Reagan's America. Reagan's economic policies focused on reducing the growth of government spending, reducing marginal tax rates on income from both labour and capital, reducing regulation, and reducing inflation to control the supply of money. Reagan believed that taxing productivity and innovation, that taxing business, didn't necessarily hurt the wealthy, who could better shoulder the burden; it hurt the middle class and the poor, the reason being that when the rich and upper middle class weren't keeping as much of their money, they weren't investing as much, which in turn meant few jobs of a lesser quality for lower and middle-income workers.

Reagan reduced income tax rates, including those to the highest wage earners. The result: the recession that came into fruition under Jimmy Carter ended in 1982. Real GDP growth strongly recovered and grew to an annual rate of 3.4 per cent per year for the rest of his time in office. Unemployment also fell sharply. But most importantly – and this is the key, Mr. Speaker – real median family income increased by \$4,000 per person during the Reagan years. Prior to Reagan it had experienced no growth through the Carter administration, and post-Reagan it experienced a loss of \$1,500 after George Bush the First raised taxes.

Then there is my favourite example of good, sound tax policy, and that is that of our very own Alberta. As we all know, under the leadership of former Premier Klein and many of my fellow members of this Assembly throughout the mid-90s and continuing today Alberta has consistently lowered its personal and corporate income taxes. What are the results, Mr. Speaker? We have the strongest economy in Canada. The per capita GDP in 2006 was by far the highest of any province in Canada and was higher than any U.S. state. In 2006 our GDP was 56 per cent higher than the national average. In fact, this deviation from the national average was the largest for any province in Canadian history.

A 2003 study by TD Bank Financial Group found that the Edmonton-Calgary corridor is the only Canadian urban centre to

amass a U.S. level of wealth while maintaining a Canadian-style quality of life, offering universal health care benefits and the other social benefits that we enjoy. The study found that GDP per capita in the corridor is 10 per cent above the average of U.S. metropolitan areas and 40 per cent above other Canadian cities. The average Albertan's salary is more than \$7,000 U.S. higher than the average American salary. According to the Fraser Institute, Alberta has the fourth most tax-free economy of any U.S. state or Canadian province, and hopefully the motion of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek will bring us closer to being number one.

Alberta is the richest province in Canada GDP per capita, and if it were its own country – and of course I say “own country” strictly for comparison purposes – it would be ranked the second richest country in the world after Luxembourg only.

Lowering income taxes improves the lives of the vast majority and allows us to better assist the struggling minority. It also results in great economic growth and, in the end, increased government revenues. We've seen this principle proven in Europe, we've seen this proven in the United States, and we've seen this proven in our very own province. For this reason I endorse and support the motion of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to rise to speak to Motion 502, introduced by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I would like to begin by praising the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for her diligence and hard work. In the six years that I've been a member of this Assembly, I must confess that I've always found the member to be incredibly thoughtful, very diligent, and always well researched in any proposal that she's ever introduced. I know that the member, in every decision that I've ever seen her make, has always considered how it impacts families first, number one. So I really respect the member for that because I know that the intent of this motion is to consider how it will impact and benefit families first and foremost.

Now, I also find it very interesting that the first two motions that were introduced in this brand new Assembly happen to both be about taxes, income tax in particular, Mr. Speaker. I think that perhaps it's time for a lot more discussion about taxes in this House, and this is just the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, some of the comments that were made suggested that this is not a good idea because we have such a hot economy. “We don't need to stimulate the economy anymore. It doesn't need to be goosed; it doesn't need to be fired up. It's already hot.” That's not the issue, and I don't think that's the intent, why this needs to be done or needs to be addressed.

Quite frankly, this is an incredibly wealthy province. We all know that. Sometimes we disagree on how much we should spend: maybe we should spend more; perhaps we should spend less. This is an incredibly wealthy province, and we can set the pace for anyone else in the country by doing some pretty remarkable things. But the real question now, when we talk about how wealthy this province is, is: how much wealth is enough for the government of Alberta? This is not about how wealthy Albertans are. This is not about how wealthy we should be. This is about how much money is enough for the government of Alberta to operate.

Now, there are three different scenarios that any government can operate under. The first, which I'm sad to say most provinces in this country and, in fact, most jurisdictions in North America operate under, is this sort of deficit finance. They don't take in as much tax revenue as they need in order to pay for the programs they want to

provide for their citizens. So they run deficits, Mr. Speaker, which accumulate into debt. That's, quite frankly, undertaxation, and it's just another tax. Only it's not a tax on the people who are working and functioning today in society; it's a tax on the next generation because they'll be the ones who pay for it.

7:50

I think most members in this Assembly, regardless of what party they come from, will agree that we're wealthy enough that we should never have to consider whether or not deficit financing and undertaxation is an option in this province, Mr. Speaker, particularly because it can be incredibly detrimental to any country, any province, any jurisdiction. I mean, that's why Alberta has a triple-A credit rating: we have no more debt; we don't run deficits. They're confident in our economy and the way we manage things. But in other jurisdictions the larger the debt, the more significant the deficit year to year, the lower their credit rating, their bond rating, is and the higher the interest they have to pay because money lenders start to lose confidence in the government's ability to actually manage under sound fiscal policies.

Equally devastating to running deficits, Mr. Speaker, is government running significant surpluses. Now, this is very significant, and this is the reason why I think members of the Liberal Party and members of the New Democratic Party should support this motion. When the government takes in vast amounts of money, it is overtaxation.

Our fundamental purpose, our fundamental principle is to take in enough money to pay for the programs we provide our citizens. We're not supposed to take in less money, because we'd just tax the next generation. We'd just defer the payments. But neither should we take more money because, quite frankly, if we're running surpluses and we're saving money, we're taking money out of the pockets of citizens today that could be buying homes, that could be buying vehicles, that could be paying down debts and credit cards, that could be saving or investing. We're pulling money right out of their pockets that they would normally spend to help stimulate the economy and do some remarkable things. We're overtaxing the people of Alberta.

Now, when you operate in an economy like Alberta's, that is very cyclical, that runs like agriculture does, that runs like the oil patch does, where we'll have large revenues over a few years and then we'll have short revenues over a few years, we have to plan. We have to save for those times when we will experience sharp declines in our revenue forecast. But we have ample vehicles in place already for saving for those sorts of contingencies. We already have incredible amounts of wealth saved.

The next question we have to ask is not: how much more should we save? In a hot economy where people are having challenges being able to afford houses in a rising housing market, where people are having trouble just making ends meet – perhaps sometimes it's of their own doing, but oftentimes it's not – do we need to take more off their paycheques to subsidize our spending habits, which we already have adequate supplies to subsidize?

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't really matter which political party you belong to in this House. It doesn't really matter whether you think we need to save \$5 billion or \$50 billion or how much we should save. We're talking about a small amount of money that will go right into the hands, into the pockets of the people in this province that need it the most to deal with and make choices on their quality of life and standard of living. They're the ones that are best and most able to decide where that money should go.

I want to praise the member again for bringing this back. I want to remind all members that in my six years this is the very first time

that the first two motions have been about taxation, and I hope that we do enter a broader discussion in this House in the near future about how much we do need in taxes. I applaud the member again for doing this. I encourage every member, regardless of what party you come from, to give this some serious consideration, and instead of collecting more money to spend on the people of Alberta, give it back to them so they can make their own decisions, and support this motion.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, as well, rise in support of this motion. We are talking a lot about taxes. Before I begin my comments, sir, I must also join my friend from Airdrie-Chestermere in commending the Minister of Finance and Enterprise for our 15th consecutive balanced budget. Indeed, strong financial management is a hallmark of this government and of past governments.

Before I begin, I just want to state a couple of principles in support of this motion. To support it, first of all, we have to understand that the government must never go back into deficit financing and, two – and don't accuse me of being a socialist for this – we also must recognize that people depend on the government for certain core services, including health and education, and we must ensure that the government has sufficient revenue to meet these demands, Mr. Speaker. In analyzing this motion, we must ask ourselves two questions. One, can we afford this? Two, is this the right priority?

I want to give this House just a bit of history of the reduction in personal and corporate taxes over the last 10 years. The Alberta Tax Review Committee first recommended a single-tax system in 1998 after a lengthy consultation with Albertans. In '99 the budget moved to a single rate of 11 per cent, effective in 2002, and in April of 2000 the date was moved forward one year and reduced to a rate of 10.5 per cent. In January of '01 the single tax was again reduced, to 10 per cent, meaning that approximately 200,000 more Albertans would pay no income tax at all. As a result, Albertans saved \$1.1 billion per year, bringing the personal income tax cuts since 1998 to \$1.5 billion, or 23 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2001 revealed \$1 billion in business tax cuts, reducing the small business tax rate from 6 to 3 per cent over three years. Having operated a small business, I can tell you how important this is to small businesses in this province. The fiscal situation in 2002 revealed the need to implement the proposed business tax cuts at a slower pace to ensure that the cuts were fiscally sustainable. Smaller steps than initially planned had to be taken, but the destination was the same.

Now, the province's accumulated debt was eliminated in 2004, and I for one remember the announcement at McDougall Centre. Tax revenue for the purposes of this debate amounts to about 42 per cent of total revenue and is estimated for this coming year to be \$16.2 billion, slightly lower than the previous year. In the next two years tax revenue is forecasted to grow by an average of 3.1 per cent per year. I note that Alberta is the only provincial government who is debt-free and whose total assets exceed total liabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the government had a surplus of \$8.5 billion in '06-07 and had a forecasted surplus of \$4 billion for the previous year. Alberta is the only province in Canada with a triple-A credit rating because of our past financial management.

Now, in answer to the first question, Mr. Speaker, a one percent-age point reduction in corporate taxes is worth about \$300 million and in personal income tax about \$900 million. So the first question

is: can we afford this? The answer, doing the math, is: yes, we can without impacting our core services.

The second question: is this the right priority? It's also important to note that with further tax reductions more businesses are going to be attracted to our jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, Calgary is already the number 2 head office in Canada, and this has much to do with the low tax rates we have in this province. We have a labour shortage here, and the only way to attract skilled labour and bring more people into the workforce is by increasing the amount of take-home pay that they have. Further growth will also generate further revenue to offset forgone taxes. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo indicates that we already have the lowest taxes in Canada. That's true, but Alberta is not just competing with B.C., Saskatchewan, and Ontario. We are competing on a global scale. We have to do this. This is the proper initiative to attract or retain businesses and skilled labour to this province.

In conclusion, can we afford this? The answer is yes. But the real question is: can we afford not to?

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

Shall I call on the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek to close the debate? The hon. member.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate having the opportunity to end this. I've listened intently to the speakers that have spoken both for this bill and those against.

The nice thing about a motion is that it's a motion; it's not a bill. As I indicated in my speech, it gives us an opportunity, as members have indicated, to discuss this and listen to what people have to say and put it in the experts' hands. I'm not an actuary. I'm not a financial wizard. I think it's something that people have to look at.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I ask people to support my motion.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 502 carried]

8:00

## Committee of Supply

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. members, I'd like to call us back to order.

## Main Estimates 2008-09

### Aboriginal Relations

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to rise as the recently appointed Minister of Aboriginal Relations. It's my pleasure now to present an overview of Aboriginal Relations' spending estimates for '08-09 as well as the '08-11 ministry business plan.

Joining me in a few moments will be my deputy minister, Maria David-Evans; my assistant deputy minister, Donavon Young; my senior financial officer, Lorne Harvey; and my executive director of aboriginal consultation, Graham Statt. I want to begin by thanking them and all the other members of the ministry for their diligence in helping prepare these particular estimates that are before us today.

I want to begin my comments tonight, Mr. Chairman, by just explaining a little bit about the ministry and the importance that our Premier and our government place on this ministry, having now named an exclusive ministry dedicated to aboriginal relations. I'm very privileged to be the new minister for this stand-alone ministry,

which is now called Aboriginal Relations. The mission of Aboriginal Relations, of course, is to show leadership in working with aboriginal communities, the federal government, industry, and other partners in order to enhance quality of life, social, and economic opportunities for aboriginal people here in Alberta. In doing that, we recognize that Alberta's economy demands a dynamic and growing workforce and that aboriginal people are an important part of our ability to meet that challenge. As for all Albertans aboriginal issues are interrelated with education, employment, health care, economic development, and much, much more. I, therefore, will be working very closely with all of my colleagues, particularly my ministerial colleagues, to address these and other important needs.

In fact, Mr. Chair, the Premier's mandate letter to me was very clear about the role that our ministry is to play. For example, I will be working with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to promote strong and vibrant communities. I'm also tasked with arriving at a new long-term governance and funding arrangement with and for the Métis settlements that is focused on effective governance, enhanced accountability, and sustainability. Aboriginal Relations will also formalize relationships between the government of Alberta and the Alberta treaty grand chiefs, otherwise known as treaties 6, 7, and 8, through a new memorandum of understanding.

I take the Premier's mandate very seriously in this regard, so I'm both pleased and honoured to present our ministry's business plan outlining how we will address these and other important matters. An overview of the 2008-2011 business plan will illustrate the basis for our spending estimates. The strategic priorities for the '08-11 business plan focus on Métis settlements, First Nations relationships, consultations, and aboriginal self-sufficiency. Aboriginal Relations' business plan goals are linked to the three fundamental pillars of the government of Alberta's strategic business plan and to our government's collective goal of promoting strong and vibrant communities.

Our ministry has two areas of core business for 2008-2009. The first is aimed at strengthening the relationship with First Nations and Métis people. Our first goal in that regard is to build capacity for economic participation, self-reliance, and effective governance within aboriginal governments and their organizations.

We will achieve this goal in the following ways: by supporting strategic partnerships among industry, postsecondary education, training institutions, and aboriginal groups to enhance aboriginal participation in the labour force; by supporting the inclusion of the needs of First Nation and Métis governments and organizations in the development and implementation of provincial social policies and initiatives, especially for aboriginal women, children, and youth; by leading the participation of Alberta ministries in discussions on self-governance, as requested by First Nations and the federal government; by working with other Alberta ministries, federal and municipal governments, friendship centres, and other aboriginal organizations to support urban aboriginal initiatives; by working with the Métis Nation of Alberta Association and other Alberta ministries to achieve a renewed Alberta Métis Nation of Alberta Association framework agreement; by working with the federal government, other provinces, territories, and aboriginal governments and organizations to develop national and regional strategies to address aboriginal issues; and finally, by supporting economic, social, and community development projects through the First Nations development fund.

Mr. Chairman, our second goal is to lead Alberta's aboriginal consultation initiatives and facilitate the resolution of land issues. We will achieve this goal in the following ways: by co-ordinating the participation of Alberta ministries with First Nations and industry in the implementation of consultation policy guidelines; by continuing to support the development of traditional use studies and

protocols that support consultations; by working with other ministries, the federal government, and First Nations toward timely resolution of land-related negotiations; by leading Alberta's participation in discussions with First Nations and the federal government to establish regulatory frameworks that encourage economic growth on First Nations reserves; and finally, by working with the Métis Settlements General Council and the Métis Nation of Alberta Association to clarify Alberta's responsibility with respect to consultation with Métis people.

Mr. Chairman, now that you and others in the Chamber have heard about the course that we have set for the future, let me identify some of the spending estimates attached to our plans. Aboriginal relations has a budget of \$117 million, which is an increase of \$22 million, or 22.6 per cent, over the 2007-2008 forecast. A significant part of the budget is for First Nations and Métis relations. This includes \$18 million over three years in transitional funding to support the Métis settlements in implementing initiatives which will contribute to more effective governance, enhanced accountability, and long-term sustainability.

Budget 2008 also includes support for Alberta's growing urban aboriginal population, which is the second highest in the country after Ontario. Mr. Chairman, we support Alberta's urban aboriginals with more than \$1 million in provincial funding: \$700,000 of that is for friendship centres, and \$300,000 annually is for the urban aboriginal strategy, which focuses on lifeskills, job and skills training, and supporting aboriginal women, children, and their families.

Mr. Chairman, aboriginal relations has also committed \$4.7 million on an annual basis to operate the First Nations economic partnership initiative, called FNEPI. This initiative is designed to increase First Nations participation in the economy by supporting the development of partnerships between First Nations, industry, government, and other stakeholders. The program helps strengthen First Nations economic capacity, and it supports the development of a viable First Nations private sector. This brings the total for First Nations and Métis relations to approximately \$19.5 million.

Another significant portion of our budget is for the First Nations development fund, which will increase by \$22 million, from \$56 million in '07-'08 to \$78 million in '08-'09. Members will know that 40 per cent of the net proceeds from slot machine revenues located in First Nations casinos in our province will flow back through this fund to support the economic, social, and community development projects of our First Nations communities.

The government of Alberta's First Nations consultation policy on land management and resource management is another area I'd like to touch on briefly. It was approved on May 16, 2005. This policy outlines Alberta's approach to how the province will meet its consultation responsibilities and our expectations of resource companies and First Nations in increasing certainty for all parties around land management and resource development. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, consultation in land claims has a budget of \$13.8 million.

**8:10**

I'm going to stop there to allow other members an opportunity to pose their questions and/or make their comments. I would only ask that where it is applicable, if they could give us a page number and perhaps a line reference, 2.1.2 or whatever it is, that will help speed things along. I'll do my best to provide answers to the questions and the comments raised. If time doesn't permit or if there are some issues that we don't have at our fingertips, I will undertake to provide written answers in very short due course to those members posing them.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to an interesting evening of discussion on Aboriginal Relations' budget and business plans.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the estimates briefing for Aboriginal Relations. My congratulations to the minister on his service to the First Nations and to this formation of a new, independent ministry, which we on this side have been encouraging for a number of years, that will now, I think, provide a more focused and sustained support for First Nations in their development in economic, social, and environmental ways.

I think the minister has outlined some of the significant changes in the budget over previous budgets within the combined intergovernmental affairs and aboriginal relations ministry. And some significant increases they are, with 47 per cent over the '07-08 budgeted amount, that no doubt will have a very clear accountability and evaluation associated with those expenditures. I appreciate the minister's willingness to have a dialogue tonight for this first hour when the Official Opposition relates the issues directly to the minister. I'll raise a few questions, then sit down and appreciate some of the responses.

One of the first areas of interest to me as the new critic for Aboriginal Relations is the recognition that this is fundamentally a lottery-funded budget. I'd be interested in hearing more about how that came about and why that is an appropriate focus for the lottery funds: the history of that, maybe, to some extent, and how this minister relates to the former lottery funds/Solicitor General control of that budget, which it was formally under, as I understand it, the Gaming and Liquor Commission, Solicitor General's office. You know, is there still a connection between your ministry in allocating those budgets, or is it simply an automatic transfer to your ministry and you deal with the management of that fund as you deem fit?

The Auditor General mentioned in his 2006-2007 report that there were some accountability issues that he wanted to see addressed in the last budget, and I wonder how you're dealing with those issues. In terms of spending on the development fund, what changes have been made to try to address some of the Auditor General's recommendations? Are you, in fact, predicting a dramatic increase in casino revenue? Is this part of what is reflected in this significant increase? And maybe some details about the monitoring process would be very helpful at this time.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you. I'll just clarify briefly that the lottery-funded aspect of this budget is, by and large, only those monies that flow to us from the four casinos that exist in the province of Alberta on First Nations land. That's largely \$78 million of the \$117 million. Now, there is another aspect there, that I'll get you a little longer answer for, that connects to about \$200,000, which also comes from the lottery fund. Other than that, hon. member, all the monies come to us through the general revenue fund, the normal source of money, if you will.

With respect to the connection of the Aboriginal Relations ministry to the former Solicitor General's department let me just go back a little bit historically. This, as you know, hon. member, is the first time that Aboriginal Relations is a self-standing ministry, and we're very proud of that because prior to that it had always been attached to some other ministry. Most recently it was international, intergovernmental, and aboriginal relations, IIR, and I think prior

to that it might have been something like aboriginal affairs and northern development, something along that line, and prior to that it was attached somewhere with children and family services. We're very excited, and I hope you share in the enthusiasm. I'm sure you probably do, knowing your history. This is a very big step for our aboriginal communities, to have this kind of recognition as a self-contained department, if you will.

That having been said, we maintain liaison and ties with several other ministers. Certainly, the Solicitor General is one of them. Other ties we have are with Education insofar as off-reserve schooling is concerned for on-reserve children, with children and family social services units, and so on.

In terms of the accountability issues that you refer to, I'm not sure if you have a specific one in mind that the AG may have mentioned. I don't have his report just in front of me, but if your question, if I heard it correctly, had to do with the First Nations development fund, which is where we house the monies that come to us from the casino account, there are some fairly strict measures in place there, as you might recall, and there's also an audit that gets performed on quite a regular basis. In fact, there's an audit clause in the agreement that I recall that requires an audit to be performed, and in the early stages that audit might only be once every four years or so, but I think that probably as it becomes more refined, we might step up the audit procedures there. We haven't discussed that with anyone yet, so I'm hoping that that'll be taken in the spirit with which I'm intending it.

Your last point about the dramatic increase in casino revenues: yes, you're absolutely right. In fact, we know that the earliest projection we had was about \$56 million or thereabouts, and that was an increase already from the first few forecasts. Now we're projecting that to be up by another \$22 million, and that will be \$78 million in this coming budget. We just did the supplementary supply estimates last week, and you'll recall that there were \$16 million of additional monies approved, and that was also because of a dramatic increase in the revenues from these casinos.

I'll just close, hon. member, by saying that this First Nations development fund is very, very strongly supported by our First Nations communities because the money is coming back for which both the host communities and the nonhost aboriginal communities have to apply for these monies. Those go out to a number of very important projects that facilitate economic development on reserves, or they perhaps facilitate community development projects or some other good, benevolent purpose, so they're pretty excited about them. The dramatic increase in revenues also means, I hope, an equally dramatic increase in good projects in the communities.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In relation to energy development and land claims I'd be interested in hearing some discussion about how the minister is planning to address these very contentious and important issues to First Nations.

Under your budget, core business 2, made up of lines 2.5.1 to 2.5.3, the increase in these amounts has not been significant relative to the other increases that we've seen in your budget. How does this relate to achieving resolution on some of these goals, and given the dramatic pace of development affecting First Nations' lands, do you not feel that more resources are needed to properly address the consultations and try to get to resolution on some of these land claims? Are you satisfied with the pace of resolution of land claim settlements, and to what extent are companies undertaking the development, getting involved in these consultations? I've heard myself concerns expressed by First Nations about the failure of



consultations generally and, in spite of some of the work of this department, two major criticisms. One, the consultations are occurring after the fact, after decisions have been made on land use, and secondly, there is no mechanism for First Nations to actually significantly influence or change decisions relating to development. If you could comment a bit on that, that would be appreciated.

8:20

In relation to oil sands development that's clearly going to be a major issue for you to deal with. How are you dealing with that and with the concerns of, for example, the Lubicon people and the TransCanada PipeLines issue there with ongoing concerns about land-use settlements and a continued sense of violation by the Lubicon around resource use and access without agreement?

Finally, under line 2.5.3 there is \$11.9 million in spending, and it's not clear to me how that could be broken down.

If you could address some of those questions, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you, hon. member, and thank you, Mr. Chair. Your opening comment was with respect to energy development and some of the contentious issues. Yes, I think you're quite right. There are some very contentious issues there. I want to just say that one of the things that we've worked very hard on as a government over the past several years is to develop a solid framework for the consultation process and the points of reference within a consultation process that affect our aboriginal communities.

Now, having said that, I think it's important to realize, too, that we really have no authority on reserve, and I think the member knows that. That's entirely a federal responsibility. However, where we do have responsibility is on some of the land, all of the Crown land, in fact, surrounding some of the reserve land, so we do have a fairly aggressive consultation policy which we actually help fund. We provide about \$6.6 million annually for the consultation process to our First Nation groups, and this year we're providing an additional \$3 million, as I recall, for that same purpose. What that does, hon. member, is it helps First Nations to attract more staffing and do more research so that they can present themselves and their case better. We're proud of that. I wouldn't say it's all perfect yet, but it is a work in progress, and so far it's yielding some fairly good results.

You mentioned that in some cases, in your opinion or perhaps in things that you've heard, some of the consultations were occurring after the fact. If that were true, I'd be very disappointed, hon. member, because we have a duty to consult as a government any time that we're involved in this area. Land and resource management issues are things we take very seriously. My experiences so far and the meetings I've had so far, which are probably less than 60 at this point, the 60 or so meetings I've had with industry stakeholders on both sides of the equation, so to speak, would inform me that the industries also take these consultation processes quite seriously because it's to their benefit. They, in fact, draw a large pool of labour from our First Nations communities, particularly in the north. Treaty 8 comes to mind, any of the lands up in that area.

To answer your question, "To what extent are industries getting involved" or words to that effect, I think I should point out that in the new consultation process that we're now developing to augment what's already there, we are working more closely with First Nations, with Métis settlements, with Métis in general, and others to ensure that industry is at the table when some of these things are being talked about. They have a role to play in helping us develop that consultation policy because we all benefit from it. They need it for their business. We need it for our growth and our economic sustainability. In fact, our policy does require consultation with the

First Nations before any of that type of economic and other activity proceeds. If you know of some specific examples, and wouldn't mind letting me know what they are, where you feel that that's somehow not being carried through, I'd be grateful to learn that.

Quickly on the oil sands development. You know, we have a tribal council established there that represents the five major First Nations bands who are in that milieu. Over the last couple of years we've been engaged with a number of these representatives from the five tribal nations in that area to develop something very specific for that region because we understand that there are sensitivities there. So, too, is there tremendous growth potential there for them as people aiming toward more and more self-reliance and self-sufficiency. We see economic development contributing to that as well as to our economy in general. I'd say that a significant amount of progress has been made in this respect. We are looking at a draft protocol that I hope will be coming forward fairly soon. I can't put a time frame to it yet because I'm only a month or so and a week old in this ministry, but I can tell you that we've completed a number of consultations in the area, and I think I can sum it up by saying that the progress is good and it's quite steady.

The last point that you mentioned on the Lubicon. Hon. member – and I'm sure you know this – the Lubicon is a very interesting case because they are legally landless, if I can describe it that way, and I don't mean anything by it other than to say they have not yet crystallized their deal with the government of Canada. Our role in that is to then provide the lands that have been agreed to by the government of Canada and the First Nations. That's really our role as a province. This goes back to 1930. I don't have time to quote you the whole chapter, but if you look at paragraph 10 of the natural resources transfer agreement, you would see more clearly, hon. member, what our specific role is in that respect. We're very sympathetic to the cause. We have put offers on the table to augment and complement what the government of Canada and the Lubicon nation have discussed, but I think I can safely say that the negotiations have stalled. I'm hoping that they will kick-start soon. I have referenced this with the federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very helpful answers to many of the questions. I guess given the unresolved nature of the Lubicon issue, for example, I see not much hope for anything but further hard feelings going ahead with active development projects, resource activities, without a recognition of First Nations claims on some of that land and the First Nations' appropriate expectation of compensation and sharing in the resource revenues that have already been taken over the last decades.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Chair, you know, there are hard feelings, and it's unfortunate that there are. In having read quite a bit about this in my briefings and in the meetings that I've had with people who have studied this, some of the historians we have available to us and so on, I note that a considerable parcel of land has been proposed and outlined for settlement. If it were to be crystallized and accepted by the Lubicon nation, then they would automatically start to participate in a very different way in some of the benefits that come from having a legally defined land base. There's also some cash that is likely proposed by the government of Canada in that respect.

I want to just end by saying that even though the Lubicon don't have a legally described land base, or a reservation, as some would call it, they are still treated as if they had that, so there is a form of

respect that goes between the government of Canada and the Lubicon nation. But strictly, technically speaking, they do not yet have that deal formalized, so we're kind of caught waiting here for some process issues to be resolved between the Lubicon nation and the government of Canada before any further progress can be made. From my standpoint, if there's anything that I can do – I've already mentioned it, as I said – I certainly will to help move toward resolution in a speedy fashion.

8:30

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In relation specifically to the First Nation bands in the oil sands area, can you give some idea of how you could show a greater level of respect for the First Nations in relation to their request for slowing down of activity that is profoundly affecting their way of life and their health?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Well, you know, there are probably as many if not more success stories associated with First Nations and the oil sands general area, whether it's the Athabasca area or the Fort McMurray area, than there are bad stories if you will. I can tell you also, hon. member, that I will be meeting very soon with some additional members from that community. I've met with a few informally, and we've talked about what we need to have in place to move forward with the next step of our process in that regard.

If there are some specific negatives that still hang over the issue and you're aware of them and perhaps I'm not, I'd be grateful if you forwarded them to me or asked the people who are bringing them to your attention to please bring them directly to my attention, and I'll see what we can do to help alleviate those concerns. We're all very committed to finding the best resolutions possible. We're all very concerned with land management and resource management, air quality management, water management, land-use management. All of those processes and realities are things we're all very concerned with.

The Athabasca oil sands and the Fort McMurray oil sands and all of those other areas up there pose a great amount of potential for all of us if they're handled properly. Part of our goal is to ensure that we do get to that proper handling, and that's why we're working very closely with all five of those First Nations that are most directly impacted there, the Athabasca Tribal Council.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Relating to business plan performance measures, there are a number. I'm speaking specifically of the Métis settlements transitional funding. This is the second year of the program, and it ties to business strategy 1.1. "Lead the development of provincial strategies to guide Alberta's long-term future relationship with the Métis Settlements to enhance governance and self-reliance." Seeing that this is called a transitional program, how long is it intended to last, what are the deliverables of the program, and how is the minister consulting over these strategies? Will there be general public involvement?

Secondly, in relation to the business performance measures what are the measurements of successful capacity building and economic development, and what, if any, feedback has the minister had on this initiative?

Finally, under that same category of Métis services, are there land claims associated with this, and how are they resolving if there are any?

Thank you.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** I'm sorry; I missed the second question a little bit. With respect to the Métis settlements I think the member would probably know that there was a historical period of some 17 years during which, I think, about \$350 million was set aside for the Métis settlements. Some of it went into a trust fund, and they're still benefiting from that. There was a conclusion to that period, if you will, and so we had to have some transitional funding. I think that amounted to about \$9 million. That has now concluded, so this budget brings in the next tranche of money, which is \$7 million, \$6 million, and \$5 million over the next three years.

Your question is very good because you asked about what the measurements are or what the objectives are or words to that effect. In a nutshell, hon. member, the objectives here are to help our Métis settlements get on with more independent living, with more self-sufficiency, self-sustainability, self-governance, and all of those other things that are necessary as you move toward to being more of a self-reliant community. That's very much one of the objectives, so we're happy to provide that additional funding.

The other issue was with question 2, something to do with measurements. Now, I don't know of any measurements that have been established yet, but I didn't quite get the whole question.

**Dr. Swann:** What are the deliverables of the program?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** What are the deliverables? Right. The deliverables are also couched in what I just said earlier. We want to see more effective governance on the Métis settlements; we want to see enhanced accountability for the projects that they're undertaking, for the monies that we're providing, for the other forms of support given to them; and ultimately, Mr. Chair, we want to see long-term sustainability for the Métis settlements. That's really what this is all about.

I think members would be pleased to be reminded here that the land that has been set aside in the eight Métis settlements is very unique in Canada. We're the only province that has recognized in that way Métis rights, if you will, with the apportionment of land, and we're working with the Métis settlements to help them get even more firmly onto their own legs, as it were.

So we're just at the beginning of these discussions. There is this three-year transition period to go through, and as we evolve and make progress, I'll be reporting back to the House again.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you explain a little bit about the role of the Métis ombudsman and how effective that is, how it's changing, how much it's being used? What is the feedback from the First Nations on line 2.1.6, which shows very little real change in the budget?

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the ombudsman's role is a very, very important role, and it's basically one that has been agreed to by ourselves and by the Métis settlements. It's been operating for the past five or six years, as I recall, hon. member. The basic purpose of the ombudsman is to investigate complaints that are brought to him by members who are living on any one of the eight settlements. We know that this is a valuable office from that standpoint because as groups, in this case the Métis settlements, strive for more independence, more self-governance, more of their self-sustainability, there are going to be some problems from time to time. The limited exposure and experience I've had with correspon-

dence from the ombudsman already tells me that that office is very, very worthwhile. It has a fairly high record of resolution and success. In a nutshell, that's basically what we've pledged to continue support.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be interested in your comments about other First Nations and why or why not they would not also have an ombudsman relating to First Nations.

In relation to health and wellness I know health services is a shared responsibility between the province and the federal government. Your budget hasn't changed in relation to health services delivery for First Nations and Métis settlements. What does the budget for health and wellness services include? Perhaps more specifically, do you have a role in safe water for Métis settlements and First Nations communities, and how does that relate to the Alberta Environment budget for safe drinking water?

Again, there's been no significant change to your budget over the last few years for health services. Does that mean that the health issues are improving? Why has there been no significant change in health services spending for First Nations and Métis settlements? Surely, it's a growing and important issue for these communities.

I began with a question about an ombudsman for other First Nations and specific issues about the health services. Thank you.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** The question about an ombudsman on reserves is – well, the answer, I guess, is that we have no jurisdiction on reserve land. That's entirely federal, and frankly unless we're invited, we can't and don't go. I've had several meetings now with some of the chiefs and some of the elders and others, and I'm sure we will be invited soon again, but we have no jurisdiction in that respect.

8:40

**Dr. Swann:** What about the urban aboriginals?

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. member, I think it's appropriate to work through the chair.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Well, we do have an urban aboriginal strategy, into which we put considerable dollars. I'll find the amount for you in just a moment. There is help for people, for example, who come off reserve into urban settings, and by urban I don't necessarily mean just, you know, the city of Edmonton. It's virtually anywhere. Part of that is our friendship centres. As you know, we have 20 friendship centres, so they find some form of help there. That isn't to say that we don't get complaints once in a while from members who were on reserve and for one reason or another were asked to leave. We pass those on, typically, to the federal government because that's where that jurisdiction lies. But strictly speaking, there's no ombudsman appointed by the province on reserve because we have no jurisdiction there.

With respect to health services let me just clarify that Aboriginal Relations has a couple of specific programs, which I'll save the House time by not repeating. I mentioned them in my opening comments. But we're not a delivery agent for health services or education services or water services or infrastructure services. That's not our role in Aboriginal Relations. On those specific questions we can get you some follow-up from the relevant ministries. You were asking about water. I'll find something out from the Environment minister for you, similarly with health services and other services you asked about. That's not a role for my particular ministry. There are other ministers that I'll ask for you, and I'll put it in my letter back to you in that respect.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a \$1.7 million budget for aboriginal health. Maybe you could express something about what that \$1.7 million goes to, then.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Could you just give me a line number?

**Dr. Swann:** It's 4.0.3.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Page?

**Dr. Swann:** Under Health and Wellness estimates. It's actually under Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Oh, yeah. That's what I mean: that's not ours.

**Dr. Swann:** Okay. My mistake. Why would they be including that, I wonder?

There's also been a 40 per cent increase in spending in section 1, ministry support services.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** What page?

**Dr. Swann:** I'm not sure. Ministry support services. Can you relate to that: a 40 per cent increase? Is that part of splitting off from the ministry of international and intergovernmental affairs? What is that due to?

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you. I just want to clarify for the purposes of *Hansard* that the earlier questions that were being asked about health services are actually being quoted out of the Ministry of Health and Wellness document. That's a good question, and I'll pass it on to the minister of health to provide an answer for when we do the written follow-up. However, we're not responsible for delivering health through my department, so I hope the member will be patient while we search out the answer from another minister for that.

On the question with respect to ministry support services I think probably you're talking about page 26, line item 1, which has five breakouts to it. There is an increase there because we are now a self-standing ministry. There is a minister and a minister's office now dedicated exclusively to Aboriginal Relations. There's a deputy minister's office that has been created, which is brand new, with its own deputy minister and staff, and there's also a communications area. I think that in total probably somewhere around the \$600,000 mark is the cost of giving the aboriginal community what it had asked for when they met with the Premier a few months ago, and that was a stand-alone ministry. It's probably a relatively small cost in terms of responding to the needs that were asked of this government.

I hope that answers those couple of questions.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Those are all my questions.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

Seeing no one, I think I'll now invite the officials to leave the Assembly so the committee can rise and report.

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Chairman, I would move that the committee rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

**Mrs. McQueen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions for the Department of Aboriginal Relations relating to the 2008-09 government estimates for the general revenue fund and lottery fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, reports progress, and requests leave to sit again.

**The Acting Speaker:** Having heard the motion from the hon.

Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Acting Speaker:** Opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank members for their participation in the previous discussion and debate on Aboriginal Relations.

On that note I would move that we adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; at 8:47 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]



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