



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, May 20, 2008

Issue 21

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

First Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC),
Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Solicitor General and Public Security
Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Sustainable Resource Development
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Advanced Education
and Technology
Blackett, Hon. Lindsay, Calgary-North West (PC),
Minister of Culture and Community Spirit
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (L),
Official Opposition House Leader
Boutilier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (PC)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC),
Deputy Government Whip
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (L),
Official Opposition Whip
Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)
Danyluk, Hon. Ray, Lac La Biche-St. Paul (PC),
Minister of Municipal Affairs
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
Denis, Jonathan, Calgary-Egmont (PC)
Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
Elniski, Doug, Edmonton-Calder (PC)
Evans, Hon. Iris, Sherwood Park (PC),
Minister of Finance and Enterprise
Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)
Fritz, Hon. Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC),
Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs
Goudreau, Hon. Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace (PC),
Minister of Employment and Immigration
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Agriculture and Rural Development
Groeneveld, Hon. George, Highwood (PC),
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),
Minister of Education, Government House Leader
Hayden, Hon. Jack, Drumheller-Stettler (PC),
Minister of Infrastructure
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (L)
Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert (PC),
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology
Jablonski, Hon. Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC),
Minister of Seniors and Community Supports
Jacobs, Broyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC)
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)
Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (L)
Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC),
Minister of Service Alberta
Knight, Hon. Mel, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC),
Minister of Energy
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)

Liepert, Hon. Ron, Calgary-West (PC),
Minister of Health and Wellness
Lindsay, Hon. Fred, Stony Plain (PC),
Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security
Lukaszuk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Municipal Affairs
Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)
MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (L)
Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)
Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
Leader of the NDP Opposition
McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)
McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Environment
Morton, Hon. F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC),
Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Deputy Leader of the NDP Opposition,
NDP Opposition House Leader
Oberle, Frank, Peace River (PC),
Government Whip
Olson, Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)
Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC),
Minister of Transportation
Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (L),
Deputy Official Opposition Whip
Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)
Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)
Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC),
Minister of Environment, Deputy Government House Leader
Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Education
Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Health and Wellness
Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC),
President of the Treasury Board
Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC),
Premier, President of Executive Council
Stevens, Hon. Ron, QC, Calgary-Glenmore (PC),
Deputy Premier, Minister of International and
Intergovernmental Relations
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (L)
Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (L)
Leader of the Official Opposition
Tarchuk, Hon. Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC),
Minister of Children and Youth Services
Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (L),
Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition
VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)
Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)
Weadick, Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Energy
Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC),
Parliamentary Assistant, Employment and Immigration
Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC),
Minister of Aboriginal Relations,
Deputy Government House Leader

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Clerk	W.J. David McNeil	Sessional Parliamentary Counsel:	Sarah Dafoe
Clerk Assistant/ Director of House Services	Louise J. Kamuchik	Sergeant-at-Arms	Brian G. Hodgson
Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research	Micheline S. Gravel	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	J. Ed Richard
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	William C. Semple
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Shannon Dean	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Liz Sim

[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Welcome back.

Let us pray. In our mind's eye let us see the awesome grandeur of the Rockies, the denseness of our forests, the fertility of our farmland, the splendour of our rivers, the richness of our resources, the energy of our people. Then let us rededicate ourselves as wise stewards of such bounty on behalf of all Albertans. Amen.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, we will be led today in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Paul Lorieau, and I'd invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm honoured and very pleased to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly an old friend of mine, the Hon. Jack Layton, Member of Parliament for Toronto-Danforth and leader of Canada's New Democratic Party. Jack has previously been a city councillor, much like myself, and was president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which is where I got to know him as we worked on the many challenges facing Canada's municipal governments. In January of 2003 Jack assumed the leadership of the federal NDP and has been advocating for Albertans on important issues like gas prices, consumer protection, and the rising cost of living for working families. Seated with him is Diana Bronson, director for policy and operations for the federal NDP caucus. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Mr. Stelmach: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature 29 very special guests from the Fort Saskatchewan Christian school. We had a brief chat before the opening of today's session. The students today are accompanied by teachers Stacey Simpson and Natalie McIntyre, parent helpers Brenda Barr, Rhonda Gibson, Deb Hankirk, Dana Dunstall, and Renée Goodbrand. One of the teachers, Stacey Simpson, is married to Mike Simpson, who is, of course, director of caucus, and today is their first anniversary. I'd also like to extend a thank you to the class for providing bookmarks for every member

of the Legislature, which we will distribute, and also for their prayers. On behalf of all of the members I would ask all to welcome our visitors with a warm appreciation.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions to make this afternoon. The first one is to you and to members of this Assembly regarding several guests from overseas. They are Sandra Henry, who represents Antigua and Barbuda; Faye Prescod from Barbados; Nicole DuBerry from Montserrat; Sitna Cesar from the Seychelles; Seneliso Nkambule, who represents Swaziland; Charmaine Louis-Justin from St. Lucia; Euody Manti Mogaswa, who represents South Africa; Kaifala Marah of the Commonwealth Secretariat; and Mark Woodhouse from Edmonton.

We welcome this delegation, which is here through a partnership between the government of Alberta and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. Alberta has a long history of sharing its best practices with other governments around the world. In this instance we are pleased to help our guests learn about the government of Alberta and its excellent financial management systems, which embody our open and accountable approach to governance. I understand that the delegation has been busy job shadowing budget and finance staff in various government departments and learning about our business process. I would ask our valued guests now to rise and receive the warm applause of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. Deputy Premier, you have another one?

Mr. Stevens: Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 31 enthusiastic and energetic grade 6 students from St. Gerard school in Calgary-Glenmore. This is my 12th year in the Assembly, and this is the first occasion on which I've had actually an opportunity to introduce a school class from my constituency, so it truly is very special for me. They are here for the School at the Legislature program for the week of May 20 to 23. They are accompanied by teachers Mme Martine Claeys, Mme Marie-Andrée Laliberté, Mme Annie Fafard, and parent helpers Mr. Bob Pitter, Mr. Dean Reiman, and Mrs. Julie Downe. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the honour of introducing to you and through you to this Assembly 49 students, teachers, and parents from the Grand Centre middle school, which is in Cold Lake. They are accompanied today by their teachers Renée Piercey, who did her student teaching in my school – I'm really happy to see her here today – and Cass Claude, parent helpers Jeff Bentley, Shea Hatch, Russell Hatch, Wanda Edel, Karen Swan, Heather Mitchelmore, and Val Pettipas. I would like them to rise so they can receive the traditional warm welcome from this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A real honour today to introduce some employees that are here with us from Finance and Enterprise. From the financial sector regulation and policy division we have Meaghan Alton, Antoine Garipey as well as Julia

Wawrykowicz. From the tax and revenue administration Rajan Bhatti as well as Hilda Chui, Myles Grimble. We have Jessica Poon and Tessa Rawski. Also, then, from the strategic business services Sharon Scott, David Stanford, and Frank Potter, and last but not least Dawn White from human resources. Please join me and welcome these employees to our tour today. If they would please rise.

1:40

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure on behalf of the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake and myself and our Premier to introduce to you and through you to all members here four very special guests from the Sucker Creek First Nation, just about 24 kilometres east of High Prairie, for those who don't know. They are here in Edmonton on the occasion of the Assembly of First Nations gathering, and they were kind enough to visit with our Premier and myself over the lunch hour. I would like to introduce each of them and ask them to stand one at a time, and then we can acknowledge their presence: Chief Jaret Cardinal, Councillor Ron Willier, Councillor Russel Willier, and Chief of Staff Ray Cardinal. Please extend a warm greeting and a thank you for their attendance.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly four special guests from my constituency: Frank Farberman; his wife, Patricia; his mother, Sophie; and his son Sam. I'd like to make special mention of Sam, and I'd like to congratulate him as well. He's been invited into the international baccalaureate program at Westminster junior high. Sam is just 11 years old. He has already volunteered in four elections. He hopes one day to be a marine biologist, but I think with the way that he's going now – he's interested in joining the page program in the near future – Sam just may be a future MLA and a future Premier-in-waiting. I would ask that my guests please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two very special individuals from my constituency who are residents of the town of Devon. Pat Maddison is a retired nurse, dedicated mother, and a grandmother. John Maddison was a municipal administrator in many centres in Alberta and finished his very successful career as the executive director of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. John currently serves as a member of council for the town of Devon and is very active in his community. These two individuals have been dear friends of mine for many years and have been very instrumental in getting me elected to serve in this Assembly. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they both rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to present to you and through you to all members of this Assembly the 2008 Alberta provincial wheelchair champions. They're up in the

public gallery. This team won the provincials not only this year but also in 2005-06 and 2006-07. They also won the silver medal at the national championship in Ottawa in 2007. The players are the skip, Bruno Yizek; the third, Jack Smart. We're missing our second today – Anne Hibberd is vacationing in Australia – but we have our lead, Bridget Wilson. They came to Edmonton today with assistants Bonnie Simmons and Brian Rivers. I'm also honoured to introduce Donna Elms, my Calgary-Hays constituency assistant, and Kathy Odegard. She's the provincial director of the Alberta Curling Federation. I'd like to give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am really delighted to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Charlann Shyiak. Now, Charlann and I have known each other since we were 14 and attended the Drumheller drama school, which was then sponsored by Alberta culture. Charlann went on from there and had a very successful career as a singer. She is now writing and producing the *Alberta Trucking National News*. We're very proud of her, and she's here today to see question period. I would ask Charlann to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly two individuals from Fort Chipewyan. Chief Roxanne Marcel has been the chief of the Mikisew First Nation since 2005, and George Poitras is the Crown consultation co-ordinator and former chief of the Mikisew First Nation. They are in Edmonton today to meet with the hon. leader of the federal NDP and myself regarding health and environmental impacts on people in and around Fort Chipewyan who are downstream from the Athabasca tar ponds. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

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

Lethbridge College

Mr. Weadick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to speak to this House about a major milestone that was celebrated this past weekend in Lethbridge. Just over 50 years ago the very first public community college in Canada opened its doors in Lethbridge. It was a significant achievement in 1957, particularly for a city of just over 21,000 people, to build not just a college but a groundbreaking institution that became a model for many schools over the following decades.

Now it's 2008, and a lot has changed. Lethbridge Community College has become Lethbridge College and developed a whole new attitude. The college has spent the past year creating a new identity for itself both as a tribute to the school's history and as a foundation for the next 50 years. The school is actively recruiting across the country and has positioned itself as a great choice for students to learn a trade or prepare for university.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's time to celebrate. This past weekend saw alumni from five decades return to the college for a homecoming that celebrated both the past and the future. I was fortunate enough

to take part in the three days of festivities that featured everything from educational seminars to a tailgate party. The homecoming wrapped up on Sunday with a concert by Tom Cochrane and Red Rider, which was sold out and phenomenal.

In a time when postsecondary schools are competing for every student, I believe Lethbridge College deserves congratulations for its efforts to celebrate its alumni and recruit new students to carry the school's legacy well into the 21st century.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Earthquake in Sichuan Province, China

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the world woke up to the horrific story of a magnitude 7.9 earthquake in the Sichuan province of China. This earthquake is being called the country's worst natural disaster in 50 years. The quake has killed more than 70,000 people in the region, and estimates are that 5 million people have been left homeless. As a result, many of my constituents, indeed all Albertans, are deeply saddened by this terrible tragedy.

Calgary's 65,000-strong Chinese community has rallied to the assistance of those affected in the Sichuan province. Fundraisers have been organized, and people are giving generously to lend a helping hand. I attended an event this long weekend in Chinatown where many of my constituents were deeply concerned by this tragedy. I know many in Alberta who have been personally affected, and my condolences are extended to all those who have lost family, friends, and colleagues in this earthquake.

Many Albertans and Canadians have contributed what they can to help victims of this earthquake in order to assist the ongoing relief efforts. In total the Red Cross has received almost \$2 million in donations for the earthquake fund. Should the hon. members or other Albertans wish to donate, they should contact their local branch of the Canadian Red Cross.

The Chinese government has called for three days of mourning starting yesterday. I would ask the Legislature to keep the Chinese people who have been affected by this tragedy in their thoughts and prayers as we go forward.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Health System Governance

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The very recently unemployed board chair of the Peace Country health region, one-time health minister and legendary PC magician Marv Moore, said last week, and I quote: there's nothing, absolutely nothing, to be gained by having one health board; nothing is going to change in terms of the demand for health care services. Unquote. To the minister of health: will the minister provide this House the business case that identifies that the creation of this health superboard will reduce costs and improve access for the public?

1:50

Mr. Liepert: First of all, Mr. Speaker, there are varying opinions, but most of them that I've had on the weekend have been very positive relative to our announcement last week. The member knows full well – and I said last week in this House – that this is not about cost-cutting; this is about delivering health care in the 21st century differently than it was delivered in the '60s and the '90s.

Mr. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what to believe or who to believe or why I should believe any of this when you've got the minister saying that this reorganization will lead to better service at about the same cost, and the Premier says that it is going to save money. To the minister: which is it, your version or your boss's?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, what we are attempting to do is ensure that we streamline the patient experience in the Alberta health care system. After we do a critical assessment and if there is duplication, we will deal with that. But overall we want to ensure that we've got a health care system that meets patient needs, and if at the end of the day it costs us less money, that would be a bonus.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm still waiting for the business case. I didn't get an answer on that, so I'll try this. What plans does the minister have to further facilitate privatization of health care in Alberta?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the member again was twisting words in terms of savings from the elimination of going to one board. My comments to the media, where most of the questions the opposition gets are from, were simply that whatever dollars will be saved in administration will be directed to patient care, to improve access, and to improve quality in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Health Care Privatization

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of health: was the minister aware when he blew up the nine regional health boards last Thursday, created one province-wide superboard, and appointed Ken Hughes as the interim chair of that board that Mr. Hughes was a promoter of a luxury private hospital in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, in 1998?

Mr. Liepert: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. deputy leader.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What are the people of Alberta to infer from this minister's appointment to the Alberta Health Services Board as interim chair of the one-time, quote, managing director of business development – that was his title – of the company promoting a private Mexican hospital? I don't know. Maybe health care is a business, and he plans to privatize it.

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that this particular member is going to try and use whatever method he can to put words into our mouths, and we're just not going to fall for it. The person that we have chosen to be the interim chair of the board is a well-respected businessperson in this province who has experience in the past as a member of a regional health authority. I think it's shameful that this hon. member would use those terms.

Mr. Taylor: And, Mr. Speaker, he is also a man who promoted a private luxury hospital in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, in 1998.

It's time for the minister to come clean. Far be it for me to put words into his mouth. He can make this all go away right now. If he does not plan to privatize health care in Alberta, will he go on the record and say so now?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I would go on the record and say that, we'd have to change half of the things we're doing today because health care is delivered privately by doctors. We have private operators in long-term care. So this is just another attempt to try and mislead the public.

The Speaker: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Game Ranching Industry

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our approach to game ranching and chronic wasting disease continues to ignore science, good business principles, and the public interest. The first wild elk in Canada with chronic wasting disease has now been identified in northern Saskatchewan as of last week, a truly disturbing development given elk propensity to range much more widely than deer. The expert panel on CWD in 2005 concluded that CWD entered Canada from game ranches, and it continues to spread. To the agriculture minister: what is the purpose of the game ranching industry? Where is it going?

Mr. Groeneveld: What is the purpose of the game ranching industry? I suspect it's for game ranching.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is for the Sustainable Resource Development minister. Given the present and growing risks to wildlife from chronic wasting disease and the Canadian expert panel's conclusion that its source is game ranches, will the SRD minister now move quickly to the source of the problem and eliminate game ranching in the province?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I believe I pointed out last week to the same hon. member that while there are 49 cases of CWD to date discovered in Alberta, they're all on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, the eastern part of the province, where we've focused our efforts to contain the disease. In the areas where there are some game ranches today, there's not a single instance of CWD found in proximity to any of the game ranches in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Premier: given the tremendous economic losses due to tuberculosis and chronic wasting disease arising from game ranching subsidized by public dollars in the past 20 years, will the Premier call in the public interest for an independent review by the Auditor General of the game ranching industry?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's role in government is to ensure that whatever dollars are passed here in this Legislative Assembly with respect to budget are spent on that particular line item. This is an issue that the minister has raised with respect to an industry that is operated completely differently in the province of Saskatchewan. You will remember that from many years ago, when we debated the processes followed in Saskatchewan and those in Alberta. Our program here in Alberta is controlled. It's monitored very well for the safety of the Alberta public. There are two big differences, in fact, between the provinces.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Legal Aid

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to a 2003 study by two U.S. economists the only public service that effectively reduces domestic violence in the long term is a well-funded legal aid system. Without such a system women in abusive relationships often don't have access to the legal system to help them get away. So it was distressing to read media reports today that Alberta's legal aid system can't meet the needs of Albertans who cannot afford \$200 an hour for a lawyer. To the Minister of Justice: can the minister tell the House how many women in abusive relationships were denied legal aid last year?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members of this side of the House understand the importance of a legal aid system in protecting families in this province and helping people that can't afford to hire lawyers privately. We currently have a system that we've funded, increasing the budget of legal aid in the past three years by 50 per cent, and we're committed to continue to support legal aid.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you for that answer, but given that Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan each fund legal aid at a higher per capita rate than Alberta, can the minister explain why Alberta is behind these other provinces in its funding?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question from the hon. member. It's very difficult to compare one program to another across provinces. While there might be some differences with respect to that, we also fund many more services under legal aid than other provinces do. So we're not prepared to accept that our system is in any way lesser or has less impact than programs in other provinces.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you. Given that a 1999 Supreme Court of Canada decision ruled that access to a lawyer for family law cases is obliged by the Charter, is the minister planning on waiting until her government is ordered by the courts to increase legal aid funding, or will she do the right thing before that happens?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had a number of discussions with respect to legal aid within the department and with the Law Society, who is also doing work to encourage lawyers in the private sector to take on legal aid cases, which is the way that legal aid works. What we know – and I've asked that question – is that we are not looking at a situation where people cannot get legal advice if they need it in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Library Services

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents enjoy having access to their local libraries and make use of the services these libraries offer. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What is he doing to make sure our libraries have the support they need from our government?

The Speaker: Well, hon. minister, your estimates will be up here in about an hour. If this has to do with your estimates, please do not continue.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do understand that my estimates will be up, but if I can answer the question, maybe, on policy.

I will say that the government is very committed to supporting a strong province-wide library system. The government will continue to support Albertans through libraries in different ways: the regular operating grant, the Alberta public library electronic network, and the Alberta SuperNet.

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental is to the same minister. Alberta is one of the fastest growing provinces. What are we doing to ensure that libraries continue to meet the growing expectations of Albertans for public library services?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, we do need to look at different ways of providing access and providing service. Communities have changed. Library users have also changed. We need to find new ways to address those community needs. We are going to establish a working group that is going to look at and review future library delivery. It's more complex than just simply putting more money into the system. We need to maintain our traditional support as well as using the newest technologies and practices.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm going to recognize you again, but this seems very, very close to what will be up here in the next few minutes. Do you have an additional question?

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do. Is there an opportunity for my municipalities to invest municipal sustainability initiative funds in my local libraries?

The Speaker: I think we can probably deal with that in about 45 minutes to an hour from now.

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

Water Ecosystem Stewardship

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Environment minister. The January 2008 report from the Alberta Water Council, Recommendations for Renewal, is another in a long line of reports critical of the Water for Life implementation. Following on the heels of the AMEC Earth & Environmental report, it clearly states that we do not have the accurate data that we need to manage our water. It also states that our water is not being managed as it should be. The report recommends that the minister address aquatic ecosystem degradation. To the minister: can the minister tell us why his department has allowed aquatic environments in Alberta to be steadily compromised?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, that's the age-old question you ask a politician. No matter what he answers, it's the wrong answer.

Let me just say that I disagree with the premise of the question. Environment has not allowed a degradation of our water ecosystems. We have identified that there is a need for us to make decisions today so that we don't have a significant degradation in the future.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume, then, that the minister disagrees with his own Water Council's report. A key recommendation is that water and land management must be integrated, which is also a key recommendation of the Water for Life strategy. Why has the minister allowed further land-use approvals without a clear, enforceable, integrated land and water management plan?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, this member would like to live in the utopian world where no decisions are ever made, where no economic growth ever happens, where nobody ever moves in, and where nobody wants to build a new house or open a new business until all of the questions are dealt with in intimate detail and we have perfect solutions to every potential problem. What has been identified by the Water Council is a need for us to concentrate for the future in a number of areas, and I can assure the member that we are committed to doing just that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the report is critical of the lack of a clear governance model for the partnerships and that without this clarity, quote, partnerships will become less active and ineffective, end of quote, what is the minister doing to ensure that roles and responsibilities for these environmental partnerships are clarified?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Water Council has done a terrific job in just recently reviewing the Water for Life strategy to ensure that it still meets the needs of the state of affairs in 2008. We have committed to fully implementing this report. We continue to put in place new governance councils at the local level, new WPACs, watershed advisory councils. All of the issues that are identified in that report are being implemented as we speak.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Vehicle Emissions

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the past couple of weeks I've received a couple of e-mails from constituents about the pollution that older vehicles can cause on the road. I did a bit of research this weekend, and I found out that pre-1975 vehicles can produce as much as a hundred times more smog-causing emissions than today's cars. I've also looked into the fact that 13 per cent of children in our cities suffer from asthma. I took a walk around my place in Edmonton last week, and what did I see? An older model blue van and a rusted out old Malibu. To the Minister of Environment: what are we doing to get these cars off the road and into the auto graveyard?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Renner: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is absolutely correct. The evidence is conclusive that removing older vehicles from the road is one of the most effective ways that we have of reducing pollution and smog created by automobiles.

We have a couple of programs that are working very well and show a lot of promise. The one delivered through Climate Change Central, Car Heaven, in 12 different locations throughout the province provides incentives when older cars are turned in to purchase a new one. It provides offsets, incentives towards the purchase of a bicycle and transit passes.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, what I want to know as well is: how many vehicles have been scrapped under this program since its inception?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, this program along with the kidney car program – I'm sure members are aware of that, where if you donate your car to the Kidney Foundation, they'll haul it away and give you a tax receipt, to boot. These relatively modest campaigns, surprisingly, have resulted in removing 6,000 cars, 1995 vintage or older, off the road since 2003.

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, finally, to the same minister: does this minister have any plans to expand this program in the near future?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly there is a need for us to expand programs like this to encourage more and more old cars to be removed. The Clean Air Strategic Alliance, CASA, recently conducted a study in the province and have made four recommendations to the province: that we enhance programs like this, that we introduce laws to stop tampering with vehicle emission control systems, that we introduce roadside-sensing equipment to advise gross emitters of the damage that their vehicle is doing to the environment, and finally, that we have a hotline to report vehicles with visible emissions.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With modern medicine allowing individuals who before would have had only a few short years to live to now live extended and full lives, we are witnessing the coming of age of a generation of people who have moved from handicapped children's services to AISH and PDD. For parents and caregivers of adults with disabilities there are many frustrating bureaucratic red-tape requirements. My questions are to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Why do the parents or caregivers need to file only once federally but a four-page document every year for AISH on behalf of their adult children?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for that question. I'd like to say that although somebody's disability itself may not change, the circumstances of the person and where they're living may change. That is one of the reasons why we ask for a form to be filled out once a year. I will have a look at the form and see if we can make it more concise, but I think we're doing due diligence on behalf of taxpayers.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Related exactly to that, why are individuals with permanent, nonchanging disabilities, such as Down's syndrome or paraplegia, required to file paperwork yearly with AISH to prove that nothing has changed?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to state that I understand that maybe the disability doesn't change. I certainly have a good understanding of that. However, circumstances may change with aging parents and differences in the community. The form that we require our AISH clients to fill out is a four-page form. It has 13 questions where you check a box, and you sign the second page. The third page is a consent form for Revenue Canada, and the fourth page is a declaration with just a signature. I will review it to

see if it is extensive. However, I think that this form is not too cumbersome.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you very much. I think it's more cumbersome than that.

My final question to the same minister: why is the information collected on individuals aged zero to 18 years by handicapped children's services not shared with AISH once the people turn 18? Same people, same disability, no information shared.

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, I would concede that that is a concern that we have in the transition of the 18-year-old into the adult program. Perhaps that is cumbersome, and perhaps we need to take a look at that. I would be willing to review that with my colleague in children's services.

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Unruly Behaviour in Parks and Protected Areas

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After this past long weekend some Albertans woke up to burnt-out vehicles, mounds of trash, and other evidence of unruly behaviour on our public lands and in our parks. My first question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. What was his staff doing this past weekend to deal with all of these problems?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member might remember that last year some of the worst abuses occurred in the Indian Graves-Willow Creek area, and we responded to that immediately. We brought in a new forest land-use zone for that area that restricted off-road access and random camping. I'm happy to report that this year the situation at Indian Graves was much better.

More generally, across the eastern slopes we had an expanded task force that consisted of fish and wildlife officers, conservation officers, forestry officers, and then also help from the RCMP and the sheriffs. We distributed a lot of information on FireSmart, respect the land, and generally had a better result than last year.

Mr. Rodney: My second question is to the same minister. It's true that there was some good news out there, but of course there was bad news as well. I've had a number of e-mails this morning from constituents who are very concerned about the future in this respect. Can the minister please share with this House and with the province what direction his department will be going in in the future so we can ensure a finer balance between recreation and safety?

Dr. Morton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was in the area. I toured the southeastern slopes on Saturday for about four hours, visited most of these areas. I can report that in Ghost-Waiparous, Castle, and Indian Graves conditions were better. People were having fun but respecting the land in a much better way than a year ago. Were there problems in McLean Creek? Absolutely. When I get a full report from my officers, we'll deal with that. Was that behaviour acceptable? No. But overall was it better than last year? Yes. Are we going to be satisfied with what happened this year? No. We'll work to continue to improve that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the response, but I do have one final supplemental, this time directed towards the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. Alberta added 15 new traffic sheriffs to its roadways for this May long weekend. What impact did these new sheriffs have on enforcement in the province's southern parks and recreation areas?

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, this past long weekend the new sheriffs deployed to southern Alberta, along with all the other sheriffs in those areas, worked in partnership with the RCMP on highways and roadways near these recreational areas. The sheriffs out of Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat, whose primary focus was working in and around trouble spots identified by the RCMP near recreational areas, laid approximately 1,600 of the more than 2,800 violations listed across the province. In northeastern Alberta some of our sheriffs worked with the RCMP to control traffic on highway 63.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Off-highway Vehicle Use in Parks and Protected Areas

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that infomercial. Now for some real questions. Rather than preventing the wanton off-road destruction of wilderness that occurred during the May long weekend of 2007 at Indian Graves, the ministries of Sustainable Resource Development, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and the Solicitor General simply shifted the problem to McLean Creek in Kananaskis Country this past weekend. To the minister of SRD: when does the ministry plan to eliminate the problem by restricting the access to parks and protected areas of those specifically bent on destroying them at the expense of all other recreational enthusiasts?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the hon. member would have heard my answer to the previous question, when I said: "Is this type of behaviour acceptable? Absolutely not, and we'll work to improve it." In particular, after all the bedtime stories he's told us about his days in the backwoods as a camp counsellor, he would know that McLean Creek is actually the oldest, the original forest land-use zone in southern Alberta, and it was set aside specifically for off-highway vehicle use. Are there problems today? Yes, because it's too close to the city, and there are too many people going there. We'll deal with that. McLean Creek was the original FLUZ area, and it was set up for off-highway vehicles.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. If the off-highway vehicles restricted themselves to the trails and the trails were well posted, that wouldn't be a problem.

To the same minister: how many millions of taxpayer dollars have already been spent on reclaiming the Ghost-Waiparous and Indian Graves wilderness areas, and how many more are projected to be spent on repairing the environmental damage to McLean Creek?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity for that question. Again, I was in Ghost-

Waiparous for several hours on Saturday morning working with a group called the Calgary Quad Squad. This group of volunteers has installed three sets of bridges – salvaged the leftover bridges from the floods in Fish Creek park from 2005, moved them up there, installed three bridges using their labour and volunteered help from the private sector – and with \$20,000 worth from us have achieved \$75,000 worth of bridgework, three critical passages over McLean Creek. So volunteerism, the spirit of Alberta, is out there working to do a lot of that restoration.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No one will put down the efforts of volunteers in Alberta, but the government has a responsibility, and it has yet to face it.

Again to the minister: given the large number of officers tied up this weekend in policing McLean Creek, how would opening up new parks for similar unrestricted all-terrain use solve either the environmental damage or ease the burden on stewardship enforcement? Clearly, SRD's multi-use, blurred responsibility designation isn't working.

Dr. Morton: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's first question answered his third question. The solution isn't unrestricted access; the solution is more trails. I'm happy to report that the land-use framework as it unfolds over the coming weeks and months focuses on making watershed and recreation the top priority uses of the eastern slopes, and that will include appropriate pathways and trailways for horseback riders, campers, and off-highway vehicle users.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Women's Shelters

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the minister of children's services dismissed concerns in part about the 13,000 women and children turned away from shelters last year by claiming that a lot of them had been counted twice. According to representatives of women's shelters that my office has spoken with, any woman who gives her name to a shelter has a file and is only counted one time. To the minister of children's services: when will the minister stop trying to discredit the numbers and admit that Alberta's women and children are being turned away on a regular basis from the support they need to break the cycle of violence?

Ms Tarchuk: Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to that comment. I did not dismiss the concerns. In fact, what I was talking about – and she's referring to our estimates – was some conversations I had visiting a shelter last week. The point of what I was saying is that our women's shelters, the staff that work there, are dead serious and absolutely committed to helping families experiencing or who are victims of family violence, and they will make sure that they do help them.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with those comments by the minister, but can the minister tell the House how many women and children were placed in hotel rooms last year without the proper staff support and stability they need because shelter spaces were full?

Ms Tarchuk: Again, Mr. Speaker, we had this discussion just a

couple of evenings ago. We had talked about how hotel use is very, very rare, and when it is used, it is the safest place at that time for those children to be, and they also have full-time support with them.

Ms Notley: Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, I was actually talking about in this case women and children fleeing domestic violence, not children in a different program.

Anyway, given that in 2006 alone police responded to nearly 5,000 incidents of family violence, isn't it time for a real and substantial commitment from this government to fund shelter beds, support services, and transitional housing?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Tarchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The commitment that she's asking for I think we already have. This government takes family violence very seriously. This year we're up to, among I think nine different ministries, \$49 million. We have numerous programs that deal with public awareness and education. We are funding women's shelters, sexual assault centres as well as outreach services.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Agricultural Fertilizers and Chemicals

Mr. Mitzel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently some of my constituents, farmers who are trying to get their crops seeded, have asked me why, despite the fact that Canada produces nearly 60 per cent of the world's potash, there are now local shortages, not to mention the fact that when it is available, the cost of potash and other fertilizers has tripled in the past few years. They're willing to pay if they can. They just need to be able to acquire it. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. What's the government of Alberta doing to ensure Albertans and Canadian producers have access to potash and other fertilizers?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it's the basic principle of supply and demand. Because grain prices are up, more crops are being planted, which means more demand for fertilizer and higher costs. Of course, the good news is that the grain prices are high. The downside is that the rising input costs mean more risk for our producers, but through our many programs we continue to help producers manage the risk, reduce their costs, and try and maximize their profits.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mitzel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My only supplemental is to the same minister. Not only are producers having a hard time buying potash, but the costs of chemicals such as pesticides have skyrocketed, as much as a 10 per cent increase per week. What is the government of Alberta doing to support these producers as chemical companies continue to make record profits?

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, it's about supply and demand in the global marketplace although chemical costs have not gone up as dramatically as the rest have. Last year we helped producers with a \$165 million farm recovery plan, and we will continue to support agriculture during these challenging times that are coming. We're also continuing to work with the industry on the

competitive initiative one, and once this one is complete, we'll present a number of options to address the challenges that are facing our agriculture industry.

The Speaker: The hon. member?

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

Legal Aid (continued)

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The press, academic commentators, and the Legal Aid Society feel that the legal profession has been unduly burdened with the primary responsibility of financing access to justice. One commentator has gone so far as to say that governments have not done their part to make access to justice viable. Currently, because of lawyers' workloads, the availability of higher paying work, and the Legal Aid Society's inability to keep its hourly rates competitive, financially strapped individuals cannot find legal representation.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of points that I'd like to respond to in the hon. member's question. First of all, let's be clear that the story today is not about funding to legal aid. We have increased funding to legal aid by 50 per cent in the past three years. What this story is about is whether or not lawyers choose to take on legal aid cases. The Law Society has identified the fact that that is an issue they need to deal with as well, and we will work in co-operation with them to encourage young lawyers to take on legal aid cases.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A different question to the same minister. If she was paying attention to the answer by her colleague, it's a supply and demand question, and she knows that if more money is made available, more lawyers will choose to take this kind of work. Will she increase this funding so that more lawyers can get paid adequately for doing this type of work?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our hourly rate for legal aid in Alberta is one of the highest across the country. Supply and demand is not about lawyers choosing to take on legal aid work only. We are dealing with challenges in this economy. We certainly have to face them head-on, and we're prepared to work with lawyers and with the Legal Aid Society in that respect.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Practitioners are accusing this government of failing to adequately fund legal aid organizations, thereby limiting access to justice for Albertans. Will the minister commit to implementing something to decrease this access to justice issue?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, we have increased funding over the past three years. We are also working

with federal, provincial, and territorial ministers to try to put a business case together to improve legal aid funding, and we expect to see some results of that in the next year. I will say again, as I have said to the Law Society and as a lawyer practising legal aid myself when I was practising: lawyers need to do more as well.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Wildfires in Thorhild County

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my constituency a very large fire started Friday and still burns today. A large amount of people and equipment from different sources and locations was mobilized to battle this fire and save the hamlet of Newbrook. My question is for the minister of sustainable resources. How does his ministry decide how to allocate the firefighting resources in his department to fight wildfires in Alberta, and why do we need to rely on crews coming from B.C. to help our Alberta communities?

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

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My department actively monitors the risk of wildfires breaking out in the province. There were over 200 new starts this past long weekend. We put our firefighters in advance in a position where we think the threat is greatest so that they're ready to respond. Then as fires break out, we assign firefighters based on calculations of risk posed to human life and also to communities and structures, also in terms of the number of firefighters available. In certain instances if it's serious, we invite assistance from neighbouring provinces and states, and we did have help from British Columbia this past weekend. I'm happy to report . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday a local state of emergency was declared in Thorhild county due to these intense wildfires throughout the area. My next question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What is the role of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency in an emergency situation such as this?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, our heart goes out to the families that were personally affected by the fire. First of all, I'd really like to commend all of the outstanding work that was done by the firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, the role of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is to co-ordinate and to provide expertise and support for municipalities. To offset the extraordinary costs associated with these emergencies, we do work with those municipalities.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: as our communities now assess the damage costs and plan to rebuild and recover, can you tell us what your department does on a go-forward basis to support them through this exercise?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, our department works very closely with municipalities and disaster recovery assistance programs. Residents and businesses need to work with their municipality to assess the damages that they may have, and those municipali-

ties work in co-ordination with our ministry and the agencies to provide support in these disasters and emergencies.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Long-term Care

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a promise to increase funding for continuing care, but last week's health announcement made only vague references to addressing workforce issues and support for continuing care. Little detail was given regarding how the immediate concerns of seniors will be addressed in our province under the new plan. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: how will standardization of care be implemented under the new Health Services Board to ensure that seniors living in one region receive exactly the same care as in another?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. Clearly, we need to ensure with the one health system model that that takes place because there are discrepancies out there today, and all Albertans should be receiving the same quality of health care no matter where they live. There may be some different ways of delivering it, but in essence it needs to be equitable.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you for that, and I certainly concur.

How will the creation of a single health board expedite the movement of seniors who are occupying acute-care beds in hospitals presently? How do we move them into long-term care facilities or appropriate accommodations?

Mr. Liepert: Well, I think there's no one answer to that, Mr. Speaker, but here are some of the ideas. One would be that, obviously, we need more long-term care facilities. We need to do that. We as government have already made a commitment to new long-term care facilities in our budget, but also we need to look at removing barriers that exist today for private operators to also participate in the delivery of long-term care. There are a number of issues that, unfortunately, I can't cover in a 30-second answer.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Pastoor: Yes. Thank you for that, and it's good to hear that there is more long-term care coming. Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Westlock, Camrose, and Grande Prairie have all seen decreases, so they're going to have to be up to what they should be in the first place and then add to that because they're all behind.

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't just use those numbers as being somehow – let's take the Chinook health region. I answered this question one other time for the member. The Chinook health region took a very proactive approach to financially assisting lodge facilities so that they could have patients in lodges that would normally be in long-term care. The fact that there are fewer long-term care beds does not necessarily mean that there is less service provided.

2:30 Home-care Programs for Seniors

Mr. Allred: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Seniors are staying in their family homes for as long as they can manage, but some require medical assistance in order to do so. I have constituents that are in their 80s and would like to remain independent but are struggling to pay for the expense of these

services. My question to the minister: is this government doing enough to help keep seniors in their homes?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question because there is certainly no doubt in my mind that if we are going to provide services to Albertans, we need to look at different ways to deal with our seniors. One of the ways is to do whatever we can to ensure that they can stay in their homes. We have developed an aging-in-place strategy. One of the first initiatives around that was to remove the \$3,000 ceiling cap for home-care services. Now, I happen to believe that home care may be one of the most underutilized services that we offer to seniors, and we're going to look at ways that we can enhance home care.

Mr. Allred: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. It's good to hear that the government has removed the home-care cap, but many seniors need expensive medical aids such as wheelchairs to remain independent. My supplemental to the minister: how does the government expect seniors to cover these additional expenses?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to say that Alberta is a leader in the provision of medical equipment and supplies. The Alberta Aids to Daily Living program helps individuals with long-term disability, chronic illness, or terminal illness to stay in their homes by providing medical equipment and supplies to meet their needs. Each year the program helps nearly 80,000 Albertans with the cost of medical aids such as wheelchairs. Individuals pay 25 per cent of the cost to a maximum of \$500 per benefit year for all benefits received. Low-income Albertans are exempt from cost sharing.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Allred: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm shocked at how much wheelchairs and accessories such as seat covers can cost. One of my constituents tells me that the price of a made-to-order seat cover that attaches to a wheelchair was \$800. It seems to me that companies that sell these appliances are gouging us. My second supplemental is also to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. How does the government make sure it is getting good value for taxpayer dollars?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, the cost of equipment is dependent on the health needs of each client. The clients we serve have unique needs, and we need to remain flexible to help meet those needs so that they can stay at home. When, for example, we choose the models of wheelchairs to buy, we ensure that our clients are using dependable, long-lasting, and safe equipment. For the last 20 years Alberta Aids to Daily Living has had a recycle program in place. When your constituent is done using her wheelchair, it will be available for someone else to use. We feel that this is an excellent use of taxpayer dollars.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Energy Efficiency of Government Vehicles

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The latest list of taxpayer-funded cars for ministers and senior officials is in, and with just

three exceptions out of 62 the environmentally unfriendly practices continue. This shows that the Minister of Service Alberta simply hoping for ministers and senior officials to strive towards better fuel efficiency is clearly not working. My questions are to the Minister of Service Alberta. Why won't the minister end these wasteful practices and require fuel efficiency standards for all these vehicles?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the area of green vehicles the list of vehicles is public in the library now. As mentioned previously, the government is moving in that direction where appropriate, where vehicles can be used in the areas that are needed.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's the list we got the numbers from.

When will the minister change the system so that the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, the minister of health, and the minister of finance can no longer get taxpayer-funded vehicles that are twice as polluting as the Minister of Environment's car?

Mrs. Klimchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment has certainly taken the lead in this area with his vehicle. With respect to the vehicles that the other ministers and deputy ministers have, that is something we are encouraging, and we're moving forward in that direction.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister again: given that all operating and maintenance costs for these cars are paid by the government, does the minister agree that mandatory hybrid vehicles for ministers and senior officials would save the taxpayers many thousands of dollars in fuel each year?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe there are certainly cost savings with respect to some of the hybrid vehicles. The technology is certainly improving every day as we speak, and we have to be careful that the vehicles that we purchase are, indeed, a cost saving to the taxpayers of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose, followed by the hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Legal Aid (continued)

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a part of Alberta's recent economic boom young lawyers are choosing not to work in the area of legal aid. In fact, lawyers available for legal aid work have dropped by 61 per cent in the last four years. Can the minister advise what we are doing to improve the availability of legal aid to Albertans who need it?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This issue is a very important issue, and I want to pay tribute to the lawyers in this

province that do legal aid work. They're young lawyers, they're retired lawyers, and they're lawyers that take on this work as a community service. What we are doing in the Legal Aid Society is streamlining billing systems to ensure that people who do undertake legal aid work don't experience onerous paperwork requirements. We're also ensuring that they can get quick turnaround on file assignment. We'll continue to work with the Law Society to find other ways that will make it easier for lawyers to take on these cases.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next and final question is to the same minister. Can the minister explain what she is doing to secure stable funding for this crucial program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have stable funding for this program. We have increased funding every year for the past three years to a total of 50 per cent more than it was three years ago. We are also working with our colleagues at the federal and provincial and territorial levels with respect to both additional funding for criminal cases as well as for civil cases, and we will keep doing that.

The Speaker: The hon. member?

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year Alberta Environment required large industrial facilities to reduce the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions by 12 per cent. Results of the first six-month compliance period indicate industry invested \$40 million into the climate change and emissions management fund in lieu of making reductions over this period. My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Why is he allowing industry to pay into the fund instead of making real reductions?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, the first of its kind in North America, is intended to create the environment where industry will make the necessary investment to reduce their emissions over time. Obviously, no one expected that there would be complete compliance with reductions in the first six months, so contribution to a technology fund is only one of three different compliance mechanisms that industry had in place. I'm pleased to report that they also did in fact have reductions, real reductions of 2.6 million tonnes.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans expect industry will do their part to invest in technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By creating this fund, isn't government letting industry off the hook when it comes down to making their own investment in technology?

Mr. Renner: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, this fund is designed to make it very clear to industry that the government takes it very seriously, that we as a society need to reduce our CO₂ footprint. By creating this fund, we have an opportunity to invest in the kinds of technology that will allow us to manage CO₂ into the future. We also have an incentive for industry to start looking within their own

mechanisms and procedures to ensure that they are maximizing reductions internally.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplement is to the same minister. Industry has the added cost of meeting this reduction requirement. Does the minister expect that industry, including power generating plants, will pass the cost on to consumers through higher electricity costs?

Mr. Renner: Mr. Speaker, in the long run the fact of the matter is that reducing our CO₂ footprint is in many cases more expensive than doing nothing. That doesn't necessarily make it wrong; that's just a reality. Initially I suspect the costs will be borne by industry as they invest in technology, as they invest in compliance with this legislation, but in the long run I think all consumers need to be aware that as costs go up, those increased costs can be reflected by increased prices.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development would like to supplement an answer given earlier today. That would allow the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater to raise an additional question.

2:40

Wildfires in Thorhild County

(continued)

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I was remiss with my answer in not taking the opportunity to thank our firefighters for the great job they did this weekend. This weekend we had over 200 new fires start, and as of this morning only 29 are still burning, and they're all under control. On behalf of everybody in the Assembly I'd like to acknowledge our gratitude to our great firefighters.

The Speaker: In a few seconds from now I'll call on additional members to participate in Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Recognizing Immigrant Success and Excellence

Mr. Xiao: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to draw attention to a special award ceremony held last week that recognized immigrant success and excellence. The fifth annual RISE awards was hosted by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton on May 15. The awards celebrated the successes and achievements of 11 newcomers to the province as well as those who have supported the success of immigrants in areas such as the arts and culture, business, community service and health, human services, and education.

Besides highlighting immigrant success the evening also featured live Alberta entertainment from two excellent groups of artists representing our rich and diverse provincial cultural life: the Ukrainian Cheremosh dancers and Bomba!, a group playing Latin American music.

Events such as this one remind us that the contribution of newcomers goes far beyond the economic needs of our province. Newcomers to Alberta enrich the social and cultural fabrics of our communities while at the same time broadening our view of our place in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly congratulate the 11 award recipients and the nominees as well as the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers for their excellent ongoing work.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

Wildfires in Thorhild County

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a long weekend that will long be remembered in Thorhild county. This past weekend the residents of the county of Thorhild and the hamlet of Newbrook experienced a state of local emergency and evacuation due to a wildfire. As we can all imagine, when your community and property are threatened, there is fear and uncertainty about what will happen. The services and support that were provided to the local residents were phenomenal.

I would like to acknowledge the proactive efforts of Reeve Henry Zolkewski and his administrator, Dan Small, who imposed a fire ban on Tuesday, May 13, and who were quick, decisive, and co-ordinated in their efforts once the fire broke out on Friday, May 16. The emergency public warning system was activated on Friday evening, providing residents with notice and the information that they needed.

An incredible effort was made by local firefighters, who were supported by two crews from British Columbia. These brave individuals were supported by the county, the RCMP, CN Railway, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Emergency Management Agency, and, of course, hundreds of local volunteers.

These people have all worked tirelessly and continuously since Thursday to ensure the safety and security of residents and their property. They have gone and many continue to go beyond the call of duty, working long hours and battling very difficult weather conditions. It's only because of their efforts along with the equipment made available, including bulldozers, helicopters, water tankers, and six water bombers, that the small hamlet of Newbrook still stands today. This fire burned up close to 2,000 acres and only destroyed two farms, with no injuries or stock losses reported. I'm told it will take another three to four weeks to put out all the fires still burning but currently under control.

I want to thank the various agencies who came together to provide such an effective, co-ordinated response. The effort of these professionals and volunteers is truly invaluable in a time of crisis. On behalf of the reeve of Thorhild, Henry Zolkewski, and the residents of these communities I want to express a heartfelt thanks to everyone who was there and is still there to ensure that we are safe.

Thank you.

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

Aboriginal Children's Memorial Round Dance

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, May 16, I attended an event called the Blanket of Remembrance, hosted by the Creating Hope Society. It was the first annual memorial round dance for this organization remembering aboriginal children who died during the '60s scoop. In the late 1960s and early '70s aboriginal children were taken away from their families, and many of them lost their sense of community, identity, status, and in many cases their lives.

The ceremony touched me deeply and caused me to remember certain memories from my childhood that I had long forgotten. When I was in grade 2, there was an aboriginal boy in my class that suddenly disappeared from school one day. I never heard from him

again, and on Friday I found myself wondering aloud what had become of him. As I spoke at the event, I began to connect his disappearance with the cause that this organization is fighting so hard to address. All of a sudden I was very aware of this realization: I have personal ties to this cause, as I'm sure many of us do as well. We are all touched by this, whether we realize it or not, and it is important that we strengthen these ties and build upon those which have been frayed.

The ceremony honoured the stories of children like my childhood acquaintance, whose stories have not been told and probably never will be. It reinforces the importance of children as an integral part of our nation and of our community. I spoke about the importance of community and the many different communities that each person is a part of. I also talked of the importance of participating within these different communities while continuing to maintain a strong sense of where we came from, the community we were born into. It is a part of who these children are and who they will become, an identity that is crucial to their very being.

It must have been devastating for these kids to be taken from their communities, their very sense of identity. This is a tragedy that must not be repeated. We cannot let children lose their sense of self, and we must act always in a way that reinforces their importance and belonging. It is necessary for us to set goals for tomorrow and to ensure that an aboriginal home for every aboriginal child in care comes none too soon.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Myanmar Relief Effort

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 10 I participated in a radiothon organized by Radio Sursangam in Calgary and the Calgary Sikh community. The radiothon helped raise over \$26,500 for the Canadian Red Cross's Myanmar cyclone fund. In addition to Radio Sursangam two Sikh temples, Gurdwara Dashmesh Cultural Centre and Gurdwara Sikh Society of Calgary, were also involved in this fundraising effort.

I wish to recognize Mr. Gurinder Singh and Mr. Ranjit Singh Sidhu of the radio station and all of their staff for their work in making this fundraiser a success. A special thanks also goes out to Mr. Bill Kahlon, Dan Sidhu, Jessie Singh, Apar Kahlon, Avinash Kangura, and the Member for Calgary-McCall for their participation in this event.

Sir, it moves me to see a community pulling together to help those in desperate need. While the victims of the cyclone are likely to be strangers to most that participated in the radiothon, separated by a vast distance, this shows that compassion knows no borders. I am certain that the compassion shown by the participants will go a long way in helping the Red Cross's relief efforts.

Thank you.

2:50

Presenting Petitions

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition signed by individuals from Sherwood Park, Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer among others. They, of course, are petitioning the government to commission an inquiry into the government's administration of or involvement with the local authorities pension plan, the public service pension plan, and the Alberta teachers' retirement fund.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition urging the government to

commission an independent and public inquiry into the Alberta Government's administration of or involvement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the Public Service Pension Plan, and the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three sets of tablings. The first contains over 160 signatures, primarily from Calgary and Fort McMurray, calling upon the Legislative Assembly to "pass legislation that will prohibit emotional bullying and psychological harassment in the workplace."

My second tabling calls upon the government to commission an independent and public inquiry into the Alberta Government's administration of or involvement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the Public Service Pension Plan, and the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

These come from across the province.

On behalf of my hon. colleague from Calgary-McCall: he has an additional several signatures calling upon that same fund to be considered.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a number of Albertans from Edmonton, Balzac, Okotoks, and Fort Saskatchewan that have signed a petition also asking that there be

an independent and public inquiry into the Alberta Government's administration of or involvement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the Public Service Pension Plan, and the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have 20 pages of signatures of people from across the province, ranging from Wainwright to Lethbridge to Calgary and Edmonton, calling on the government to commission an independent and public inquiry into the Alberta Government's administration of or involvement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the Public Service Pension Plan, and the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a speech by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin delivered last August in Calgary in which she expresses concern that many Canadians cannot afford access to the justice system. She notes:

Middle income Canadians are hard hit, and often left with the very difficult choice that if they want access to justice, they must put a second mortgage on their home, or use funds set aside for a child's education or for retirement. The price of justice should not be so dear.

The Speaker: Hon. member, if we start tabling speeches that were given eight and nine months ago, what will prevent any member in this House from tabling speeches given in 1921, 1937, 1967, and 1999?

Proceed with your next tabling.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of an abstract of a study on domestic violence and legal aid and a news story on the same study.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling five copies of a memorable 2008 convocation ceremony at the Alberta College of Art and Design. A record number of graduates convoked.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the House that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk on behalf of the hon. Mr. Hayden, Minister of Infrastructure: responses to questions raised by Mr. Mason, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, on May 6, 2008, in the Department of Infrastructure 2008-2009 main estimates debate.

Orders of the Day

Committee of Supply

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

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

Main Estimates 2008-09

Municipal Affairs

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

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm indeed pleased to present to you an overview of the Municipal Affairs '08-09 spending estimates as well as our three-year ministerial business plan.

I'd like to first of all introduce my staff that are with me here today. To my right are Ray Gilmour, the deputy minister; Michael Merritt, the assistant deputy minister, local government services; Peter Crerar, assistant deputy minister, corporate strategic services; Dave Hodgins, managing director of Alberta Emergency Management Agency; Anthony Lemphers, senior finance officer; Ken Fenning, the executive director of the strategic services and public safety division; and Thomas Lukaszuk, parliamentary assistant, MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs. I'm also joined by Jody Korchinski, director of communications; Bill Nugent, the director of legal services; Tara Trelford, manager, financial planning; Bill Cruikshank, the director of business planning; Indira Breitreuz, the executive director of corporate planning and policy. They've done a great job over the last year, and I am very much honoured for them to be with me here today.

In our ministry we do have a number of priorities, and we'll be focusing on them over the coming year. They're important to the well-being of Albertans, which makes them important to government as well. Mr. Chairman, the first of these priorities is the municipal sustainability initiative, or MSI, as I will refer to it during my presentation. Our Premier made a commitment to Albertans that their municipalities would have a stable, secure, predictable source of funding. This funding would be ramped up to \$1.4 billion annually, an \$11.3 billion support over 10 years of this program. An additional \$200 million will be added to this year's MSI funding. This means that \$500 million in total is available to municipalities through MSI.

Mr. Chairman, this is a sustainable amount of money. Part of my

mandate is to enhance and implement an accountability framework for this funding and other funding provided to municipalities. We need to be sure that the MSI funding we provide to municipalities is being used for agreed-upon objectives and that Albertans see the benefits of this investment. That isn't to say that there's no accountability in place right now. Far from it. In fact, we have a good framework in place, including a formal evaluation and approval process and accountability requirements. However, this is a substantial, serious investment by the province and, by extension, an investment by the taxpayers of this province. Five years from now, 10 years from now we need to be able to see a sustainable return from MSI funding.

3:00

Mr. Chairman, my second priority deals with the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. Our budget calls for an additional \$5 million in funding for the agency and the vital work it does. Municipalities and first responders are on the front line when it comes to disasters and emergencies: fires this weekend and possibly floods the next. The importance of this agency is critical to Albertans in time of need. The agency's role is to work with government departments, to work with municipalities, with industry and nongovernment groups to make sure that we are all prepared in a worst-case scenario.

The additional funding for the agency will be used in a number of different areas. It will go towards training for municipal emergency officials and others included in emergency preparedness and responsiveness. We need to make sure that our front-line people are able to respond as quickly, as effectively and efficiently as possible when needed. Some of this funding will go towards public awareness activities. We also need to support the needs of individuals, of our families for a minimum of 72 hours after a disaster or emergency.

Mr. Chairman, Albertans need to be aware. Some additional funding in this area will go a long way towards making us all better prepared. This includes working towards establishing a public safety, security, and environmental research institute. The institute will bring the province to the forefront of knowledge, planning, and developing proactive responses to major emergencies and disasters. I'm determined to see this through.

Mr. Chairman, our next priority for my ministry has to do with the Capital Region Board and the need to develop a plan to manage growth. This, too, is part of my mandate from the Premier. We need to move forward on this initiative, which is vital to the capital region and Albertans as a whole. There are billions of dollars in investment planned for this region. We need a strong, united group of municipalities working together to see this through. There are some significant gaps in the planning for the region. We need to be ready with the infrastructure to deal with the growth taking place now as well as for the growth expected in the future. The Capital Region Board held their first meeting recently, and they have a full plate of tasks to complete as we move forward. And we will move forward.

Libraries are something else I plan to focus on in supporting Albertans and municipalities in our province. Many Albertans say that libraries are at the heart of our communities, and, Mr. Chairman, I agree. They are facing obstacles mostly related to the phenomenal growth that this province is undergoing. They're being challenged to do more with their resources and, in fact, increasing expectations: more staff, upgraded technology, increased access to electronic and online resources. This is what Albertans expect of their libraries. Our Alberta libraries need to do some serious thinking on how they will meet these expectations. To help libraries move forward into

the future, I've initiated a strategic planning process to provide direction for improvements, enhancements, and a new way of doing things.

I'm going to give you an overview of the spending estimates at this point. Expense and the equipment/inventory purchases: we're seeking approval on \$692 million. This is an increase of \$194 million, or about 39 per cent, from our '07-08 budget of \$497 million. The first is with MSI, as I said before, \$500 million, an increase of \$200 million. [Mr. Danyluk's speaking time expired]

Mr. Chairman, I can finish the rest in a second or during questions.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. My first question would be: could you finish what you were doing in a few seconds?

The Deputy Chair: Hon. member, are you going to be combining the 20 minutes, two 10s?

Ms Pastoor: Yes.

The Deputy Chair: Okay.

The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, and thank you very much, hon. member, for that opportunity.

The next area, as I said before, is the increase for the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, which I covered earlier. The third is the increase to the Capital Region Board. The \$3 million in funding allocated to the board will help them start on their vitally important work.

You can rest assured that Albertans are receiving true benefits from the work we do. As you've heard, we've set some major goals for ourselves at Municipal Affairs. Our business plan and our estimates reflect that. Our priorities are very clear, and they are a key part of the mandate given to me by the Premier. I sincerely hope that I can count on your support. We will continue to serve Albertans.

I am pleased to continue on with the questions.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that overview.

One of the things that you talked about was sustainability, the MSI, in terms of accountability. I guess my question is: what type of formal evaluation would that entail? You were saying that you're increasing many dollars as an investment under MSI; therefore, you'll need to see a sustainable return. I'd like to know exactly how sustainable return is defined.

The MSI allocation will be announced when the provincial budget has been approved, and it's based on the following formula: 48 per cent is allocated on a per capita basis, 48 per cent on an education property tax requisition, and 4 per cent is allocated based on kilometres of local roads. I would question how that's arrived at in an equitable manner because some local roads – I'm thinking up north with oil trucks and certainly down south with heavy beet trucks and moving beef around – are not treated or used in the same way. I'm wondering, you know, how you arrived at that formula and how it could be perhaps looked at. Maybe it should be based on the number of trucks that are used and the actual tonnage that is being put on that road rather than just 4 per cent straight across the board.

The \$50 million for the MSI funding is for the operating funding to municipalities, and the operating funding is a designed portion of each municipality's overall funding allocation. It includes a base amount and, if applicable, sustainable investment funding. I wonder if I might have that explained. Does that mean that the municipalities would be allowed to take some of that money and actually invest it?

My other question on that would be: what are the long-range plans after 2016-17? I realize that that's a long way down the road. However, municipalities do think a long way down the road. They're looking at, certainly, 20-year plans based on fairly reliable numbers in terms of the growth that's in each of their own municipalities. I guess that if the thinking hasn't gone that far, my question would be: why not, and when would it start to be discussed and thought of to go further past the 2016-17? Certainly, MSI is a positive move. Being a former municipal councillor and speaking with many in southern Alberta, it is a positive move. It is long term, and it is sustainable, but again they need to be able to make those decisions further down.

3:10

The funding formula was seen by some as benefiting communities with larger industrial bases. Can the minister explain or tell us if there were any formulas considered that would have been more equitable and if there are discussions to deal with this perceived inequity? For instance, based on the formula, Edmonton receives \$1 billion less over the duration of the MSI deal than Calgary. I realize that I come from Lethbridge, but it's still a big issue because it will trickle down into smaller municipalities. Certainly, I think that Lethbridge has perhaps less dollars than some cities of comparable size.

I think I will leave it at that, and then I can go on to the capital region funding after that. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much. Maybe I could start out with: what is MSI? Well, MSI is very much a sustainable, predictable funding that is new money. It is support. It is a commitment to municipalities over 10 years to help them with some of the challenges that they've had, to do projects that, really, they were not able to accomplish with the funding and the taxation that they had. Mr. Chairman, \$11.3 billion over 10 years is a lot of money for support of municipalities. That is a commitment.

The first question was: how is the evaluation of MSI going to take place? Well, Mr. Chairman, the MSI does have criteria, and the criteria very much talk about capital projects that are needed for the area, whether it be roads, whether it be infrastructure, whether it be water and sewer, whether it be recreation facilities, whether it be libraries. It is important to understand that this is for projects that are necessary to communities, and it gives municipalities that opportunity for autonomy, to have the choice of what they feel is necessary for their area. When you talk about sustainable return, I think municipalities are deemed with the responsibility of knowing what sustainable return in their area is.

As far as the formula that you talk about, how it was arrived at, the 48 per cent population and 48 per cent equalized education assessment and 4 per cent roads, well, I can assure the hon. member that this just didn't come out of thin air and was arrived at one evening and we said: this is what we're going to use. We looked at different formulas. In fact, if I can, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if this is the exact number, but I think we went through approximately 17 to 20 different ways that we could look at support and funding. It came from the municipalities. Last year we went to Albertans – we stopped at eight communities – and the municipalities came and

told us what they felt MSI should look like. They told us it was important to have capital funding. They told us it was important to have operational funding. So, hon. member, I would like to say to you that it was arrived at from individuals that were involved.

You also made comments about the roads. Mr. Chairman, that is why we have the resource road grant in place as well. Where there are those heavy traffic areas, where it's deemed important to the municipality or deemed important to the area, we are able to access the resource roads, which comes out of Transportation.

You talked about the operating funding, the sustainability investment. The sustainability investment, basically, is from looking at municipalities that did not have the opportunities for growth, did not have the opportunities for assessment or population yet had some of the costs. If I were to say – and it's not exactly right – it really reflects some of the targeted investment program that was in place previously.

Also, the discussion was on the 2016 year of completion. Municipalities have a 20-year plan, looking at 20 years into the future. What's going to happen in 10 years? Mr. Chairman, I can't tell you what's going to happen in 10 years, but I can tell you this: that our Premier and this government very much recognize the need for predictability for municipalities. We have brought forward a program that has 10 years of sustainability. It's unprecedented anywhere in this country to give that support and predictability for municipalities. I say to you that we haven't looked at it 20 years down the way as far as the actual funding, but if you took the liberty and the time to read our 20-year plan, we do very much emphasize the importance of sustainability, the importance of municipalities.

I will go on to make comments about Edmonton and Calgary. You made the comments that, you know, Calgary receiving more is not quite being fair because Edmonton is receiving less. Well, let me just bring you two of the major points. I don't have it in front of me – and I should – but let me just suggest to you that Edmonton and Calgary may have the same amount of miles of road. I don't know if they do or they don't. That is probably 4 per cent inconsequential for the major numbers. But if we looked at equalized assessment, the equalized assessment in Edmonton is \$81 billion. The equalized assessment in Calgary is \$174 billion. If we look at the population when this program was brought forward, Edmonton has 730,000 people, and Calgary has close to a million people. There is a difference between the two centres.

Yes, they are the two major centres of our area, but there are differences, and those differences very much reflect in the formula. Calgary does receive \$3.2 billion over the 10 years; Edmonton receives \$2.1 billion. You know, your comments on a billion dollar difference very much reflect that. But if you look at the Edmonton region, the Edmonton region has a million people – well, not quite a million people but around a million people – and they would receive, meaning Edmonton and surrounding area, just over \$3 billion.

Mr. Chairman, I think that's it. I'm not sure if I missed any, but I'll try to write clearer because there's one where I'm not sure what I wrote down.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, it was probably just a scribble because I do think you covered it all.

On the capital region integrated growth management plan, line item 2.4.8 on page 310 of the estimates, \$3 million to support the board, can the minister tell us how he came up with the formula to enable the municipalities to share the costs of the regional projects?

I can't remember exactly the quote. I know I remember reading it somewhere, and then it went into my head. I guess my question is: is the government actually looking at regionalizing other areas? I read it somewhere, which prompted that question. I don't have it right here, though.

3:20

So far the Municipal Government Act has not been amended in any way. Can the minister tell us what legal obligations municipalities have to make their area structure plans, intermunicipal development plans, land-use bylaws, municipal development plans able to conform with the regional plans? Are you planning to amend the MGA? If so, would you discuss the specifics of where those amendments might be? If you're not going to amend the MGA to give legislative prescriptive authority to the regional board to ensure that all municipal decisions fall under the regional mandate, how would you ensure compliance within the regional framework? If you are providing additional support to some of the smaller municipalities who will have to review development plans for other communities – I'm going to stray off this for a moment and then come back to this thought.

One of the other thoughts is that presently some of the municipalities are having to create a document which lists the value of all of their assessments. Some municipalities are having a very hard time with that. I do realize that the department has given some money towards that, but I believe that the problem is staffing. Will the department be looking at helping municipalities in being able to come with that, or are they prepared to perhaps push the date further back for when they have to give that information?

Smaller centres like Leduc or Sturgeon county may not have the capacity within their planning and development departments to properly assess complex planning initiatives, and that is almost in addition to having to come up with their asset value. What is the minister prepared to do if the approval process employed by the capital board leads to delays and jeopardizes economic growth in the region? How will he expedite the process? Some of the smaller municipalities have spoken with me saying that they have got some projects ready to go and feel that they now are being stopped because they're not going to get that proper okay in time, and they are sort of sitting on the work that they've done.

Some municipalities are not in favour of the regional planning process, so if a municipality would like to pull out of the regional structure, how will the minister compel compliance? For instance, if Strathcona county decided that they would not abide by the decision of the board, what steps will the minister take to deal with that? I guess what I'm getting at is the legislated compliance mechanism within the Municipal Government Act if the changes aren't legislated.

The government has recognized the need for co-ordinated regional planning in high-growth areas. Again, this is sort of a similar question to, basically, what I asked about before: are you considering similar mechanisms in areas such as Peace River, Grande Prairie, or Cold Lake? These communities, some people feel, would benefit from regionalization.

Implementing mandatory regional growth plans for high-growth areas would be a way to achieve strategy 1.7. How is the minister going to accomplish this goal? I guess that really sort of covers a question that I spoke about. Are you really looking at regionalizing other areas, and in the end how many actually would be regionalized? I guess I think of the regionalization of the health care boards, and now we're back to one again. Is that really good planning? Granted, Health is certainly different than Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If I could start out and try to follow the same pattern that was asked. The first one

was about the \$3 million used to support the board. Yes, we have allocated \$3 million for that support. That support is for the support staff. It is for whatever the board, the 25 municipalities, deems is necessary for their support and for the work that needs to take place. I want to say to you that when you're talking about a funding formula that comes forward with the government, let me make it very clear that that formula is to be developed by the municipalities.

Your question was: are we looking at amalgamation in other areas? I say to you that there are amalgamations that have taken place. In fact, in my constituency, with Lakeland county and Lac La Biche, amalgamations have taken place voluntarily. This is not an amalgamation. This is a group of 25 municipalities looking together at regional issues. They still have the independence of their own operations. They still have the independence of bringing forward their proposals, their directions. But if there are focuses – and I stress to you: large directions – that need to be looked at that have a regional implication, this is what they will be discussing, whether it be transportation, whether it be housing, whether it be transit, whether it be land use. I want to stress, Mr. Chairman, that this is a board that is getting together and is going to get together and look at the region and the necessity for that regional planning.

Mr. Chairman, also, I want to say to you that there are different groups that are working throughout Alberta not as an amalgamation but working together: the Calgary partnership group. You mentioned Cold Lake. Cold Lake, in fact, has already joined. Medley, Grand Centre, and Cold Lake have amalgamated into one area. They're working together.

An Hon. Member: Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Danyluk: Yes. Wood Buffalo. You know, there are others that are looking at that possibility when they look at the advantages of working together, of amalgamating. Also, I would, if I could, mention Grande Prairie. The city of Grande Prairie and the county of Grande Prairie and Sexsmith are working together as far as the delivery of water, looking at different partnerships with libraries, you know, looking at different venues. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that throughout this province there are many memorandums of working together, whether it be fire services, whether it be water, whether it be recreation. Some just feel that they need to get together as one.

The question about Strathcona wanting to pull out and how they would do it. I need to say, Mr. Chairman, unequivocally that that is not an option. These 25 municipalities are bound together by regulation to look at regional projects.

The MGA amendments. The regulations are in place currently. The MGA will, we hope, be amended in 2009, and the minister has the authority regarding compliance. Right now the regulations have been formed, have been passed, and that is what the board is working under right now.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

3:30

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 217 of the business plan strategy 1.7 says: "implement the accepted recommendations from the Minister's Council on Municipal Sustainability." One of the recommendations from the report was new revenues and in particular municipal own-source revenues. If that's still on the table, how exactly can those be explained, and what are you looking for from the municipalities? Are there any plans to allow municipalities to utilize any of the potential new revenue sources, such as an amusement tax or local tourism levies, in order to generate more revenue? Would municipalities be allowed to have, I guess, different standards or different levies than other municipalities in the

province, or would they be standardized throughout the province? Are they all having to do exactly the same thing, or can they actually perhaps use some of these, like amusement taxes or local tourism? Not everyone has huge tourist dollars coming in. Would there be a chance to adjust that for each municipality, or are they going to be the same?

I think you've sort of answered the question about this being under regulations and hoping to change the MGA in 2009.

On page 214 of the business plan 2008-11 it states: "In addition, there are an increasing number of appeals being submitted to the Municipal Government Board relating to subdivision and assessment issues." I'm wondering how you are going to maintain the high quality that people appear to be pleased with up to this point. There's a huge increased workload over the last eight years, but the funding has remained the same. Can you explain why the board doesn't need more support when, in fact, there are more and more appeals coming forward? I suspect that there will be more coming forward as time goes on.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I want to say that municipalities really have the ultimate adjustment between themselves and the differences, and that is simply to levy taxation.

You talked about the minister's council. The minister's council had made some recommendations before MSI, and they had been working for two years on those recommendations. Part of the recommendation, of course, was for funding. We brought forward the funding, which, I believe, very much addressed a lot of those issues that municipalities had of a different source of revenue. I want to say to you that we have addressed that funding concern. Is there still some question or discussion? You know, we do understand the challenges that are had by places such as Jasper and Banff, that have traditional international visitation, where in one day they may have 45,000 people in town or 10,000 people in town and they have a community of maybe 2,500 to 5,000. Those challenges are real. We have said that we will still look at some of those directions. I also want to say – and I want to make it clear – that most of those issues, I believe, have been addressed by MSI.

The other point that you made is on more appeals to the Municipal Government Board. Without a doubt our appeals have gone up. You know, in the municipal sustainability initiative in the operational part of the funding one of those eligible expenses is planning. We very much have encouraged over the last two years for municipalities to get together to plan, to look at things just like Calgary is doing in the partnership plan, to look together on where everyone would like to see a plan that is brought forward by all municipalities involved. I would like to suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that planning and talking and communicating lead very much to collaboration and co-operation, and I see some of those issues being alleviated as well.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You certainly hit upon something that I always used when I was a municipal councillor – I just said it in a different way – that if everyone played nicely in the sandbox, everybody won. I think that's what you were trying to say when you said that if you sit at the same table, hopefully everybody will come out with a winning formula.

I'd like to talk now about the tank site remediation program, page 310 of the 2008-09 estimates, line 3.2.5, \$9 million. For 2007-08 the estimate was \$26.1 million, but the forecast was \$5.8 million. It

represented a decrease of \$17 million. I'll get into further why it was decreased.

It was designed to assist municipalities and small retail gas station owners clean up contamination from leaking underground storage tanks on current or former gas stations. The program continues. The initial program, established in 2000, was \$60 million. This was called the underground petroleum storage tanks program. In 2006 an additional \$50 million was added to continue the program. Eligible sites must have a tank that was installed prior to the Alberta fire code amendments of September 1, 1992. Small retail gas station operators are those owners with five or fewer retail fuel sites. Those sites are not eligible, including sites that have been out of operation for more than two years and do not pose a significant environmental risk, and large retailers because they are in a financially viable position to incur the cost themselves for cleanup and nonretail operations.

I guess I have some questions around that. I'm not sure why the municipalities and the gas station owners should necessarily be responsible for that. I really believe that those who should be responsible for that are the oil companies themselves. Taxpayers have already paid for their gas and certainly contributed to the high profit of all of those oil companies, so why should the taxpayers have to pay again, which adds further to the profit margin of the oil companies, by having their sites cleaned up? When the property is first created as a gas station, there should be a covenant against that property that then goes with each successive sale. Somewhere along the line money should be put up, and that first money goes along with that covenant as it goes through with each different seller so that when it has to be cleaned up, it's an oil company that has actually paid for it.

Now what's happening – and it certainly happened to a constituent of mine. It was a site that had been out of operation for more than two years, and they couldn't get the funding to clean up that site. In fact, it had been a gas station, and then it was a restaurant. Somewhere along the line this hadn't been cleaned up, and it was over the two years. So here we are again: the taxpayers don't want to pay for it, and certainly the people that wanted to buy that property couldn't afford to pay for it, nor do I think that the taxpayers should have paid for it.

Can the minister explain the difference in that \$2.3 million in the estimates and the forecast? Is it due to less than expected uptake on the program? We are creating more and more gas stations, and they're not being necessarily renovated on-site. There are many, many new sites, certainly, with all our new development and growth in this province.

3:40

If there weren't as many applications for funding as expected, why was the funding not utilized in another way to clean up other sites, even those that are outside of the eligible criteria? For instance, in Edmonton on Whyte Avenue the old Esso station has been sitting there fenced off for several years. It's an eyesore, and there are similar cases in other municipalities. As I mentioned, I've had one of my constituents speak to me about it. If there's funding available under the program that's not been utilized, why not expand the criteria to larger retailers to get them to assist and to clean up sites like Whyte Avenue Esso?

Again, I guess my question is: why isn't Esso doing their part? We realize that larger companies should do this by themselves, but they aren't, so I guess my question is: why? It seems that they would prefer to leave these sites sitting for years instead of incurring the cost of full remediation. It probably doesn't affect their profit margin, and they write it off their taxes.

If the uptake has not been as expected, what steps is the minister taking to increase awareness of this program to smaller communities? I'll leave that portion for now.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Can I just answer those questions, maybe, in reverse form if you don't mind? First of all, I want to say to you that in the regulations that we have now, we definitely are ensuring that there is no environmental pressure on the surrounding area by having double-lined tanks and taking those type of precautions, in fact, even things like the elimination of leaded fuel, so that would never happen again.

I also want to say that the program is the same, but it has basically been extended from three years to five years. You say to me: why? Well, we have the applications, but we don't have anybody to do the work. The expertise that's needed for this work, we just don't have those individuals. So we have basically taken that program and have put it over five years. I say to you that the prevention part is in place right now. The funding has remained at \$50 million.

One of the comments you talked about is that we should hold the oil companies, the resource individuals, accountable. Well, a lot of these sites are sites that were contaminated 50, 60, 70 years ago, and we really don't have any way of assessing how much people were, you know, responsible for the amount of contamination they did. We don't really know who the contaminators were. We know that there's contamination. After 1992 we changed those regulations, and oil companies are responsible. I say to you that what we have done is we have provided \$160,000 to each individual applicant for that purpose as well, for municipalities, for individuals to clean up their sites and to bring them to environmental standards.

The first one, you say that, you know, I said it in a different way, and we're in the sandbox playing together. Well, I would say that the beauty is to look at things in a different way because I think that if we do look at things in a different way and we come together, we are definitely all going to be benefactors.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. For the prevention by using these new tanks underground . . . [Ms Pastoor's speaking time expired]

The Deputy Chair: Hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, you can continue on.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. The new tanks that are being put underground – in terms of the prevention, certainly, we have the knowledge. I agree with you that you can't go back 50 years. Who knows what has happened? I'm thinking from here on in the future. Those tanks, can they stay underground, or are these projects still going to have to be reclaimed? With the reclamation would it be totally the responsibility of the original gas company or oil company or whatever that might be?

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency. In the business plan, page 220, core business 3, as you've already mentioned, is to manage the effective co-ordination of the provincial emergency management system. We have had some discussion today about the unfortunate fire that they had up north and how everyone came together and helped to get it out. This is sort of off on a bit of a tangent, but one of the things that has been brought to my attention is that some of the people that are trained to do this are volunteers but also that a lot of the volunteers are not trained.

I think it's easy to sit in Edmonton or wherever, in larger centres, and make rules that say, "Okay, only somebody that's trained can

help put out this fire," when in fact there have been fires, heavens, since the province was, you know, created sort of thing, if not before. The community comes together, and sometimes the community people are not allowed to help. It is an issue, certainly, in smaller communities, and it has been brought to my attention, so that's why I am bringing it up at this point. Hutterite communities that are near a fire come out full blast. They'll come out and do whatever they can. People come from everywhere when they see a fire, particularly in the south with grass fires because they grow so rapidly. So I think it's something that should be discussed at some level: how do we determine who can help put out a grass fire when everyone is willing and it's a community project?

Line item 4.0.2 of the estimates, page 311, shows an increase for community support services, 2008-2009 estimate, to \$7.4 million. That's up from last year's \$3.8 million. Can the minister tell us what initiatives this increase will be used for? I'm sorry; I'm back under Emergency Management Agency.

It appears that the bulk of the funding under line item 4.0.3, page 311 of the estimates, is spent on public awareness, education programs and services, to create an informed public. It's a good initiative. Can the minister tell us what programs are being offered with the increase in spending? How is this level of spending going to meet the goals of strategy 6.2 in the business plan, on page 220, to reduce preventable emergency events through collaboration with emergency management partners on education initiatives? All of those words sort of fall upon what I was talking about before; that is, you know, education, perhaps training all the local people. I don't know how one would do that, but that's, I think, part of what that's about.

Although he did refer to it briefly in his opening remarks, can the minister tell us when the Alberta emergency plan will be updated to reflect changes in the emergency preparedness stemming from the Wabamun incident and the subsequent recommendations of the Environmental Protection Commission? It is outdated. It's the same plan that was effective as of November 6, 2000. It really should be changed, and it should be signed off by you because we still have an old minister from 2000 having signed off on this. So when the updates are made, I think that it should be reflected that the minister has signed off on them.

3:50

In the business plan page 220, strategy 6.6, says that the department will begin the establishment of an interdisciplinary institute to promote a proactive response to potential emergencies. Can the minister tell us if this is in response to a similar key recommendation from the Environmental Protection Commission? Could you provide any more details on that: the timelines, potential funding, and who might be involved? What is the plan to actually accomplish this strategy? Is it actually in the planning stages, or has it gone further than that? Is it actually written as a document?

In the business plan strategy 6.4, on page 220, is to provide central co-ordination of provincial resources that would respond to an emergency event. If the minister can explain it in a little bit more detail than he did in his opening remarks because it appears from reading it that the province provides more of a support role to local authorities and not really the lead role. Under the plan the province will only take over when the Lieutenant Governor in Council declares a state of emergency. Can the minister tell us what capacity exists right now if the province had to take control of an emergency? I guess I'm speaking of an emergency that wouldn't necessarily be a health emergency as in a pandemic. I believe it would fall under Health to take the lead on that one.

If another Wabamun occurred or an incident in the oil sands, I

guess, with all the talk that we've had lately about the toxic swimming pools times however many in the north, what specific mechanisms exist to allow the province to take over the command structure? I know that the earth dams are very secure, but so were the levees in New Orleans, you know, and they broke. So if something happened to those and that toxic waste was leaking out of those toxic tar sands lakes, how prepared is the province for that?

Can the minister tell us what steps he's taken to ensure that the things that I've talked about have already been addressed? Again, perhaps in more detail. I know that you touched on it in your opening remarks. Can you say that these concerns can be dealt with with only \$3.5 million allocated to preparedness services? On page 311 of the estimates that would be line 4.0.3.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To start off, really the mandate of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is to be prepared and to have a province that is prepared. In reality the definition of a disaster or the definition of emergency is something that we do not predict is going to happen. We need to be able to respond to situations where there are emergencies or disasters and be able to deal with those issues. I want to say to you that probably one of the most important aspects of the whole process is education.

You know, we need to talk about the education part and what our role is. Well, first of all, let me say that our role is supporting expertise. It's to support municipalities in whatever definition they may need, whether it be the expert knowledge that our agency has, whether it be support when a disaster comes to a close, or during a disaster when they need funding.

Next, your question or your comments were about the institute. Yes, the institute is going ahead. Yes, it is going ahead now. Yes, the funding is in place for us for the initial start.

I'm going to jump around a little bit. Let me just go back to the tanks for a second, if you don't mind. The new tanks are different types. First of all, the tanks are above ground and underground. They are different. Like I said before, since 1992 the oil companies are responsible for those tanks. The tanks have added protection and should not fail.

The tanks that were put in 50 and 60 years ago, their primary reason for existence was simple containment. Nobody talked about or looked at the environment. Everybody that needed a tank looked at containment. If it started to leak or if they noticed that there was some fuel missing, they replaced the tank. But now we take precautions. We make sure with the tanks that are there that the environment is the key issue. Also, the Petroleum Tank Management Association has a monitoring program in place for those existing tanks. They check those tanks to make sure that they comply with the necessary regulations.

Anyway, let me go on. Communities coming together. Going back to fires, you asked a question: how come there are people there that are willing to volunteer and we're not utilizing those volunteers? Well, first of all, we definitely need to protect people. We can't have somebody coming to a firefighting situation when they don't have the expertise. That is exactly why we have training programs with municipalities, with fire stations, with volunteers, with search and rescue in ways that when there is an emergency, they're able to help.

As I said at the beginning of this answer period, education is the key component, and that's exactly what we're trying to do. We're trying to educate people, different types of individuals that want to get involved, volunteers, so that we can address the needs that we feel could happen in an emergency. I would suggest: join up; get involved; take one of the courses.

One of the education directions that we have promoted is the 72-hour kit. That alone would help not only this province, but it would help the Alberta Emergency Management Agency so that people are prepared in case of that disaster. They can at least be self-reliant for 72 hours. We'd be very glad to give you some of the recommendations that we suggest: that every individual should have a kit and what should be contained in that kit whether you're a family or an individual.

Public awareness is probably one of the key issues. We also deal with and try to educate individuals, educate communities in possibilities – in floods, in fires, in different situations – not only to help prevent fires but to make people aware of what they can do and how they can address some of those major challenges when floods happen.

Also, one of the questions was about the monies for community support. One of the things that I failed to mention is the public warning system update that we need to look at. Remember that Alberta was the leader and is the leader with the public warning system. We still have the only province-wide public warning system in Canada. It still is one of the best systems in Canada. But we started the public warning system earlier than anybody else really did. Some of the equipment that we have we would like to update to keep ahead and ensure that our public warning system continues to be the best.

4:00

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The institute that you talked about, that you've got up and running, what does it really look like? Then my other question would be: how often is this training offered? People learn, they move on, they sell their farms, they die, whatever. How often is it offered so it's kept relevant within smaller communities?

You said that you would like to update the equipment for the public warning system. What does "would like" mean? Are you actually looking at it, or do you have the money put aside for it?

Mr. Danyluk: Sorry. I didn't catch that. What does what mean?

Ms Pastoor: You said that you would like to upgrade or update the public warning system. I'd like to know what "would like to" means. Does that mean that you've got the money, that you're thinking about it, that you're planning it, that it really needs it? When was the last time it was looked at? Those sorts of things, I think, would come around "would like to."

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry; I didn't quite catch "would like." When I said what we would like to see – well, first of all, I want to tell you that we are doing a study, that was initiated back at the beginning of March, to look at our system to see the efficiencies and the effectiveness. Of course, you have to remember that presently we are training approximately 900 people a year in the operation of that system, whether it be city police or whether it be search and rescue, individuals that have access to that system.

It is very important to me as the minister to look at a system that is accessible. What do I mean by accessible? Meaning that an individual does not need extensive training in the ability to operate a system. We need to be able to go from what the system and the availability of technology was before to advance, really, the mobility of its use. I would like something that maybe more a layman could operate, that maybe wouldn't take as much training, that maybe the

distribution of the public warning would happen quicker, would happen more effectively and efficiently, that maybe would give some better responses, and that would use modern technology.

Now, modern technology. You know, as anybody would, that the computers that we got three years ago are probably out of date. Now, this warning system that we have is continually being modernized or worked on or maintained as we go. As I said before, we are looking at taking that system and analyzing where we could go and what's available, what modern technology can give us that would give us more protection, again I say to you, to be better prepared as a province in case of an emergency.

I think that was it, wasn't it? Oh, sorry. Mr. Chairman, if I can. At the beginning there was the institute, what it looks like. First of all, the role of the new institute and who would take part in it. It is research and analysis. It's the leading edge, again, looking at the leading edge in response techniques, independent post-incident evaluation, and also taking that information and having it in a central system so that if something happens in Cold Lake, somebody in Banff can take advantage of it.

The Deputy Chair: Hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, are you going to go back and forth and combine your times?

Mrs. Leskiw: I have several questions. If that's what it takes, then yes.

The Deputy Chair: Okay. Thanks.

Mrs. Leskiw: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I was going to ask this earlier, but it was a money question. The province has contributed \$4.29 per capita for our libraries since 1993. This is 2008. That amount has not increased, yet the cost of everything, including books, has gone up. Is the minister planning to address this lack of subsidy to the libraries since 1993?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would agree with you that there has not been an increase in the base. There has been additional funding that has supported libraries. What we have done is support the networking side. We have supported the SuperNet side. Also, on a short-term basis, if you want to call it, we have supported the per capita side.

I want to stress to you, as I said earlier, that we cannot just look at the funding and add funding and hope that we address the challenges and concerns. Libraries have changed, the customers have changed, the communities have changed. That is the exact reason that we are going to look and have the people of Alberta involved in looking at where we're going with libraries, what the needs are, how we can better address the needs of communities, of individuals that are using libraries.

I've always said, you know, that if anybody walks through the door of a library, they're hooked for life. I want to say to you that we need to address the traditional use, but we also have to address the new technologies to be able to try to address those individual needs. In fact, my parliamentary assistant is looking at some of the challenges of new people coming to this province that do not have the opportunity to know our language, to know our customs, to know our communities. Is that a role for libraries? What is the role for libraries? Is there an expanded role? Is there an expanded need? I think that we need to have that information come from the communities, from the people that use them, to make sure that when we do put funds in, it's going in the right direction.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 221 there's a difference between the actual and the estimate. The forecast for 2007-2008 is \$24.664 million, but the estimate for '08-09 is a drop of \$2 million. Can you explain that to me, please?

Mr. Danyluk: What happened is that two or three years ago there was a special grant that was brought forward of \$20 million. The first year we used \$8 million. The second year we also used \$8 million – is that right? – or \$10 million, \$12 million. Somehow we ended up that we had some funding left over that we put in, and then that funding has basically ceased to exist. It was special funding, a special pool that was brought forward, and that's why it's not there.

Mrs. Leskiw: Minister, you have told us that the library funding is a partnership between municipalities and the province. How is the province doing its part to support these libraries?

4:10

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Well, libraries and municipalities do have a partnership. They have a dual responsibility. They have the assessment of ensuring that libraries provide the services that they do. What are some of the ways? Well, of course, municipalities get a library grant, which they distribute. That's the \$4.29 that you were talking about. Also, the libraries have access to funding that has gone to municipalities through MSI. First of all, the regulations and the criteria very much offer up the opportunity for municipalities to support the construction of libraries or whatever may be necessary from the capital side. Also, from the operating side libraries, which are a nonprofit organization, have the opportunity to apply to municipalities to access some of that operating funding as well. No doubt, it is deemed by the municipality and at the choice of the municipality where that funding should go. That funding is new funding that has been given, as I said before, with MSI, and those municipalities have the ability to make that choice if they feel that libraries are important in their area.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you. What about the future? How will libraries respond to the increased demands for these services?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. How about the future? That is exactly the reason that we're going to have a working group get together and look at the future needs. I look at this in three components. The first one, traditional use. The second one is how we are using the technology that is available to us to provide the best service we possibly can at this time for the needs of the communities. But more importantly is looking into the future, looking into the crystal ball and saying: what are some of the needs for libraries going to be in the future for communities, maybe for industry? I want to say that it's not something about thinking outside of the box; it's really throwing the box away. Libraries have been the heart of communities for over a hundred years, and, you know, they still are the heart of communities. But they need to change because they need to adapt to what communities feel it's important that their library should provide.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you. AUMA's convention passed a motion to increase funding per capita for libraries in the province. Could you tell me what the per capita for libraries is? I mean, I know you've given us the millions of dollars, but could you break it down to what it is per capita?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, on your first question I'm not sure exactly where you're going with this: what the per capita is? We have an allocation of \$4.29 per capita.

Mrs. Leskiw: Has it increased?

Mr. Danyluk: Has it increased? No, it has not increased. I want to say that it is not in the budget to increase, but this summer we are looking at the needs. We have increased it by population, if I can say that. The per capita has not dropped, but if the population has increased, we've done that increase. I want to say to you that looking at it and having this working group go through the province and assess the needs will definitely determine how we look at funding for next year.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you. My next question is also to the minister. Fort McMurray and Cold Lake are municipalities with significant growth challenges. What is your ministry doing to help address these challenges in places like Fort McMurray and, of course, closer to my heart, in Cold Lake?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, what are we doing? Of course, there are many different ways of supporting municipalities, whether it be direct funding or, as you will hear later on this evening, the support that this government has given to housing. But I'm sure you don't want hear about all of those different initiatives; you want to hear where we're at in Municipal Affairs.

Well, number one, I'll use Fort McMurray. I'm not exactly sure where it is on here, but I want to say that not only MSI; we have helped in new sewage treatment, a water treatment plant, a regional landfill site, water lines. We have, really, a co-ordinating payment of interest of \$136 million for the Wood Buffalo bridge financing arrangement in years 2 and 3 of a \$3.6 million administrative program, preparation of a fiscal impact model.

I guess the way I can answer the question that you have: what about Cold Lake? Well, Cold Lake comes to us in no different a way than other municipalities do. They have individual water and sewer programs. They get the MSI funding. We have municipalities that come forward that talk about looking at different ways that they can work together, and we'll provide support funding in that direction. Cold Lake gets \$33 million in support as well, you know, in MSI. That kind of gives you a little bit of a range where the support comes from.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you. I'll give him a break.

The Deputy Chair: Okay.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. My thanks to the minister and to the staff appearing on the floor. We appreciate your attendance here. I'm sure the minister does. As well, do we have fans in the gallery? Yes. Thank you to the staff joining us in the gallery.

There are a couple of areas I'd like to address with the minister: libraries, mass transit, tank remediation, emergency preparedness, and if we get to it, what happened with Monarch Place, which was under your ministry. It may end up being under a different ministry at this point, but at the time that came out, it was under your ministry.

I, too, am very interested in library funding. I listened with great interest to the exchange between the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake and the minister. I want to follow up on it, and I'm looking for a few details. For starters, there has not been an increase in the per capita grant to the municipalities, it's my understanding, since 1993. There is an additional grant that was made available, which was the public library development initiative grant which targeted specifically service expansion, but we have not had an increase to the baseline funding for libraries in a long, long time.

When I look at the vote on page 311 of the government estimates, vote 6, library services, we see that for library grants, vote 6.0.2, however you want to look at it, the budget last year was \$21,451,000. The budget this year is \$21,419,000. That's a slight decrease. But the forecast for ending the previous fiscal year was \$23,648,000, so we're down quite a bit. It's either stagnant or it's actually reduced, depending on how you look at those figures.

What we do know about library services already is what they're doing differently. They are serving newcomers. For people who come into a new community, the library is where they go to find out how government services work, how they can hook into local community stuff. They are especially heavy users of the Internet hookups that are available but also any other cultural information that's there. We already know that any communities that are dealing with a high newcomer population have got heavy use of their library.

4:20

Specifically, I heard the minister talk about a working group and some sort of consultation that was going to take place around what libraries would look like, not only thinking outside the box but throwing the box away. I'd like to hear more from the minister with specific details about what he's anticipating here. Will this be led by his parliamentary assistant? Is it expected that this is a panel discussion or a group that travels around the province taking public hearings? Is it being referred to one of the policy field committees? There isn't a lot of information here, Mr. Minister, so I'm asking you to fill in the blanks. The people listening to this through their library Internet hookup are saying to me and into cyberspace: what the heck is he doing? So let's hear what the heck you're doing about this consultation. When is it going to report back? If it says, "The system we've got is really good; fund them," are you going to do that? How does that work? How is this consultation going to happen?

Why will the government not consider increasing that per capita grant? I'm very interested in this because, you know, I've had libraries under me a couple of times in different critic portfolios, and I end up in the same sort of budget debate. The ministers have all been pretty stoic about not increasing that per capita grant. What's the government philosophy behind this? Clearly, people use it. Clearly, it provides a service. They're pretty efficient at delivering it. Why will the baseline not be improved?

The second part of that is: why aren't you using current population figures? Every time I hear from libraries, they're telling me: you're not using current population figures; you're using old ones. Actually, when I first started, in '97, one of the first things a group said to me in Grande Prairie was: you know, they're using figures from 1993-94. I think that managed to get bumped up a little bit – they moved a couple of years – but overall the per capita money amount has not changed significantly, neither has it been updated on an annual or biennial basis to reflect population figures.

So what is this consultation he's talking about? What is the philosophy behind not increasing the per capita amount, and why has it not been possible to update using the current population figures? Of course, all of this also affects the regional library systems, who are also dependant on per capita grant funding.

If I can just argue with the minister a little bit before I move off libraries and give you a chance. "What a surprise," he said. Me argue? No. But, you know, saying to the libraries, "That's okay. Stick with what you've got. You're not going to get anything more – there's stasis there – because you can get in and compete with every other demand on municipalities in this day and age for a piece of that MSI funding for your little old library," well, that's not incredibly helpful, with respect, Mr. Minister, because they would then be in a competing pot. Not that I don't believe that libraries can't compete pretty heartily, but they are in a pretty heavy competition at that point for things like – oh, let me think – LRT, mass transit, housing, FCSS funding, after school care, all the other demands that are currently being made on municipalities.

I look at my own dear, fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre and look at what they're trying to deal with and go: yeah, right; libraries are going to come out of that one really well. They're not. So, with respect, to say that they can just go to this other source for money and it'll all be great I don't think is realistic. But talk to me.

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Chairman, I would be glad to. First of all – and I'm going to jump a little bit in between – I want to say to you that my belief is that we need a library system, not necessarily a system of libraries. We need to be able to deliver a service that is compatible, yet a system that gives an opportunity for libraries to work together.

I'm going to go backwards because we talked about MSI competition. You are absolutely right that there are a lot of demands, and demands come from individual not-for-profits. When we went around the province, we asked municipalities how they felt the distribution of these funds should happen, and they were very clear in that focus. That focus was: give us the opportunity to be autonomous; give us the choice of making that decision of what our priorities are, of what our direction is. In our discussions, in fact, when I go and speak to the AUMA and the AAMD and C, when I speak to municipalities, I make it very clear that this is a possible place where your responsibilities lie, that you could support those services.

Now, you say in a competition of, quote, unquote, housing and everything. Those are capital. Mostly what libraries are asking us about is operational, and that operational is there. As mentioned by your colleague, \$50 million of operational funding is accessible by not-for-profit groups: some money for planning, some money for administration if they see fit, for municipalities that work together in a collaborative area.

I want to say also that libraries – you're right – have not had an increase on a per capita rate. We have given them increases. That \$2.2 million difference there that you have noted, really, is the difference between the budgets. All of the things that you have talked about I think are right and right on board. They are delivering services. They are adapting. You know, we don't have that concentrated direction on where they believe funding should be. It's easy to say: just give us more money. We need to have accountability in a way that says: "What are the priorities of libraries? What is the focus where libraries and library associations want us to go in the funding?" We need to look at where that funding should go.

Am I looking at trying to get more funding? Without a doubt. But we need to have that consultation with libraries and specifically address where they believe that funding needs to go. What are we

doing? We have the working group that will be meeting this summer, and I expect them to report back to me prior to budget time so that we can put the details in place that are necessary and make sure that we do have it in place for the next budget.

Why are we not using the new population figures? We are using the 2005 population figures right now. I mean, we need to look at some of those as well. It is a good point. Okay?

Ms Blakeman: Okay. It sounds to me like what the minister is casting about for, searching for in envisioning a new library system is one where there's less concentration on the building itself, where you talk about delivering a service as compared to actually having a physical building. I'm trying to fill in the lines here. I'm trying to draw the minister out a bit more on where he sees the lack or where the gaps are now. What is it he doesn't like about the system? You know, it's great service delivery. We know that we're hitting a newcomer market.

The SuperNet, by the way, I've been asked to thank the government for putting in. Well, the last time I talked about the SuperNet here, I was wailing on the government for a long time about making sure that they funded the municipalities and the libraries to run the SuperNet connection from outside of the building, through the wall, up the stairs, down the hall, to the computer terminals. You weren't going to do that in the beginning. You did, and it's been an incredible success. They want to make sure that they thank the minister and the government for providing that because it's had a number of effects. A couple of the notes I've had is that it's a drawing card for people that travel, like travelling salespeople, seasonal workers that are working in camps around a particular centre, businesspeople that want to access e-mail as they go through, or even tourists, I suppose. They are very grateful for everything that the SuperNet has allowed the library system to do.

4:30

That got me off on a tangent. I'm back to where the minister sees that things are wrong. I'm wondering if it's around having to fund the bricks and mortar and maintenance of the actual buildings themselves. If you like the library service and you like the idea of service delivery, is the problem the buildings and the location of the buildings and where stuff actually sits? We're always going to have books now. We thought for a while with technology that people would read books online, and – guess what? – they don't. There's something about the texture of a book and the pages and the care that you take when you choose the paper and the font, and we're never going to give that up. Even younger generations that are very attuned to the Internet still go and buy books. I mean, the success of Chapters and Amazon is a testament to that. We're always going to have books. We're going to have to put them somewhere. I'm trying to draw you out a bit more on that.

Of course, I'm going to go back and say that I'm looking for a bit more detail on what your working group is. Who's the chairperson? Who's on it? How did they get appointed? Are they going to move around the province? Is this staff people? Is it MLAs? Is it headed up by the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, who I'm gathering by his animation in this discussion is very interested in libraries? Can I draw a bit more specifics on that from the minister and also more about what he's seeing as a lack in the system now that would make him drive towards changing this so much in the future?

Mr. Danyluk: First, Mr. Chairman, I want to say: don't ever think for a short moment that the system is broken. The system is not broken. The system is working very well. How can we improve it? How can we make it better?

You ask me what I see that's wrong. I don't think I see anything that's wrong. One of the major questions when we start looking at

funding and we start looking at support of libraries is: how do you believe libraries should be funded? Should they be funded by the same mechanism that we're using right now, as per capita? Does that adequately address the system?

You made mention of the SuperNet. You know, the SuperNet is a great thing. But I talked to some of the libraries, and they're saying: "You know, we love the SuperNet, but we need to be able to access its potential better. Funding should be concentrated in a different direction so that we can do that." So when you ask how I want to do things differently, I always ask the question: how can we share better? Is there a way of funding that would provide better sharing that would be advantageous to the delivery of the service?

I want to make a quick comment to you. It was a personal experience that happened. We went to the opening of Yellowhead last year. You lifted up your book, and you talked about the book. People are passionate about libraries. You know, I have a little bit of a passion for green John Deere paint. When you see shiny green paint, it kind of sends a little bit of a chill. Well, we went on a tour, and in the back of the library what happened was that there was a lady that was opening up new boxes of books that came in. She took one of the books and opened it up, no differently than what you did, and rubbed it and said: "You know, don't you just love it? This is such a great feeling, to be able to touch a new book." When I go to a library and I think about my age and I think about all of the potential that there is in that library, all of that knowledge, it's kind of depressing in some ways to know that there is no way that I could ever read all of the books that are there, yet there are so many adventures.

Let me make sure it's very clear that I am passionate about libraries. I think libraries are very important. At the same time I want to make sure that the delivery of the services is what is necessary and what is wanted. I don't know exactly what's wanted because I do have all kinds of different directions that are coming forward on how we should fund libraries. I say to you again that when we talk about libraries and we talk about capital, capital is important. In the regulations to access the capital of MSI funding we have specifically included that opportunity for recreation facilities and for libraries so that they can access that funding. It is an opportunity that municipalities have, to be able to use new money for something that maybe they haven't been able to afford. There's always going to be that competition, but there is additional funding. You know, we've seen in a lot of different communities that municipalities have been approached and have been convinced by library systems that this is important, that this is key, and those municipalities have looked, have understood, and have given.

I want to say to you also that we do have 350 municipal libraries, seven regional library systems in our province, and we need to make sure that they're working together for the best advantage of the customer, the customer being Albertans.

Mr. Quest: Just a couple of brief questions for the minister. What progress has been made to improve emergency management in Alberta since the Environmental Protection Commission released its report on the Wabamun train derailment?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. That's a very interesting question. I want to tell you that there have been mammoth changes. First of all, the major change is the forming of the agency itself, having an agency that is the overseer, having an agency that is the co-ordinator. Its mandate is to co-ordinate and work together with ministries, have ministries all on the same page,

work together for a common goal, look at the different areas of training, and also find information that is necessary in case we do have an emergency.

Now, let me sort of give you a little bit of – it's not a hypothetical situation; it was a real situation. When Wabamun happened and we were looking for tools and equipment that were necessary, we were looking in places where, maybe, they weren't. In fact, we got some equipment from B.C. It took – what? – 24 hours to get here or something in that neighbourhood, 24 hours to get to Alberta when really the equipment was 20 miles away. So we needed an inventory of what is available out there, what industry is available out there, what resources we have in the oil companies and the municipalities, in private enterprise, in case we have a disaster so that all we have to do is look in our research bank and call those individuals, and they can be at the scene and be supportive.

4:40

Part of the challenge we have is to make sure that we assemble a crew or whatever is necessary as quickly as we possibly can to contain whatever the disaster is, whether it's a spill, whether it's maybe a pandemic where we need some sort of different method. But I say to you that it's co-ordination: working and training the first responders, the firefighters, looking at how we can support and have supported search and rescue, looking at the different not-for-profit agencies, the volunteers, how we can utilize their expertise. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East talked about the use of volunteers, making sure that those individuals are trained. The key is having a joined up system. That is where we're progressing ahead. The formation of the institute, that we talked about a little bit earlier: not only using the technology that we have, not only using the expertise for a fire that takes place in the south and a fire that takes place in the north but bring that all together so that we make it accessible to different areas for, really, the education and the learning process, being able to use expertise from different parts of Canada, use their knowledge in how we can do things better.

One of the other important areas, of course, is getting out in front, mitigation. You know, we have situations where we have floods, and we've been working with the federal government for support for mitigation practices: if we would build a dike in places or build a little bit of a dam or do something different to help mitigation. The hon. member from south of Calgary did a report, and we are very much looking at that report and looking at the recommendations of that report. Part of this year's commitment is to look at some of those recommendations and see what we can do.

Really, it's finding out and making sure that we know what municipalities need. What does industry need when we need them, for lack of a better term? How can they be prepared to support and help us? That takes a lot of communication. That takes a lot of personnel to go out. What we have been doing is having meetings with responders. We've been having meetings with individuals that are involved and, if I can say it, having training sessions so that they can go back into their municipalities and train their people so that we are, as I said again, better prepared.

Mr. Quest: Just one more question. I've heard that reports of contamination threats to our water supply, to our environment are actually becoming more common as the population increases. What steps are you taking to address this issue?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, first of all, I want to say to you that, you know, it is not only a single ministry that needs to look at the importance of water, the importance of air, the importance of soil, and how we keep them in a preserved state. The hon. Minister of Environment, as you have heard, is working very closely not only with his department but all forms of government and industry, making sure

that that's important. Water quality, as you know, is one of the major priorities of this government. We need to protect the environment and public health.

I'm going to go off in a little different direction. In this province we have over 220,000 private sewage systems. To maintain those systems and to make sure that those systems are operating to what we feel is environmentally friendly is a mammoth task in itself. Developing a waste-water management framework, grants to the AAMD and C for model development projects, a grant to the University of Calgary to research on aquifer and groundwater contamination: we really need to look at joint water and sewer projects so that whenever we have those projects, we're addressing both. We're addressing individuals getting water but getting the grey water back or getting the sewage back so it's not just disposed of into the community.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much. Just to begin with an aside, the minister indicated his passion for John Deere green. Possibly it's the fact that my grandfather was a farmer in Saskatchewan and the first tractor I rode on was a red Massey-Harris and then upgraded to a Massey-Ferguson, possibly that was the defining moment in my past history, where red has always been important. I spent a fair amount of time harvesting my grandfather's major crop of rocks on the stoneboat behind that Massey-Harris tractor, but it was an enjoyable experience being out with my grandfather.

As a former teacher I can't help but address libraries, and I believe it was the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre who proposed that we honour Lois Hole with a memorial library card, where the province would pick up the cost of library cards and provide that extra support for libraries. We know that education is the great escape, the great raiser, the great leveller, and as children grow up, we recognize the fact that 40 per cent of Albertans are functionally illiterate, so the notion of providing greater funding to libraries is an absolutely essential investment.

Currently there are over 64,000 children living below the poverty line, that don't have computer hookups. They do have access to computers when they get into school, but that's where the library comes in, again, as the leveller. It provides children not only with access to the classics and print material, but in our modern day it allows them, via the SuperNet, to connect to the world, so I just want to push greater funding and support for libraries.

In terms of the changing roles and names of the ministry, I don't know whether the minister wakes up bolt upright in the middle of the night and says: "Oh, does that fall under Municipal Affairs, or is it Housing and Urban Affairs? Watershed: well, that's more Environment. Oh, regional planning: that falls under the Member for Foothills-Rocky View, Sustainable Resources." The point I'd like to make is that just as you can't separate Education from Children's Services, it must be very hard to define your ministry's role; therefore, the need for interministerial collaboration and co-operation is absolutely essential. As part of the education of Albertans in general some kind of a table of context or indication of what exactly falls in under the ministry's responsibilities would be very helpful. For example, somebody writes you a letter asking about sewers, and you might then say: no, I think that falls under Infrastructure. It would be really nice to have that listing so people would know where to go and eventually, hopefully, arrive at an answer.

The role that your ministry provides is also a bit of a co-ordinator between various other ministries. Municipalities don't exist in a vacuum. Yes, they may have a geographic line drawn around them

that says: here's the border. The effect that the surrounding environment has on the municipalities and the effect they have on their environment have to be taken into account.

4:50

Now, we were just talking about water and management and the number of sewage systems and so on throughout the province. One of the areas that I don't know whether your ministry touches on or not is the idea of 600,000 unregulated wells throughout the province, water wells I'm talking about. There is a concern there as to the responsibilities. One of the areas that I would strongly advise and I am hopeful that you would advocate for is the idea of the watershed protection. That obviously has to be done in conjunction with surrounding municipalities. We put forward the idea, because water is very much being rationed in the southern portion of the province, of establishing clear watershed management plans and, for example, protecting the areas surrounding the cities where they draw their water from. In the case of Calgary, that is dependant on the glacier-fed Bow and the snowmelt Elbow, protecting the watershed in the Kananaskis area is of absolute intense importance.

Also, sometimes I think that when you wake up in the morning or in the middle of the night, you wonder what hat you're going to wear today. Is it going to be a facilitator hat? Is it going to be a referee's hat? Is it going to be the robes of a judge? Because what the AUMA and the AAMD and C are all about is sometimes at cross-purposes. Therefore, the need for some form of regional advisory boards or some sort of facilitating co-operation is absolutely essential.

I'll have you answer those questions. Mr. Chair, I will look forward to those answers, and we'll do it within the 20 if at all possible.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to start out with, you know, the Massey that you talk about. Its shine is also quite appealing. It's that little tinge of red that I might just have a little problem with. That's maybe why I prefer green, but I do have a little of that red in my yard, and it does provide a bit of a blend, so I just wanted to let you know that.

I also want to say that your comments about the computer hookups, the connections to the world, the access to the world through SuperNet: that is exactly where I feel that some of those priorities should be, but I really need to know that that's the direction that funding needs to be, that libraries desire, and how that access should take place and how that funding should happen.

Your other comment about staying awake at night trying to figure out what responsibility we have as far as housing: you know, not anymore; it's a little clearer now after the last ministry change. We have availability through the website or through our offices. I will tell you that we are in charge of local government services, public safety, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, the Municipal Government Board, the Safety Codes Council, of course libraries and other issues that we've been talking about. There's a wide array of services that we provide.

In essence, we have 359 municipalities. Working with those municipalities it really does begin with communication, which leads to some collaboration, which leads to co-operation. To try and facilitate those independent views of, as you talked about, the roles of different associations, there sometimes are challenges because their interests are different. You know, it is important that there is some cross-purpose because those individuals, those municipalities are representing the needs, the interests, some of the challenges of their municipalities, but also we need to look at how we can work together to try to find solutions.

You talked about the 600,000 unregulated wells, and I can't answer the exact question right now. I know that it's under the Department of Environment. I do remember that a number of years ago, whether it was a licensing program or whether it was a registration program or exactly what it was, in rural Alberta we were asked to do a compilation of our water sources and our usages so that Environment did have some idea of the water usages that took place. I can't answer that right now, but I want to say to you that we are cognizant, as I said earlier, of water, and we need to be. Water is still the lifeline of this province. So when we work with municipalities and we talk about sewer systems and we talk about water sources and we talk about development and subdivisions, the preservation of water is critically important.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much. Again, just very briefly on the water question. I know that there are a number of summer villages that are located around lakes such as Ma-Me-O Beach, for example, and others around Pigeon Lake, around Sylvan, and so on that would love to hook up to the local sewer systems and the water systems, but they need specific funding for that infrastructure. That would be an appeal from my former shadow ministry to assist the smaller summer villages. Most of the people in these summer villages end up paying double the taxes because they pay in the area of the city they live in and then they pay again for the privilege of having a cottage in the area, but they don't necessarily get the service that they're paying for. So that would be something I would pass along.

Also, we can get caught up with modern electronic communications. The SuperNet is important, but the good old-fashioned book and magazine that children can sign out of the library and take home are extremely important. For a lot of children that electronic access is extremely limited based on their poverty, but that book or that magazine, the latest, is always available to them.

With regard to the facilitator/referee role, when I've talked to former AUMA president Bob Hawkesworth and then, sort of, talked to his counterpart, Don Johnson, of the AAMD and C, they have diametrically opposed views of regional advisory boards. So it must be a challenge to try and come somewhere in the middle and recognize the values of both. The AUMA would suggest that the smaller municipalities and MDs and so on block what the larger urban centres are trying to achieve. Then the AAMD and C might charge that the urban centres are bullying the smaller centres. But as we develop further – for example, the 10 upgraders that are being proposed or the large dump that's very close to Thorhild and the controversy associated with it or the potential, at least the investigation, of a nuclear facility in the Peace district – these are decisions that can't be left to a single municipality. They have to come to collaborative decisions because at the bottom of all these decisions, again, is water and its availability. We know that water is needed for nuclear. We know a tremendous amount of water is needed for bitumen upgrading and so on.

5:00

Then there's the proposal of a hundred kilometres of coal strip mining and the effects of decisions, again, on the water and the surrounding areas. We need the power. Coal is our least expensive form of power, but it carries with it extra expenses. If we gasify it, if we sequester the emissions, then it is a good system, and it is one that can be reclaimable. So all these things enter into the decision.

I'll look forward to the minister's attempted response to those areas, and then I'd like to talk about enveloping to municipalities.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, let me talk about summer villages a little bit. I need to talk about summer villages because the role of summer villages has really changed. When summer villages first started up, they were exactly that. They were cottages that were put beside lakes in the summer-time, where people spent time in the summer. Lots of times – and I remember the one near us – what happened is that in the wintertime they put a barricade in front. Now we have anywhere from 60 to 80 per cent that are being occupied year-round.

Those summer villages are not cottages that are 500 square foot bungalows or A-frames or anything like that. They are now \$2 million cabins. So when you talk about double taxation, we have personal income tax, that takes care of looking at an individual's income, but land taxation and building taxation or infrastructure taxation have no boundaries. In actuality, if you have, you pay. If you do have a \$2 million second residence, you're responsible for that payment. Those problems of summer villages – and I don't want to say problems – those challenges extend further because of exactly the discussion that you're talking about: water, sewer, emergency management services for a community that was not intended to be full time. It was incorporated as a part-time facility. We have our challenges there.

You talked about libraries and electronic access and the differences in the different uses that are necessary. I agree with you, again, that the times are changing, and we have to be able to look at what the priorities are. Where are we? I think I said at the beginning that I have three different areas that I look at. One of them is the traditional, the book. Right? The second one is: how do we utilize modern technology or the technology that we have right now to provide the best possible access for the widest range of usage? The third, of course, is the utilization of technology or whatever may be necessary for the future; you know, to look into the crystal ball and say: where do you think we need to be in the future? Nobody could predict 40 years ago where we would be in technology with computers, cellphones, and all of those if you can call them devices that have changed our lives forever. We need to be able to adapt as well.

You were talking about the municipalities and how they get along and how they work together and some of the challenges they have. I say to you that 95 per cent of the challenges of municipalities, whether it be rural or whether it be urban or whether it be urban-urban or rural-rural, are at the boundary. That's where the challenges are: the common areas, if you want to call it that. How do we identify and really acknowledge the needs of an urban area and the needs of a rural?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister may have covered off some of these points, but I'd like to spend a moment and ask some questions with regard to the capital region's integrated growth management plan. Specifically, the Capital Region Board was recently established. Can you please explain to us what the board plans to do with regard to ensuring that growth of the capital region is well managed?

Mr. Danyluk: To explain how to ensure that it's well managed? Well, first of all, the initiation of the board has been put in place because of the extensive development that is taking place in this area: unforeseen development, a predicted first industry, not

including secondary industry, of \$88 billion. Now, let me bring \$88 billion into perspective a little bit. The equalized assessment of Edmonton is \$81 billion. The equalized assessment of Calgary is \$174 billion. The equalized assessment of this province is \$517 billion. The estimated growth that is going to take place in the Edmonton region is \$88 billion on the first, primary industry. That is a mammoth growth not seen before. In the best interests of the municipalities, in the best interests of government, in the best interests of the people Albertans have told us: "Work this out together. It's important." Albertans have made that direction very clear.

I say to you that this board needs to look at the regional land use. It needs to look at intermunicipal transit. It needs to look at a geographic information system, look at the strategic planning for housing. The board will determine which projects will be cost shared regionally. I want to stress to you again that the board will determine which projects will be cost shared.

I again stress to you that we have put in place a chair that is going to oversee this board on an interim basis. We've asked this chair to make sure that the municipalities provide us a plan by March 31 of next year. It's not an easy task. It's not a long period of time, but we do not have a long period of time with the projected growth that's going to take place. We have put funding in place for that board to be able to access the resources that they need and, as I said before, for them to be able to develop a regional cost-sharing model and, really, to provide a regional evaluation framework. Again, I say to you that ultimately the most important is to develop a regional plan without losing their autonomy.

This is not an amalgamation even though some have said that that would be the best solution. It's not the direction that we're taking. The direction is very simply to say that there are big projects that are involved in the area. How can we work together to ensure that we have the best planning, the least amount of duplication, and the best opportunity to do it right?

5:10

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, \$88 billion is a huge amount of money by any measure. My favourite way to describe a billion dollars is to say that if you earned a dollar a minute, it would take you about 14 days to earn a million and about 32 years to earn a billion, to put that in perspective. I think we often deal with a lot of zeros here that sometimes boggle the mind and that we sometimes forget. The question to the minister then: given that we have an \$88 billion growth projection, what role does the ministry play in supporting this Capital Region Board?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Well, in ensuring that there is progress, ensuring that we do succeed, that the municipalities succeed in developing that plan, really, the mandate has been very clear: that 25 municipalities get together and work together in ensuring that there is a plan that's developed. There needs to be support for each other. The governance framework that is in place very much ensures that. One municipality cannot take a stand and expect that they're going to be able to pass it on their own. In fact, what we do have is a majority: 17 out of 25 municipalities have to be in favour as well as 75 per cent of the population. So in that way it does ensure that a municipality that wants to bring forward a project has people on their side, and I think it's very important.

You know, there's been a lot of discussion about the cost sharing, but we know that cost sharing takes place in major projects. The hon. Minister of Transportation has the responsibilities as part of the allocation of some of the major projects around the capital region, around the city of Calgary, in fact throughout this province to support some of the major infrastructure and transportation routes that are necessary. This will not change, but what will happen is that there will be a plan that is going to be developed by these municipalities, where we can work with this plan and ensure that it is the best direction of delivering services.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you. I'd just take a little bit of a variation away from talking about your governance with regard to the board. I'd like to talk for a few minutes about the structure of the board itself. We hear and have heard, I think, since day one of this whole integrated growth management plan a lot of concern from various municipalities about the voting model and about cost sharing and about revenue sharing and about zoning issues and sort of the interboundary issues. I can see where the whole process is coming from, and it makes very good sense to me, I must say, that we're doing this. Edmonton is one of the unique urban municipalities in Canada, certainly, and I think in North America in that we run three separate and independent transit systems within the confines of essentially one large municipal area. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: as some boards have expressed concern about the voting model and the cost sharing, how is the board going to deal with these things?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I want to say to you: I would hope easier than independently. What does take place is that if you have 25 municipalities operating independently, having no co-ordinated plan of where major routes should go, where accesses should be, where transit should be, working together and looking at the needs of the region, in my view, it would sometimes be easier. You mentioned transit. It is critical that we do have a plan, maybe having people from different areas of the region, making sure that there is a fast way of delivering workers to the place of work, making sure that there's accessibility to some of our best institutions in this region – and we do have some of the best education systems in Canada – and making sure that there is what I want to call a co-ordinated transportation system. You know, we cannot live using the automobile for all of our uses. There needs to be that co-ordinated focus on how we can better provide those accesses, the housing, and where we can provide some of the important priorities for Albertans, for the region.

I say to you that when you look at the governance model, the governance model and a lot of the direction that was brought forward came from a report, the Radke report. That was in consultation with all of the municipalities involved, not only the elected officials but the CAOs and their work in identifying needs, their work in identifying what they felt were priorities, and from that, we came forward with the four major directions. What is our role? Our role is really quite simple: to ensure that it happens.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to just talk for a minute about the municipal sustainability initiative if I may. Mr. Minister, as you know, Alberta's municipalities are facing many challenges. What changes were made to the municipal sustainability

initiative for 2008 and for subsequent years that will allow them to address some of their priorities?

Mr. Danyluk: That's a very good question. I want to say that when the municipal sustainability initiative first came forward, what happened is that we were very concerned about the duplication that was taking place. After 1995, with the disbandment of the regional commissions, municipalities found the ability to exercise their autonomy, and there was a lot of individuality coming forward, which there's nothing wrong with, but we also need to look at co-operative incentives. The focus, of course, in the first year was on having municipalities first of all communicate, to collaborate on how they could work together on a sharing formula that would bring municipalities together to have joint projects.

Now, as a philosophy that was a good direction, but what happened is that through our consultation process municipalities felt that it was important for them to have the autonomy, for them to choose what they felt was the priority of their municipality and of their area. Through discussions with municipalities there was one point that came forward that was very clear: if you give us the security, if you give us the sustainability, if you give us the funds for predictability, we will look to find those partners, and we will look at ways to work together because we have some security of funding into the future. I want to say to you that it is working. There is communication and there is collaboration on how the discussion takes place. More importantly, we see numerous examples over and over of how municipalities are getting together and, more than just talking, are looking at co-operative measures of sharing systems, of sharing resources, of sharing services. I think that the focus of the funding has been achieved in that way.

5:20

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A supplemental question, Mr. Minister. I agree with you. I'm all about autonomy as well, but I'm not really all that much in favour of blank cheques. What I'd like to know is: how do we ensure that the provincial MSI monies that we provided the municipalities are in fact used for their intended purposes?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Well, in fact, my mandate as a minister is to ensure that the funding that is allocated to municipalities is used exactly for those purposes. There are guidelines that are in place that give reference to what municipalities are able to use their funding for in capital, whether it be roads or whether it be infrastructure or water and sewer or recreation facilities or libraries, as mentioned earlier. But it's a direction that is going to benefit the community, that is going to benefit their municipality, that is going to serve the municipality as a whole.

The operating part of the funding is to ensure that municipalities have funding for planning. That was one of the comments that came out of the meetings: "It's very good for you to ask us to plan together, but we have a hard time even supporting the budgets that we have in place right now. You're asking us to put money in for planning." That's one of the key areas when we talk about operating, that there is money for planning if a municipality feels fit to use it, that there's funding to support volunteers, not-for-profits in your community, to support those individual groups to help maintain what they're doing, to help maintain that volunteerism, which is really very much the heartbeat of what Alberta is about.

Alberta is about volunteers. I don't have the stats in front of me, but they are incredible. I know the hon. minister of employment, immigration, and industry in his previous portfolio had given me those figures, and I think it's in the neighbourhood of \$9 billion a year that volunteers contribute to this province. When a little bit of support can help them, those municipalities have that opportunity. Also, that operating funding can be used if there are administrative costs for municipalities that want to work together in that co-operative and collaborative way.

Is there accountability? Yes, there is accountability at the end. It's not a blank cheque. You have to propose what you're spending the money on, and then you have to account that that's where that money was spent. The guidelines are fairly open to give those municipalities that autonomy. That is what they felt was necessary and that this government has felt is necessary as well because it does give them that opportunity to make choices.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you. One final question, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I agree with you completely on the subject of nongovernment organizations. I think, very clearly and proven well over time, that the biggest bang for the buck we can get, we get via that way. While I hear that, the concerns that I hear as a representative of constituents in the city of Edmonton are concerns by the city of Edmonton regarding their share of MSI funding. I have a really simple question . . .

The Deputy Chair: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, but the time allotted for consideration of this department's estimates has expired. I now invite the officials to leave the Assembly.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the fact that we had a great conversation – I hope the people on that side could hear well; I guarantee you that those of us on this side heard just fine the remarks of the minister – I would move that the committee now rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions for the Department of Municipal Affairs 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: On the report presented by the hon. Member for Red Deer-South, does the Assembly concur?

Hon. Members: Concur.

The Acting Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly now stand adjourned until 7:30 this evening, at which time we will return in Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:29 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Tuesday afternoon, May 20, 2008

Introduction of Visitors	785
Introduction of Guests	785
Members' Statements	
Lethbridge College	786
Earthquake in Sichuan Province, China	787
Recognizing Immigrant Success and Excellence	795
Wildfires in Thorhild County	796
Aboriginal Children's Memorial Round Dance	796
Myanmar Relief Effort	796
Oral Question Period	
Health System Governance	787
Health Care Privatization	787
Game Ranching Industry	788
Legal Aid	788, 792, 794
Library Services	788
Water Ecosystem Stewardship	789
Vehicle Emissions	789
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	790
Unruly Behaviour in Parks and Protected Areas	790
Off-highway Vehicle Use in Parks and Protected Areas	791
Women's Shelters	791
Agricultural Fertilizers and Chemicals	792
Wildfires in Thorhild County	793, 795
Long-term Care	793
Home-care Programs for Seniors	793
Energy Efficiency of Government Vehicles	794
Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund	795
Presenting Petitions	796
Tabling Returns and Reports	797
Tablings to the Clerk	797
Committee of Supply	
Main Estimates 2008-09	
Municipal Affairs	797

STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Rogers

Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski

Amery
Blakeman

DeLong
Kang

McQueen
Notley

Olson

Standing Committee on Community Services

Chair: Mr. Rodney

Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr

Benito
Bhardwaj
Chase

Doerksen
Johnson

Johnston
Lukaszuk

Notley
Sarich

Standing Committee on Health

Chair: Mr. Horne

Deputy Chair: Ms Pastoor

Dallas
Denis
Fawcett

Notley
Olson

Quest
Sherman

Swann
Vandermeer

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Prins

Deputy Chair: Mr. McFarland

Blakeman
Campbell
Horne

Lund
MacDonald

Marz
Mitzel

Notley
Webber

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Kowalski

Deputy Chair: Mr. Oberle

Elniski
Hehr
Leskiw

Mason
Rodney

Snelgrove
Taylor

VanderBurg
Weadick

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Dr. Brown

Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw

Allred
Amery
Anderson
Benito
Boutilier

Calahasen
Campbell
Doerksen
Elniski
Fawcett

Forsyth
Jacobs
MacDonald
McQueen
Olson

Quest
Sandhu
Sarich
Swann

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Prins

Deputy Chair: Mr. Hancock

Bhardwaj
Boutilier
Calahasen
Doerksen
Griffiths

Johnson
Leskiw
Liepert
Marz
Mitzel

Notley
Oberle
Pastoor
Rogers
Stevens

Taylor
Vandermeer
Weadick
Zwozdesky

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. MacDonald

Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Benito
Bhardwaj
Chase
Dallas

Denis
Drysdale
Fawcett
Griffiths

Jacobs
Johnson
Kang
Mason

Quest
Vandermeer
Woo-Paw

Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services

Chair: Mr. VanderBurg

Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang

Anderson
Brown
Calahasen

Cao
Jacobs

MacDonald
Notley

Sandhu
Woo-Paw

Standing Committee on Resources and Environment

Chair: Mr. Prins

Deputy Chair: Dr. Swann

Berger
Boutilier
Drysdale

Griffiths
Hehr

Mason
McQueen

Oberle
Webber

Standing Committee on the Economy

Chair: Mr. Allred

Deputy Chair: Mr. Taylor

Amery
Bhullar
Blakeman

Campbell
Marz

Mason
McFarland

Weadick
Xiao

If your address is incorrect, please clip on the dotted line, make any changes, and return to the address listed below. To facilitate the update, please attach the last mailing label along with your account number.

Subscriptions
Legislative Assembly Office
1001 Legislature Annex
9718 - 107 Street
EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4

.....

Last mailing label:

Account # _____

New information:

Name _____

Address _____

.....

Subscription information:

Annual subscriptions to the paper copy of *Alberta Hansard* (including annual index) are \$127.50 including GST if mailed once a week or \$94.92 including GST if picked up at the subscription address below or if mailed through the provincial government interdepartmental mail system. Bound volumes are \$121.70 including GST if mailed. Cheques should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Price per issue is \$0.75 including GST.

On-line access to *Alberta Hansard* is available through the Internet at www.assembly.ab.ca

Address subscription inquiries to Subscriptions, Legislative Assembly Office, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 427-1302.

Address other inquiries to Managing Editor, *Alberta Hansard*, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 427-1875.

