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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

Second Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 16, 2009

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Let us pray. Guide us so that we may use the privilege given us as elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Give us the strength to labour diligently and the courage to think and to speak with clarity, conviction, and without prejudice or pride. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Speaker, the MLA for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, I would like to introduce to you and through you 19 visitors who are registered with the Vista Virtual school, which offers grades 1 to 12 courses to Alberta residents in partnership with the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, located in Barrhead. The visiting students reside in the Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock constituency as well as Edmonton-Rutherford, Bonnyville-Cold Lake, Calgary-North West, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Drayton Valley-Calmar, and Edmonton-McClung. They are accompanied this afternoon by teachers Mrs. Nadine Ruhl, Mrs. Isabel Rempel, Mr. Gary Simpson and parent helpers Tracy Ekelund, Kurt Stenberg, Audrey Karperien, Kim Van Amsterdam, Lesley Miciak, Willy Brouwer, Valerie Sorensen. I believe they are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you some gentlemen who during the warm summer season coming up would all be good to know. With us today we have some gentlemen from the brewing industry in Alberta. We have Bryan Cox from Molson's, Jeff Ryan with Labatt's, Peter Kains from Sleeman, and Greg D'Avignon from Canada's National Brewers. I think it would behoove the Assembly to give these gentlemen the warm, traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to welcome a wonderful group of 40 visitors from Calmar elementary school in my constituency of Drayton Valley-Calmar. These 36 bright grade 6 students along with parent helpers and their teachers, Mrs. Jeanette Wilson and Mrs. Angie Podgurny, have toured our Legislature and learned a great deal about our building and our provincial government. I would now ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mr. Knight: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure for me this afternoon to introduce to you and through you some members of my family. I believe this is also slightly unusual because, firstly, I have in the Assembly today four generations of strong Alberta women: my wife, Diana Knight, my daughter

Shawna Iggulden, my granddaughter Noelani, and my great-granddaughter Evangelina. They are accompanied by my son-in-law Todd Iggulden, my granddaughter Desera, my grandson Hayden, and my granddaughter Falyn. I would ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce the Glenmore Christian Academy grade 9 band, with whom I had a chance to visit before question period. Their leader is Mr. Dan Bartholomew-Poyser, and their volunteers today are Dawn Stinson and Rebekah Robertson. The band is on a four-day tour of Edmonton and area, performing modern and classical pieces at various schools and balls. Their concerts include trumpet solos, percussion features, and Canada's youngest and newest male vocal quartet, Il Quattro. They're very pleased to be at the Legislature today, and I'm very pleased that they're here as well. I'll ask them now to stand and accept the warm wishes of everyone in this Assembly.

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

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 20 international students and five instructors from Jasper Place high school's English language learner program. The challenges of immigrating to a new country are many, especially if you don't speak the local languages. At Jasper Place high school ELL students are given individual attention and encouragement to become effective communicators by developing competency in their speaking, reading, writing, listening, and viewing skills. I could have used this program when I first came to this country. My guests will be joining us shortly in the members' gallery, and I would ask that we give them the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

Mr. Blackett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise today to introduce the family and close friends of Mr. Andy Bryant, former president of Horse Racing Alberta, a great friend and Albertan who passed away earlier this year. Joining us today and seated in the members' gallery are Terrie Hudon, Andy's wife; their two children, Sean and Tessa Bryant, along with Andy's parents, Vic and Beth Bryant; Terrie's parents, Larry and Shelagh Hudon; also close family friends Sean Bryant, Tom Hudon, Sue Roberge, Dan Hudon, Lana Hudon, Matthew Hudon, Margot Cooke, Doug Cooke, Candi Fonteyne, Mary Ann Houghton, Jason Houghton, Elaine Williams Allin, and David Allin. I had the privilege of knowing Andy for over 23 years, and I know I speak for my colleagues in government when I say he was a passionate man and one dedicated to making our world a better place. I'd like the family and friends to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two people from the beautiful riding of Calgary-Hays, Tyler and Shanna Groeneveld. Tyler, of course, is the son of our minister of agriculture. I believe they're up in the Speaker's gallery. I'd like you to give them the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Prins: Well, thank you. I'm honoured as well to introduce to you and through you to all members two members of my family: first of all, my wife, Pauline Prins, and then my son Dr. Mark Prins. Mark received his bachelor of science in environmental studies at the King's University College in 2001. He then studied nursing in Calgary for a year and then moved on to the medical program. He graduated from the U of C medical school in 2006, and I think, Mr. Speaker, you actually spoke at his graduation, so you might remember that. He finished his residency in rural medicine in Chilliwack in 2008. He's now doing locums at various practices around B.C. Later this month he'll be moving to Iqaluit and Kugluktuk for some locums this summer. Mr. Speaker, they're seated in your gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Vandermeer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly Pam Cholak. Pam is no stranger to this Legislature as she has worked in many different offices, so many, in fact, that if I were to tell them all to you, it would be more like a member's statement, and I would not do that. I would ask Pam to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am just delighted to welcome to the Assembly and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Chamber nine individuals who are joining us in the public gallery from the Adult Transition Learning Centre. Today we have joining us Mark McGinnis, Michelle Weeks, Mike Kemp, Tim Demont, Valary Howard, Martin Wilson, Robbie Auger, and Aimee Anhill. They are accompanied by their teacher and group leader, Rachel Posch. I would ask them all to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly. Thank you for coming.

1:40

Members' Statements

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

Andy Bryant

Mr. Webber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in remembrance of Mr. Andy Bryant, a good friend and champion of Alberta's horse-racing industry, who lost a courageous battle with cancer earlier this year. He was 45 years old. Andy was a fervent supporter of horse racing in our province, having served as president and CEO of Horse Racing Alberta since its inception in 2002.

Although he was born in Montreal, Andy Bryant was a proud Albertan. He began his career as a Progressive Conservative Party of Canada youth volunteer and later worked as executive assistant to Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski in the early 1990s. Andy then returned home to Alberta to assist nonprofit and aboriginal groups in obtaining government funding to support their important programs and services. It was soon after that Andy's passion for horse racing began to take shape. Andy served in several management positions within the horse-racing industry, commencing with the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association and then with the

Alberta Racing Corporation, which eventually became Horse Racing Alberta. He was a driving force and key proponent of the massive entertainment complex, supermall, and racetrack being built near Balzac along the QE II, just north of Calgary. I think of him each time I drive by that facility, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Alberta government I want to recognize and pay tribute to a passionate and dedicated Albertan who worked tirelessly to not only support horse racing in our province but to make this world a better place. I know that his legacy will live on through his beautiful family and the many friends that he made along the way. God bless you, Andy.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Health System Restructuring

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before becoming Premier, the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville was a member of the so-called Deep Six, a group of right-wing Tories whose job was to slay the Progressive Conservative debt as fast as possible regardless of the human cost. The Deep Six accomplished their goal by blowing up hospitals, driving health care professionals out of Alberta, and letting the province's infrastructure fall into ruin.

History is repeating itself as this government embarks on a campaign to delist public health care services, starting with those that directly affect the most vulnerable or the most afflicted Albertans. The Premier's pharmaceutical strategy places a huge financial burden on seniors, seniors who have already seen their retirement savings decimated by the stock market crash and who are scrambling to pay their monthly bills and put food on the table, never mind paying for expensive prescription drugs. I can tell the Premier what this strategy will achieve: seniors will impoverish themselves paying for these drugs, or they'll do without and wind up in hospital at great taxpayer expense, far more than the pharmaceutical plan will save. This isn't a strategy. It's simple, short-sighted foolishness.

During the election the Premier promised hundreds of new long-term care beds for Alberta. That promise has been broken, and now seniors are being warehoused in acute-care beds, again costing the public purse more money than if the Premier had simply kept his promise.

This administration has made a complete mess of our public health care system. They've spent millions of dollars on restructuring and public relations while sick children are being treated in tents because our emergency rooms are overflowing. This administration doesn't value public health care. They are preparing Albertans for a move toward more and more for-profit health care. Only that can explain this administration's colossal mismanagement of one of our most important public institutions, public health care.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

Inner-city Community Challenges

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about the plight of our rapidly changing urban inner-city communities, particularly those in Calgary-North Hill. Recently I've been working with several different communities in my constituency on a couple of issues that have been receiving significant attention, the operation of a youth group home in the community of Collingwood and the operation of a methadone clinic impacting the communities of Greenview and Highland Park.

Resolution to both of these issues have been achieved from the perspective of the community. However, members of these communities have some larger questions about the future livability of their neighbourhoods. They have concerns about the impact of urbanization and densification that we've seen over the last decade. These concerns are exacerbated by the new land-use framework being brought forward and by the gradual shift from a resource- to a knowledge-based economy. Many of these communities do not oppose this direction. In fact, they want to embrace it but only in a manner where they can take ownership of change in their own communities.

The two situations that I have mentioned are merely an example of the challenges that we are going to face in the future. This is not a not in my backyard issue. It is bigger than that, Mr. Speaker. If we want greater density of our inner cities, we need to make these communities livable. However, our current attitudes and processes are driving people and families out of these communities, not attracting them.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development speak eloquently many times about the need for a new land-use framework in this province, that our recent economic and population growth has created a situation where the status quo approach is not going to serve us well moving forward. This is true for the future of our inner-city communities.

The complexity of issues from the siting of social services, including treatment facilities, group homes, and affordable housing, to the need to upgrade and enhance the capacity of public infrastructure in these communities is evident by the number of parties, authorities, and decision-making bodies involved. For example, in the two situations that I have mentioned, there were up to 12 entities, organizations, and decision-making bodies involved either directly or indirectly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Westend Seniors Activity Centre

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edmonton Self Starters Organization was established in 1978 under the direction of a small group of citizens led by well-known Edmonton musician Harry Farmer and members of the west end Rotary Club. Thanks to the tireless efforts of many volunteers inspired and led by executive director Janice Monfries in 2005 the organization moved to a new facility and changed their name to the Westend Seniors Activity Centre.

The activity centre is a busy and active place for seniors to come together for laughter, companionship, and learning. Their outreach program extends into the community to bring the invisible senior out of isolation from their homes and into an atmosphere of socializing and education. They have Alzheimer's programs. They have a workshop. They have a sewing club. They have a library club. Mr. Speaker, when I visited this activity centre, it looked like senior high to me.

Along with participation in the programs the centre's members are encouraged to become active volunteers. Because of these healthy lifestyle changes the number of seniors attending local emergency hospitals and clinics is greatly reduced as their active lifestyles allow them to live independently in their own homes and enjoy the golden years of their lives.

The Westend Seniors Activity Centre is now in the process of completing the basement area of the already renovated facility to

offer carpet curling and other programs. In addition, in order to help cover the related costs, they are holding a fundraising event this Saturday, April 18, entitled the Silver Hair Gala event. Tickets are still available. I would encourage all hon. members to show their support by attending or sponsoring a guest. I have my tickets in my hot little hand.

Mr. Speaker, thank you so much.

Oral Question Period

The Deputy Speaker: First question of the Official Opposition. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Health Care Facilities Capital Projects

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's uncertainty in rural Alberta about both services and the status of health care facilities. These have been promised and are now under review. To the Premier. The Barrhead health care centre, Didsbury long-term care facility, Lacombe continuing care centre, and Fort McMurray long-term care facility have all been deferred pending an Alberta Health Services review and have no funding dedicated to them in the three-year capital plan. When will these communities know what's going to happen to these?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the Health Services Board is reviewing the projects, looking at the scope of the projects, how they fit into a longer term plan for not only seniors' care but providing acute care and emergency services in rural Alberta. They're evaluating. They'll bring the plan forward to the minister. In a lot of the facilities the money that was dedicated by the province is in place. They're just looking at the scope of the project. I also know that given some of the more recent tenders coming in, many of the costs are coming down considerably from the estimated cost, so there'll be further savings on the construction side.

1:50

Dr. Swann: Will the Premier explain why the Fort Saskatchewan health centre in the Premier's riding is going full steam ahead with \$46 million in funding while Barrhead, Didsbury, Lacombe, and Fort McMurray are in a hold pattern?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, because, I guess, the board decided to go with the plan for the Capital region about, I think, three years ago. I believe the foundation is in place, and the building is being constructed. You know, it's part of the overall capital plan, and it was there for the last, I think, five years.

Dr. Swann: In High Prairie, Medicine Hat, Strathmore, Strathcona, and Grande Prairie the scope of their projects is under review. When will these communities know the results?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, they will know soon. I know with respect to the Grande Prairie facility there's \$250 million that's in place, and the Health Services Board is going to be reviewing the project.

Some of these projects – and the Minister of Infrastructure can give more detail – were asked to implement the LEED program, which is, you know, high energy efficiency, saving long-term dollars. It has really increased the initial cost of the facility. But now that the economy has slowed down, I think we're going to get some better tender prices and incorporate a lot of the LEED standards into the construction of our facilities.

The Deputy Speaker: Second question of the Official Opposition. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Accountability for Health Care System Decisions

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last two days Albertans have heard conflicting stories from the administration. First, we hear that accountability for health decisions is with the minister of health, then accountability is with the Tory caucus and the Premier, and now we hear that accountability will be with the Alberta Health Services Board. To the Premier: where does the buck stop with decisions to delist health services? Albertans need to know.

Mr. Stelmach: All policy decisions in the end are made by government. We will receive advice from the Alberta Health Services Board. The minister will be working with health care professionals. This is in keeping with the plan that we rolled out going into the campaign, when we said that we want to bring about efficiencies and effectiveness in the service by working with health care providers coming to the table, working together so that not only can we improve access but we can also sustain the system for this generation and the generation after that.

Dr. Swann: The preamble to Bill 32, Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act, states: "Ministers of the Crown are accountable to the public for the activities and performance of public agencies in their ministries." When the minister of health passes the buck, he fails to do his job. Will the Premier make very clear to the minister of health that it is this minister's responsibility for the failure of Alberta's health care system?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, you know, the other day we had four children in the Assembly. They spent a day touring the Legislature. They spent time with the hon. Speaker, had lunch with the Speaker. They spent time with me in the office. The reason I'm bringing that forward is that we constantly hear from the opposition that it is a failing health care system. Well, we have four youth that have seen phenomenal advances in technology, in drug therapy who are overcoming the huge challenges of cancer. I didn't hear once from any one of the four children that were in the gallery saying that our system is failing them.

Dr. Swann: Yesterday the minister did not answer my question regarding the tabling of the 40 services being considered for delisting. To the Premier: will the Premier table this list of 40 services being considered for delisting?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. Stelmach: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the minister said and I reiterated to the media was that there were a number of programs and grants that the minister had under the ministry of health, and there was some duplication of services amongst the nine regional health authorities. So what he's done is that he's moved what was a department expenditure, and he's given it to Alberta Health Services Board, and they will have a look at what was given to them in terms of the grants programs. They'll be making that recommendation to the minister, and then the minister will come forward and make those recommendations to cabinet, and we'll be making the decision in the end.

The Deputy Speaker: Third question of the Official Opposition. The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Provincial Sales Tax

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government already has plans to slash public health services, to raise taxes apparently, to drain the sustainability fund, and this, according to the budget, is supposed to be the year of economic recovery. The finance minister has claimed that there won't be a provincial sales tax, but one thing we've learned yet again is you can't trust anything this government tells you as these so-called fiscal hawks have quickly become fiscal chickens. To the Premier: can the Premier explain why he's even thinking about making Albertans pay for his government's mismanagement with increased taxes and cuts to the public health care system?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the only group that's talking about changes and maybe delisting of services and some American two-tier health care system and raising taxes are the Liberals and the NDs. You have not heard me at all talk about any kind of a sales tax. [interjections] I know. Listening to the truth is hard for them. But, you know, I have not at all said that we're going to go to any kind of a provincial sales tax. In fact, that will not happen. The other is that the only area that we raised taxes was on cigarettes and on liquor. We are committed, though, to the billion dollar tax reduction in eliminating health care premiums. That's over a billion dollars that's in the pockets of Albertans.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still waiting to hear the truth, actually.

Can the Premier explain how it is that Alberta spends 23 per cent more than the national average, yet Albertans are being told to open their wallets and pay more taxes? This just shows how this government is utterly flawed in its fiscal management.

Mr. Stelmach: As I said before, the only group that's talking about raising taxes is the Liberals. The hon. member was following the minister of finance in Calgary and talking to media. He says: "Oh, yeah. I think they've got this plan. They're going to be raising taxes." We're not talking about raising taxes, but the Liberals are. I guess that if you want to raise taxes, if you want to introduce a sales tax, get up in the House and say that. But I'll tell you one thing that the government did that was very wise because you never know when they'll sneak up on you. Albertans – Albertans – will make the decision whether there is a sales tax because there is a law on the books that says that it will have to go to a provincial referendum. I know what the results will be. They're going to tell the Liberals: no to your sales tax.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I guess the finance minister and the health minister are still sneaking up on the Premier because the finance minister has said that when it comes to raising taxes, everything is on the table, and the health minister has talked about delisting services.

To the Premier my final question: can he reveal to the House today the date of the referendum on a sales tax?

Mr. Stelmach: If the hon. member wants to bring forward a motion in the House, then do so. But I can tell you about one thing that this Conservative government will not do but something that the former Liberal government did under Jean Chrétien. Remember, they had

the red book? They were coming around all over Alberta saying: "We are getting rid of the GST. It's done." Guess what? The day he was elected: "Oh. Did I say I was going to get rid of it? No. I think we're going to stay with the GST." So that kind of stuff, I tell you, you're not going to hear from this government. You will hear from them. They're already talking about it.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. leader of the third party.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I can't let that little bit of revisionist history slip by. It was the Tory government of Brian Mulroney that brought in the GST, the Tory government.

Health Care Spending

Mr. Mason: In a recent meeting with the editorial board of a Calgary newspaper the health minister warned Albertans that public health care could only be expected to cover, quote, the necessary essentials. The minister suggested that if we had what he calls a clear policy 10 or 15 years ago, we might not be covering hip replacement surgery today. My question is to the Premier. Do you agree with your health minister that hip replacement surgery is not a necessary procedure?

2:00

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the minister had an interview earlier today on radio, and he will of course refer to the House in terms of what he has said.

I do want to, though, before he gets too excited – yes, the GST was put in by our former federal Conservative government. But you know what? They did not go to an election and say: we are going to get rid of it. It was the Liberal Party under the leadership of Jean Chrétien that said they were going to get rid of it, and then once they were elected, they did not deliver on their commitment.

Mr. Mason: The Premier would rather talk about ancient history than this crisis in our health care system.

In the last 15 years more than 25,000 Albertans have had hip replacement surgery. The cost of this surgery runs about \$20,000 a hip. Those who can't afford the price face a future of limited mobility and pain. To the Premier: given the attitude of this government towards such procedures, what other procedures are you considering delisting which could prevent our seniors from living out their lives crippled and in pain?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to answer that question, because, you know, it doesn't matter how old one gets; you learn. I learned a lesson this week: don't use examples, because when you use an example, these guys will blow it all out of proportion. All I said at the time was that we don't know what would have been covered under the Canada Health Act if we had this kind of an expert panel. Quite frankly, it is our intention to continue to cover what is under the Canada Health Act. If this hon. member wants to state in this House anything that we have done that's outside the Canada Health Act, then stand up and say so.

Mr. Mason: Wow. The Artful Dodger, Mr. Speaker.

The finance minister has suggested that \$2 billion of cuts need to be found in next year's budget. The health minister, whose budget is half the total of the provincial budget, has said that you won't find \$2 billion in the Department of Sustainable Resource Development. In other words, the lion's share of the cuts will have to come from Alberta health. I want to ask the Premier: is his health minister

suggesting that this government will cut up to a billion dollars in health spending next year?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, again, playing on words. All I can say is that we have a number of goals in mind. Certainly, one is to protect the principles of the Canada Health Act and make sure that it's publicly funded, and one that's very, very important is to ensure that we sustain the system for the next generation. All provincial governments and the federal government are struggling with this issue. I just reach out to all Canadians, all Albertans, all provincial governments. Let's work on this together. We've started a good process with British Columbia and Saskatchewan in terms of looking at larger drug purchases, perhaps consolidating some treatments, just various ways of trying to improve access, improve efficiency, and also sustain the system for the future dollars.

Before I do sit down, Mr. Speaker, I just want to inform the House, to end this debate, that the current Conservative government has dropped the GST by 2 points.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Library Services

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier made an important announcement about a new vision for public libraries in Alberta. My first question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Can the minister please explain what the new vision for public libraries is?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a great day to be an Albertan, especially if you love libraries. This new focus will create seamless access to resources for all Albertans. This new vision will remove barriers and increase access to libraries for all Albertans through collaboration, innovation, and advances in technology. The vision will benefit Albertans in communities where they live, where they work, and where they read.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question to the same minister: does the new vision for libraries come with new funding?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is proudly investing \$32 million in public libraries this year. This is a \$9 million increase in funding, 39 per cent: \$7 million going to local libraries and regional systems, \$2 million to invest in technology and to implement the new vision. Very importantly, our commitment is to support libraries for years to come.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental is to the Minister of Education. One of the recommendations from the library report talks about colocation and student support. How can the education system under your leadership respond to their recommendations?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been very actively encouraging our school boards to work with other commu-

nity organizations to co-locate, to bring services together, and to provide support for students because schools ought to be a hub in the community as libraries are. Schools and libraries also are very important with respect to literacy. There's a great opportunity for colocation. I think we should be considering student ID cards doubling as library cards, for example. There are many different ways that we can operate together to make sure that libraries serve communities 12 months of the year and schools serve communities 12 months of the year.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, whether he likes it or not, the Minister of Health and Wellness is responsible for the \$217 million Mazankowski Heart Institute. Yesterday when asked about the year-long delay in opening the facility, the minister said that everything from the opening ceremonies to problems with construction management is someone else's fault, but the minister is paying the bills, and he's using Albertans' money. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: will the minister admit that there are serious problems at the Mazankowski that are his responsibility?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, the Mazankowski Heart Institute is a world-class facility that's going to put this province on the map for many years to come. If this particular member is suggesting that he'd like it to be removed from his constituency, I think there are about 72 others around here who would gladly take the Mazankowski Heart Institute.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Taft: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. Construction of the Mazankowski was announced six years ago this week. It's been plagued with problems ranging from patient room design to problems with the elevators to the helipad. Some reports say it could now be next year before it opens. Again to the Minister of Health and Wellness: will he make public a detailed list of the commissioning problems that have led to the delay so that the public will know what it's paying for?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I can put this member's worries to rest. I'm told by Alberta Health Services that they expect to have the Mazankowski centre starting to take patients next month.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, the lead architect and engineer for the Mazankowski is Stantec. The CEO of Stantec sits on the Alberta Health Services Board, that is building the Maz. In other words, Stantec is intimately involved as both client and contractor in a case with serious performance problems and \$217 million at stake. Anywhere else this would be disallowed as a conflict of interest. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: for the sake of everyone involved, including Stantec, will the minister ask the CEO of Stantec to step down from Alberta Health Services Board?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, we go back to what we were dealing with earlier in the session. You know, this group stands here and smears people's reputations, and then they wonder why nobody votes for them. I mean, it's unbelievable.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

2:10

Library Services

(continued)

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I was certainly very happy to hear the announcement today on increased funding for libraries. This certainly is good news. Indeed, every day is a great day to be an Albertan. Can the minister tell us: how will the new vision ensure that seamless access is achieved between libraries?

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that Albertans do have access to information, resources, and services no matter where they live in Alberta. This could include a single library card, video conferencing, access to the Internet throughout Alberta, access to an electronic database, a province-wide technology plan. This vision is a result of hundreds of stakeholders who shared their ideas and their opinions to the MLA committee that went around this province to get the views of Albertans, and we're respecting those views.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. With greater collaboration and integration among Alberta's public libraries will we see information in Alberta's university and college libraries become available to more Albertans?

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, today is a great day to be an Albertan, as is any other day in the year. With resources like eCampus, Athabasca University, the Lois Hole digital library, the Taylor Family Digital Library, we provide resources to over 35 public postsecondary institutions. We look forward to this vision and being able to tie those institutions together with the libraries and, hopefully, one day having access for every Albertan across the province. Alberta is a leader in digital resourcing for our students.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the Minister of Service Alberta. How many libraries in the province are currently connected to the SuperNet, and what are you doing to connect even more?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are currently more than 270 libraries connected to and using the SuperNet. In fact, there are currently at least 30 of those that are using video conferencing services on a regular basis via the SuperNet. This is great news as well. In the months ahead Service Alberta officials will be working very closely with Municipal Affairs to look for ways to get individuals to have even more access to information at libraries across Alberta.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mental Health Funding

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is to vocalize the concerns of Albertans who are unable to stand in this House and speak for themselves. We've given them the chance to do that by asking questions on their behalf. To the minister of health: Caroline from Calgary points out that the new hospital in south Calgary was initially supposed to have an entire floor dedicated to mental illness, yet it was scrapped. Many patients in crisis are put on a year-long waiting list for treatment, and a large proportion of our homeless population suffers from mental illness. Why isn't the government prepared to dedicate serious resources to dealing with mental illness?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, this government takes this issue very seriously. One of the things that was in our budget was additional money for addictions, and it's part of the safe communities initiative. Just to correct the member, because this is what we seem to have to do all the time, the new south Calgary hospital is going to have a significant number of beds to deal with mental illness.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. A significantly reduced number of beds. This government's lack of support for mental health services is appalling, as can be seen with the minister of health's statement this past Tuesday that he would be "cancelling some programs around youth suicide prevention." Can the minister explain how he can so flippantly dismiss a funding initiative involving serious mental health problems with Alberta's youth?

Mr. Liepert: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, what has happened as a result of our budget – and I can go through this again. There are a number of programs that were either duplicative in nature or that should more appropriately be delivered by Alberta Health Services. It is those programs that we have transferred to Alberta Health Services to assess in the province-wide health delivery system, which ones need to continue to be funded and which shouldn't. Again, another example of the opposition taking this issue and blowing it completely out of proportion.

Mr. Chase: Speaking of blowing, the General hospital comes to mind.

The widespread problem of mental illness and the costs associated with it because of it being marginalized by this government will not go away just because you ignore it. Does this government not understand that by adequately supporting mental health, this government would effectively reduce the overall burden of costs on the health care system?

Mr. Liepert: Well, if the member would have been paying attention for the past year, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that he would have noticed is that we have done something that government has not done in a number of years: we brought forward a children's mental health strategy. Even though this member may believe that mental health just sort of creeps up in later years of life, that's not correct. If we can address mental health issues at early ages, we can get away from some of the issues that we've had to deal with in safe communities.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Library Services

(continued)

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods has many newcomers and job seekers in today's economy. My first question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. How can the government support the new vision for libraries, in particular for the newcomers and job seekers in today's economy?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the funding and vision for libraries will help us expand our existing services to Albertans on careers and training so they can get back to work. We already have a number of partnerships with Calgary public libraries and Bow Valley College, where we use the library for career and employment information services. We hope to do more partnerships in the future. In addition, we know that we can make better use of libraries to promote English as a second language classes and provide information on supplement supports for newcomers and their families.

Mr. Benito: Mr. Speaker, the report calls for seamless access to library services for all Albertans, including aboriginals on reserves and on settlements. My first supplemental question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Relations. What programs are you doing to improve access to library services for First Nations and Métis people in Alberta?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

Mr. Zwodzesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've said from the outset that libraries and education in general are my number one priority, so I'm really pleased with this huge increase for public library funding because I was quite surprised to see that we only have one such library on reserve or on settlement that I can actually proudly point to. We need more, obviously. If we're going to increase literacy rates and high school completion rates and educational attainment levels in general for aboriginal people, this is a great place and a great way to start. I'm working with our two ministers of education, with the federal minister, and with aboriginal leaders to help implement this recommendation, and we're going to get it done.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental question is to the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. Over the last year you've talked about access to arts and culture for all Albertans. Is this just lip service, or are there ways that this new framework for libraries can help move this forward?

Mr. Blackett: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's more than just lip service. Libraries along with our postsecondary education facilities and our K to 12 institutions are a vital part of our cultural policy and its development and delivery. I'd like to see more Albertans using libraries to access our cultural institutions regardless of where they live through the broadband links, the SuperNet. Many of our historic sites, like the Royal Tyrrell Museum, have an incredible amount of online programming that libraries can benefit from. My department has been working with the libraries to promote Alberta Arts Days this coming September.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

2:20 Legislature Grounds Redevelopment

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The government is again considering plans to redo the Legislature Grounds. As the local MLA I've not been kept in the loop, so I'm hoping that the Minister of Infrastructure can answer some of the questions that have been brought to me. To the Minister of Infrastructure: what is the budget and the timeline of this project?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have undertaken a study to see what possibilities exist for the grounds. I'd like to thank the hon. member because the hon. member was involved in the committee work that initially was undertaken to take a look at it. We have an opportunity with this to actually be a very core anchor piece to the Capital Boulevard. There are some amazing opportunities, but we have to study what possibilities are there, and of course we can only do what we can afford.

Ms Blakeman: This is the committee that only met three times and then paid themselves a whole bunch of money? Surely not.

To the same minister. The Royal Lawn Bowling Club, which has been on the Legislature Grounds since 1918, has not been encouraged to stay. My question to the minister is: can his department work with them to find an alternate space from other provincially owned land, and will they help them to relocate?

Mr. Hayden: Mr. Speaker, I'd be very happy to look into that. The statement was made that they haven't been encouraged to stay, but I haven't heard that they've been encouraged to leave, either.

Ms Blakeman: Again to the Minister of Infrastructure. Given that other community leagues were consulted, I'm wondering why the Downtown Edmonton Community League, in whose boundaries the Legislature Grounds lie, was not consulted on the plans for renewal.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to make sure that the member was able to be seated before I stood.

Mr. Speaker, we are undertaking a study right now that's been budgeted for, and the information was released on that. Of course, as soon as we see what possibilities exist and some of the options that are available, we'll consult with the community and with the city. I know they're very excited, and the mayor has spoken very highly of what we're undertaking.

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

Nuclear Power

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After months of delay the Energy minister finally released a nuclear report that was completely biased. It was a pro-nuke brochure designed as fact, full of ridiculous claims like wind turbines being worse for the environment than the radioactive waste generated at each nuclear plant every year. To the Minister of Energy: when will you stop spinning your propaganda merry-go-round and sit down for some straight talk about nuclear power with Albertans, who are worried about the environment?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mr. Knight: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, an awful lot of rhetoric here and not a lot of substance. What's happening, of course, is that we had asked for a nonbiased, factual report relative to the application of nuclear energy in the province of Alberta. That's what we have in front of us. Going forward, we have a very open and transparent process to go out and consult with Albertans as the Premier has asked me to do. In due course that's exactly what will happen.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, Bruce Power has committed \$50 million to support its campaign for a nuclear plant in Alberta. Meanwhile, your website is talking about inviting a select group of Albertans to discuss the issue, but you stop short of having an open house, where all concerned Albertans can discuss the truth. To the Minister of Energy: why won't you commit today to letting all Albertans in on this debate by having nuclear consultations across the province open to anyone who wants to attend, including the media?

Mr. Knight: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we're about to do. I don't believe that the Internet, that the website that we're on, that the workbooks will be restricted so that other Albertans cannot get involved. It's exactly what we are going to do. Thank you very much for the suggestion.

Ms Notley: Well, I will hold you to it, then, because right now your press release on this matter says that there will be no open public consultations. It says that select people will be invited. If you're telling me right now that your website is wrong and that you will have open consultations across the province, where anybody can attend, please confirm that now, and then you will have my thanks.

Mr. Knight: Mr. Speaker, do I have to explain it again? I am not restricting anybody from attending the website. All Albertans can attend the website. They're welcome to do it. There will be at some point in time an opportunity for people to march in front of the Legislature. If that's what they choose to do, we're not going to restrict them. They do now, on Friday afternoon, in the sunshine, go out and demonstrate in front of my office in Grande Prairie. I'm not restricting them from doing that. They can get involved in any way that they see fit.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo. Sorry, Calgary-East. Correction.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know you think very highly of Calgary-Fort.

Immigrant Nominee Program

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, immigration has been a key source of growth in Alberta's population. Last year the government missed its target to nominate workers under the Alberta immigrant nominee program. The target was not reduced; instead, it was doubled. My first question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. In 2008-2009 did the government nominate as many new Albertans as it planned for?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did meet our target. Our goal was to increase the provincial nominee certificates

issued to 3,000 last year, and we surpassed that, reaching over 3,400. This breaks down to over 250 families and over 3,100 employee-driven certificates. These certificates reflect over 8,500 new Albertans.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is also to the same minister. For most of last year the economy was in quite a different situation than it is today. Given the current economy, are you going to reduce the number of nomination certificates targeted for this year?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no. This year's target is to issue 4,000 provincial nominee certificates. We recognize that while the economy has slowed in the short term, immigration remains very crucial to Alberta's population and economic growth in the long term. To meet our goals, we're recruiting people in the professions where they are needed the most. We are also reviewing our provincial nominee program to ensure alignment with the federal government and changes in the economy.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is also to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. With increases in the unemployment rate, what is the government doing about Albertans who are losing their jobs, and how does it work with the immigration targets?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Goudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the rising unemployment rate is concerning. Government continues to offer support and training programs to get people working again. Immigration is all about planning for the future so we are ready when the economy does pick up again. We are also working on improving our foreign qualification recognition to ensure that immigrants who are already here can put their skills to work as soon as possible.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Smoking in Vehicles Carrying Children

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 21, 2009, Ontario joined Nova Scotia in passing a ban on smoking in cars carrying children, and several other provinces are moving to pass similar legislation. To the Minister of Transportation: as many other jurisdictions are passing these laws, when will you commit to meeting your responsibilities to protecting children and move on this issue?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I think everyone knows that this government thinks children are one of the best resources we have here. They're going to be our new leaders. For this hon. member to actually think that we don't care about children makes me feel horrible. Anyway, I will say that I've said in this House many a time that there should be common sense to this, and we shouldn't need a law to make people look after their children.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I honestly don't know where this member gets it that I think his government does not care about children. I understand that you do. However, I can't for the life of me believe you haven't passed this law. Why won't you pass a law when adults continue to smoke while they're in vehicles with children in the back seat? Why don't you just pass a law saying that we're not going to tolerate this anymore?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I have not seen where we could police the issue, for one thing. I really do watch drivers in other cars now because, as you know, we're looking at bringing distracted legislation forward. I try to watch other drivers without being too distracted myself, and I really haven't seen that problem with people smoking with their children in the car.

2:30

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have seen the problem happening, and also your own Solicitor General has said that we can police this if the law is passed. Just to ease your concerns on that issue, I'd have a conversation with your Solicitor General on this. As the Solicitor General, I've assured you, can police this, why not just go ahead and ban it? He will be able to look at protecting children in this province from people who are causing children damage from second-hand smoke.

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I'll definitely have a chat with our Solicitor General and see what kind of resources he has, but I still say that common sense is the answer here. I think the public in general should be educating people on not smoking in their vehicles with children in them.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Municipal Sustainability Initiative

Mr. Prins: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The municipal sustainability initiative, or MSI, is an unprecedented program that assists municipalities to enhance their long-term planning and sustainability. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What are the timelines for reviewing MSI project applications?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to supporting municipalities, and municipalities decide on the projects based on their local priorities. After we receive the application from the municipalities, it takes about 10 to 12 weeks to process them. Our staff work with municipalities to ensure that the application is correct and is done correctly and reviewed as quickly as possible. MSI helps municipalities plan for the future and their needs.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Prins: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My second question is also for the same minister. I understand that there have been some delays in processing applications, and this can affect municipal planning and budgeting for these projects. To the minister: what is the minister's strategy to deal with any delays?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have increased the number of grant advisers, and just for information for this House we need to

keep in mind that we've received over 2,200 applications, and 1,800 of those have been reviewed and accepted. We're continually trying to improve the efficiencies, but those efficiencies are improvements for municipalities. We need to make sure that those focuses and directions are right.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Prins: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as well. What can municipalities do if they are experiencing processing delays with MSI project applications?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question because municipalities can contact our ministry, and they do contact their local representatives or MLA. We look into their project, and we will tell them where that project is as far as the application or the review. We are trying to shorten those guidelines. MSI is a program that is delivered by this Premier and this government, and it's an excellent program to support municipalities.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

High-speed Rail Link

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edmonton-Calgary corridor is one of the wealthiest regions in the world, and we need to set up a transportation system that provides for long-term sustainable growth for this region. What is the Minister of Transportation's position on the role of high-speed rail as a central part of sustainable future development of this region?

Mr. Ouellette: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the hon. member is actually concerned about the great corridor that we have, and we want to be able to transport people safely in that corridor. I do believe that at some point in time we will see some sort of high-speed rail or a connection along that corridor. Today we've been analyzing a study that we just had done on ridership. I think we will probably be ready to release that at some time in the future, and I do believe that someday we will see a high-speed rail connection.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we should be planning for the high-speed train now, when the time is right. We should lay the foundation stone for that high-speed rail. To the minister again. We have heard from groups interested in high-speed rail who have pointed out that such a link would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as accidents and congestion by taking cars off the QE II highway. Does the minister agree with this? If so, what steps has he taken in that direction?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, we haven't finished completely analyzing the review yet, but I'm going to give him a little tidbit out of it. There was one part of that review that did say that if we had a high-speed rail network, in the length of time it would take us to acquire the right-of-way and the length of time it would take us to build, we would not reduce the number of cars on the road because of the type of growth we've had in Alberta. We would still have the same types of emissions and congestion because of our growth.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister received a report over a year ago on the high-speed rail. When will the minister finally release this report and let Albertans know what the government is going to do about it?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, sometime in the future for sure we will release that report. We're analyzing right now.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

AFSC Lending Limits

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It could also be argued today that this is a great day of agriculture and businesses in agriculture because agricultural businesses, just like other businesses, need to have access to capital in order to manage operations. During the economic slowdown and credit crunch necessary capital couldn't be more important to our producers. Yesterday it was announced that AFSC, or Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, is now able to offer larger loans to producers in Alberta. My first question to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: what does this mean for Alberta producers and agribusinesses?

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

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This certainly means that producers and agribusinesses will continue to have access to some long-term, stable financing. This is another tool that will certainly help them establish, help them grow or sustain their operations, and ensure the future success of agriculture here in Alberta. AFSC will be able to provide loans to a broader base of clients and increase opportunities to partner with other financial institutions on some of the larger projects.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Second question to the same minister: Minister, what are the increased spending limits?

Mr. Groeneveld: Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that AFSC's lending limits have increased since 2002. The maximum loan or guarantee that can be provided has increased from \$2 million to a cumulative total of \$5 million. For larger scale projects limits have increased to \$25 million from \$10 million, so businesses and producers who take advantage of these increases will certainly still have access and the same long-term, low-interest, and flexible payment options that they've had before on other AFSC loans.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final question to the same minister: Minister, could you explain to the House why these programs are important to agriculture producers?

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, it certainly is a good question because even small family farms have large expenses, Mr. Speaker. Purchasing new farm equipment alone is a huge expense today. The increased lending limits will benefit everyone in the industry, regardless of the operation's size, as they are available in all of AFSC's loan programs in existence today. The increased limits will be very useful in making it possible for Alberta's industry members to continue to

be leaders and act on their innovative ideas. In fact, there's already been a lot of interest from the farm industry, and I encourage everyone who is interested to contact AFSC.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, we had 96 questions and answers today. We have 30 seconds until we continue with Members' Statements.

2:40 Members' Statements (continued)

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to recognize the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

Library Services

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great day to be an Albertan, and I had the great pleasure this morning to be present at and part of a very important announcement affecting all Albertans. It involved the Premier announcing the details of a new vision for Alberta's public library system that strengthens library services for all Albertans and includes a 39 per cent funding increase for public libraries.

This fall I had the privilege to be asked by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, a true champion for libraries, to chair the MLA committee on the Future of the Public Library Service in Alberta. Along with two of my colleagues, the MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford and the MLA for Calgary-Mackay, we toured the province and listened to stakeholders. We listened to many passionate, committed Albertans and in our report brought forward their vision.

On behalf of my colleagues I want to thank the minister, his staff, and all library stakeholders for their commitment to this important initiative. Today's announcement demonstrates that the government listened to those Albertans. Autonomy has created strong local libraries and library boards. The government's role is to support that autonomy while creating an overarching library policy, supporting a province-wide public library system, promoting collaboration and innovation, and capitalizing on technology.

Today we celebrate what libraries are and, with this government's support, what they can become. With the hard work of library stakeholders and through the fantastic support for libraries that we've received from the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and all ministries, we will have a solid framework for supporting a world-class public library service that will serve Albertans well into the 21st century.

Thank you.

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

Climate Change

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For almost 40 years Earth Day has been held on April 22 to draw attention to the dangers facing the planet we share. In the midst of our focus on the global recession, it is good to take the time to once again be reminded of the water we waste, the species we risk, the air we pollute, and the future we endanger.

While there are many pressing threats to our environment, the danger of climate change is especially concerning. Fiercer fires and the mountain pine beetle will jeopardize Alberta's forests, and successive droughts will deplete our supply of fresh water. The personal and economic costs of climate change could be staggering, so governments around the world have introduced effective strate-

gies to fight climate change that create real reductions in emissions. However, while scientists, politicians, and citizens alike agree that the time for action on the environment is now, this Conservative government's plan to fight climate change will not see any real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions until 2050. Alberta is now Canada's biggest greenhouse gas polluter, and the Conservatives are doing nothing to change this.

Responsible extraction of our province's main resource and transitioning toward a green economy can go hand in hand. The technology for dry tailings and greenhouse gas reducing measures exists. But while we take the steps we must to reduce our current carbon footprint, we can also begin the transition towards an economy based on green energy and green jobs. All that is needed to make this happen is the political will to do so. However, this Conservative government continues to pay lip service to the environment while subsidizing large oil corporations through untested and dangerous carbon capture technology.

We also need to ensure that we have enough environmental inspectors who are empowered to provide the oversight that is needed to ensure that environmental laws and regulations are upheld. It is ridiculous to expect that corporations can effectively self-monitor and provide the profit margins that investors are expecting at the same time.

On the occasion of Earth Day we have the opportunity once again to refocus our thoughts and efforts on what is arguably the most significant issue of our time. Recessions will not last forever. Economies will recover and undoubtedly boom again. The actions we take for our environment or, more importantly, the ones we don't will have significance for future generations.

The Deputy Speaker: May I have a moment? I have just been notified that our colleague the hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright is married today for four years, his anniversary. He's got two children, and his wife's name is Sue. I would like to congratulate him.

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(3) to advise the House that on Monday, April 20, 2009, motions for returns 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, and 24 will be dealt with.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of two letters opposed to the cancellation of public funding for gender reassignment surgery. They state that the cancellation of funding unfairly targets a vulnerable group. The letters are written by Wayne Madden and Jordanne Prescott.

I'd also like to table the appropriate number of copies of documents related to the questions asked today by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. They are a column from the *Calgary Sun* dated April 14, 2009, a chart from the Health and Wellness website showing the number of hip replacement surgeries performed from September '07 to September '08, and an article with some statistics on the cost of hip replacement surgery in the U.S.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Dr. Taft: Thank you. I have several tablings today. The first is a letter written by Joyce Burnett, who's taken the time at a very challenging point in her life to write to me to say among other things: I cannot imagine how difficult it must be for people who need sex change operations. She's obviously opposing the government's position.

The second is a letter from Reverend Brian Kiely. He first of all notes the cut to chiropractic services, but he's in fact more concerned about the cut to gender reassignment surgery, which he describes as petty, both financially and ethically, and he would like it restored.

The third is from Michelle Shaw, quite an extensive letter opposing the government's position on gender reassignment surgery.

The next is from Kelby DeLaet, who also is opposed to the government's position on gender reassignment surgery.

A letter from Nicole Hankel written to me, a very extensive one also on gender reassignment surgery, opposing the government's position.

One from Marcus Peterson opposing the government's position on gender reassignment surgery.

Another one, the second last, is from Alyssa Stryker, also opposing the government's position on gender reassignment surgery. She notes that she's not directly and personally affected by the decision. She sees it as an issue of human rights.

Finally, a letter from Krystin Prescott, who quotes the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, which ordered that "Ontario must fund the sex reassignment surgery" and also ordered that Ontario is to "cease this contravention of the Code." Pretty blunt language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's been a busy week in the constituency office for Edmonton-Centre, so I've just prepared a report, which I'll table today. Essentially, it covers the top issues that we've heard about in the office, particularly the seniors' pharmaceutical plan, with constituents like Garry and Dolores Acres and Keith Ali writing in – and I've given some excerpts from their e-mails there – a great deal of mail on the delisting of gender reassignment surgery, and also telephone calls, e-mails, and mail on the disbanding of the Wild Rose Foundation.

Other issues that were raised: a number of AISH recipients were pleased that the monthly AISH benefit was increased but also noting that it should be a cost-of-living increase that's indexed rather than increasing at the whim of the government, some support for this member's Bill 204, and some additional correspondence on housing and homelessness. I'll highlight Lisa Budney writing in support of the province's plan to end homelessness and hoping that the plan is appropriately funded.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, just table the report.

2:50 Projected Government Business

The Deputy Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. Under Standing Order 7(6) I would ask the Government House Leader to share with us the projected House business commencing the week of Monday, April 20, government business commencing on the 21st.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next week will be a busy week. Commencing on the 21st of April under government business, depending on what's completed this afternoon, in committee we'll be dealing with bills 4, 19, and 17 as well as bills 6, 7, and 9; second reading of bills 23, 24, 26, and 30.

On Wednesday, April 22, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders again bills 4, 6, 7, and 9, depending on progress; third reading of bills 17 and 19 and second reading of bills 20, 25, 27, 28, and 32 and as per the Order Paper.

On Thursday, April 23, depending on progress, bills 4, 6, 7, and 9 in third reading and second reading of bills 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 29, 31, 33, and 35 and as per the Order Paper.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

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

Bill 4

Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2009

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 4, the Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2009, in Committee of the Whole. I wanted to reiterate a number of important points that have been made about this bill. It is to make two amendments to the Post-secondary Learning Act. One amendment ensures further consistency with our roles and mandate policy framework for publicly funded postsecondary institutions. The other proposal is a housekeeping matter related to clarifying delegation of powers for graduate faculty councils and faculty councils.

Mr. Chairman, during second reading a number of issues were identified. A question was raised regarding the concept of the urban campus in Calgary. Several issues related to tuition affordability and student housing were also highlighted. Finally, the issue of deferred maintenance at some of our campuses was mentioned. While these are all very important issues, they do not directly relate to either of the proposed amendments to the Post-secondary Learning Act. In fact, they're not related to them.

As such, I'd like to acknowledge a question that was raised which does relate to the amendments. That's the suggestion that if in the future Mount Royal College or Grant MacEwan College changed their name to include the term "university," their funding levels would need to increase to match those received by the comprehensive academic and research institutions. This amendment, Mr. Chairman, is about the ability of the institutions in the baccalaureate and applied studies institutions sector to be able to apply for a name change, not a change in the institutions' mandates. Therefore, the funding would not need to increase. The institutions in the comprehensive academic research institutions sector have the mandate to conduct pure research and, therefore, have a much higher degree of research intensity, while the baccalaureate and applied studies institutions sectors focus on teaching intensity. With respect to degree programs baccalaureate and applied studies institutions will be limited to undergraduate programming; therefore, research funding would not need to increase.

Currently the act restricts the use of the term “university.” The original intent of this provision was to maintain control over the use of the term, including restricting Alberta’s college system from using it, in an effort to preserve the foundation of the community college system. However, with the implementation of the roles and mandates framework it’s timely now to consider modernizing this provision to give consideration to the broader use of the word “university.” That would recognize the depth and breadth of programs offered by institutions within the baccalaureate and applied studies institutions sector category.

This bill would support those institutions who are currently offering – currently offering, I must emphasize, Mr. Chairman – baccalaureate degree programming by providing public recognition and some credibility through the option of applying for a name change to include the term “university” in their name. Other than this bill there are no mechanisms to allow these institutions to use the word “university” in their name without dissolving them and re-establishing them as a university under the comprehensive academic and research institutions category of the act.

This amendment to the act allows flexibility within the Post-secondary Learning Act as it relates to name only and does not change the mandate or the role of the institution. This amendment would not allow institutions to move from one sector to another but recognizes that baccalaureate and applied studies institutions are distinct as they offer baccalaureate programs as well as a variety of applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, transfer, and open studies programs under Campus Alberta.

The proposed bill has been intentionally restricted to baccalaureate and applied studies institutions because of that sector’s focus in the policy framework. This is not about shifting sectors or creating additional comprehensive academic and research institutions. Expanded undergraduate offerings within the baccalaureate and applied studies institutions will better position Alberta’s comprehensive academic and research institutions to accommodate more graduate students, which is a part of the vision of our tech commercialization as well as expanding the research capacity of our comprehensive universities. It’s a strong focus within the roles and mandates framework and the Alberta access planning framework.

The second amendment, Mr. Chairman – and I’ll speak to this briefly – is a housekeeping matter to ensure consistency and clarity for university processes related to the operation of their academic governance model. Stakeholders, in particular the Alberta Universities Association, have indicated that the authority to delegate is unclear in the current act other than for student discipline. In the preceding Universities Act there was an overarching delegating power that allowed any body constituted or continued by or under this act the power to delegate. With the amalgamation of the legislation into the Post-secondary Learning Act this overarching provision was not retained for the universities. This amendment would return those powers to the current act and is consistent with the request from stakeholders.

After much consultation and much discussion with all of our postsecondary leaders and stakeholders, Mr. Chairman, we bring forward these two amendments in order that our Campus Alberta can be more comprehensive and move forward into the future. I would also add that at some recent meetings of European leaders, who are coming over and talking about transferability within the European system, this type of sectoral model that we’ve put in place in Alberta is actually ahead of where Europe is even trying to go. These amendments just tidy up a couple of things.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you. It’s a pleasure to speak this afternoon on the bill as proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose, Bill 4. Certainly, there has been comment on this bill at second reading. Bill 4, of course, will allow, as the hon. minister has indicated, postsecondary institutions in the baccalaureate and applied studies institutions sector to by order of the minister apply to use the name “university.” Also allowed under this proposed legislation is the delegation of powers by a faculty council. How that will work, as they say, time will tell.

Certainly, as we review this proposed legislation in committee, the remarks made by the hon. minister clarify a lot. It’s again nice to see the government bringing in more policies from the last election that were put forward by the Alberta Liberal Party. This legislation is a fine example of that.

3:00

It’s definitely time that we see provisions in place for baccalaureate institutions to be able to achieve university status. I understand that Mount Royal College in Calgary seeks acceptance into the AUCC, and with the provisions set out in the bill, this will happen. I would go so far as to say that students at Mount Royal with degrees, of course, will have significantly more academic recognition. I think this is what will happen, but certainly with this bill I don’t think the minister or anyone else has any intention of picking winners and losers. We have a sound postsecondary education system in this province. There is always room for improvement, but when we look specifically at Mount Royal, Mount Royal has for some time expressed an interest in being able to offer bachelor degrees and to be called a university.

Institutions will be contacted before discussions go any further, as I understand it. I don’t think any institutions have expressed any concern, that I’m aware of, regarding the delegation of powers by general faculties councils.

Mr. Horner: They asked for it.

Mr. MacDonald: I’m corrected, Mr. Chairman, by the hon. minister, who indicates that they have asked for it, and that’s something that I think is important to be on the official record of the Assembly.

With that, I do not anticipate any outstanding issues with this component of the bill, and I think we should have a further look at this bill. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview certainly is the representative of a constituency with the largest university in the province and the most distinguished. I’m going to say that with the threat of offending others, but it’s a very distinguished place, and he is very proud to represent the neighbourhood surrounding the University of Alberta. The hon. member has some issues that he would like to get on the record regarding Bill 4, and I will cede the floor, Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill has been brewing for some time, of course, and parts of it I’m quite delighted about. This will facilitate something we’ve long supported, which is, for example, Mount Royal College becoming Mount Royal university, and we may see that trend elsewhere. There’s early speculation about Grant MacEwan College maybe following that route. We’ll have to wait and see.

There are some issues, I think, that need to be put on the record. One of the ones I have as a concern is around the overcentralization

of services and the overcentralization of, for example, the post-secondary system. I see this as a trend across the government with health services, with the school system, with other services, and I'm concerned. I just think we need to be alert to this with post-secondary institutions. These institutions have a long history of independence, and whether it's Mount Royal College, which was established virtually a hundred years ago, or Augustana College at Camrose, that was an independent institution one time, or any number of other colleges – the list would be quite long – I think we need to understand that that kind of independence is important.

It's important for a few things. I think, first of all, it's important for ensuring that there's a diversity of voices and a range of opinions and, indeed, a range of programs. For example, you might at one time have gone to what was then Camrose Lutheran College not just for a liberal arts education but for one that had a spiritual flavour to it, a spiritual flavour that would not have been available in a publicly funded university like the University of Alberta. You might well have gone to Grant MacEwan Community College because it offered a very different experience than a standard diploma and degree-granting college. The whole spirit of the community college was to be out in the community and to offer programs so that learning was available to every citizen on a whole range of issues, not just academic issues but a whole range of interests. The idea and understanding then was that better education was part of a better quality of life.

As we centralize things and, frankly, concentrate more and more control in the office of the minister, I think we risk losing as well as gaining. I admit that we could potentially gain – although there's no guarantees of this – some efficiencies. We can gain ease of transferability.

Mr. Horner: I don't know what centralization you're talking about.

Dr. Taft: The minister is asking me questions, and what I'm doing is just expressing issues that I think need to be raised around the whole trend to Campus Alberta and a single approach to post-secondary education in this province. If the minister disagrees, I think that's healthy. You know, that'll be great. That's how these issues come up.

I understand that the move towards Campus Alberta, which this is, I think, part of – I believe even the minister said that in his opening comments – has some benefits. I'm just wanting to get on the record that we don't lose some of the advantages of a decentralized system.

There's no question that the role of the government is to ensure quality standards in universities, and the word "university" has to be protected. I know that the government is concerned about that, so for Mount Royal College, for example, to become Mount Royal university, they're going to need to meet accreditation standards. That's good, and I'm counting on the government to continue doing that. But I do think that we need to remain conscious of where postsecondary education came from, of the various streams, whether they were the faith-sponsored colleges like Camrose Lutheran College or the community colleges like Grant MacEwan College. We don't want to lose that heritage entirely by coming to a singular Campus Alberta that's run kind of like the University of California system or the University of Michigan system.

I think we need to remember that learning is important for its own sake. We need to make sure that this kind of legislation supports and encourages that. We need to remember that learning doesn't just happen within the halls and walls of universities and colleges and buildings. It can happen in communities. It can happen in the outdoors. It can happen in all kinds of ways where extension programs and community colleges support it.

I wanted to make sure that some of those sensitivities were on the record in this debate and going forward as we probably consolidate the Campus Alberta model and, I suspect, look at parallel consolidations like what might be happening with research funds, which I know has stirred up some controversy in academic circles.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'll take my seat. I do look forward to some response from the minister. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Chairman. First, I'd like to maybe just chat a little bit about some of the comments that were made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. The first one, I'm going to say, is that it's difficult for me to accept the comment that this was a policy put forward by the Liberals before the last election. The policy that is allowing this to happen is the roles and responsibilities, the mandate framework that was brought forward to this ministry by the stakeholders. The idea that you supporting Mount Royal being a university is somehow why this bill is here, frankly, Mr. Chairman, is absurd.

3:10

I would point the hon. member to the numerous consultations that we had with all members of our postsecondary system over the last two years to develop the roles and responsibilities framework, the six sector model, the fact that we're getting world recognition about the fact that this will allow, indeed, our postsecondary system to flourish in a small market. I just wanted to make sure that there was no misunderstanding. We're not copying anybody here. In fact, our stakeholders are creating something totally new that is being recognized around the world.

So when we talk about university status, that's an old term, Mr. Chairman. It's a very old term. In fact, it's a 12th century term. We're not using that anymore, and we're not using an AUCC acceptance because the fact is that AUCC is a faculty club. It has nothing to do with accreditation, nor does it have anything to do with a student's ability to transfer from one institution to the other. I don't know how many times I have to say that, but that's the truth of the matter. We're not picking winners and losers. I would argue that our system is not just sound, but it's great, and I think that we get students who tell us that.

The Member for Edmonton-Riverview brings up some very interesting points. He mentioned that this was a bill that's been brewing for some time. In actual fact, it hasn't been brewing for some time. It's a result of something that we missed doing in our six sector model. The centralization of the system that he refers to, I guess, would be the idea that somehow Campus Alberta is going to be controlling what's going on at a university campus. It's not. In fact, this has not been driven by this minister or this ministry or this government. What this has been driven by is the postsecondary system itself. That is, the presidents, the chairs, the deans of the system have all been involved in writing this model. I think that's the success of the model.

I would suggest to the hon. member that he might want to check with the president of that very venerable institution which is in his constituency about her views as to what we're doing here. I think he'd find that she views it not as centralization, not as an attack on her independence, not as an attack on the system but, in fact, as the ability for the comprehensive academic institution to do what we want it to do, and that's to grow the graduate-to-undergraduate ratio on those campuses where basic, implied, and pure research is going to be done. The academic independence is there.

Governance is also part of Campus Alberta because we are only a market of 3 and a half million people, even less when you talk about postsecondary students. We have to ensure that there is an ability for students to take postsecondary wherever they are in the province. That's what Campus Alberta is all about. Hon. member, this is not about the institutions. We serve three clients. We serve the student, we serve the taxpayer, and we serve society. We do not serve the institutions. That's a cultural shift that has happened that I think you'll find the institutions themselves have really grabbed onto because they see where they can grow within that Campus Alberta model without threat and without thinking about: well, I have to achieve this in order to grow. That's not what this is about.

The postsecondary system has certainly come up to the plate in terms of support of this. I would hazard a guess that you would not find a president in our system that would say that they're opposed to what we're doing here. I think that when you look at some of the other systems that the hon. member mentioned, like the University of California system, this is not the University of California system. I'm very aware of what that system is. This is not the British system. This is not the Ontario system. This is the Campus Alberta system. I'm quite proud of that.

Again, I would ask the hon. member to have a chat with some of the folks in the postsecondary system to find out the kind of accolades, frankly, that they're receiving – and I give them 100 per cent credit for this – for designing a system that other jurisdictions are looking at and asking: how the heck can we get ours to that? Indeed, I think it's going to make it easier for us to collaborate with British Columbia and Saskatchewan. At the end of the day what it's all about is creating opportunities for the students.

I hope that I've kind of answered the concern about what the hon. member might have been thinking about. With that, I'll take my seat.

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

Dr. Taft: Thanks. I appreciate the comments from the minister. I want to repeat for the minister that we're actually supporting this bill. So if he was thinking we were opposed to it, you know, we actually are supporting it. I was simply trying to get on the record some bigger-picture issues and concerns that I have and some things I don't want us to lose. I wasn't going to raise this, but I do need to raise what to me was a genuine low point in the postsecondary system of Alberta, and that originated out of this Legislature about four years ago, when the former Premier was caught very badly plagiarizing. It was extensive, and it was well documented. I thought it would blow over. Where I think things really went badly was when a predecessor of yours – and I would hope you would never do this, Mr. Minister – leaned on the presidents of major universities, wrote letters which were widely published in the media describing the former Premier as a model student, et cetera, et cetera, when in fact well over . . .

Mr. Horner: I sure hope you're not insinuating what I think you're insinuating.

Dr. Taft: I'm not insinuating anything here. I'm just stating facts. I was not going to go there. I just want to get on the record, however, that I am concerned that universities do remain vibrant, arm's-length, independent organizations. I have tremendous respect for the University of Alberta and for other universities in this province. All I am wanting to do is make sure that that broad social and historical context for a vibrant postsecondary system is under-

stood and recognized. It goes through highs, and sometimes it goes through lows. I really want this to move on to being a high.

At some point I'm going to ask the minister, for example, for discussion on the U of A's goal of being top 20 by 2020, which I hope it can achieve. I'd be interested to know how we as an Assembly can support the university in achieving that, but that's for a different time.

I just want to get clear with the minister that we're supporting this bill. I want to make sure that people understand that there is important context in history for Alberta's postsecondary institutions.

Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Do any other members wish to speak?

[The clauses of Bill 4 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? That is carried.

Bill 19

Land Assembly Project Area Act

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments or questions or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's been a great deal of discussion about Bill 19, and the government has been listening to Albertans. We are proposing to make amendments to the legislation based on this feedback, and I'd like to move these amendments for the consideration of the Assembly.

These amendments will make an important piece of legislation even more beneficial to Albertans. The amendments' purpose is to clarify the purpose of the bill, to create greater certainty for land-owners, and to address the main concerns that we've heard.

Amendment A is an additional amendment to draft amendments tabled in the House last month. Subsections (2), (3), and (4) in section 2 are replaced, and the amendment clarifies what types of projects Bill 19 can be used for. The legislation will only be used for projects related to the management and conservation of water such as dams and reservoirs and transportation utility corridors. It's important to note that these corridors must include a transportation component such as a road or high-speed rail to move people and goods. Utilities may also be included in these corridors where it's appropriate, as we presently do with roads, Mr. Chair. Establishment of utility routes must be approved through existing processes with organizations such as the Alberta Utilities Commission or the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

The amendment removes a discretion to designate unspecified projects as public projects, so it makes it clear that this legislation cannot be used for things like nuclear power plants or by private companies to establish routes for transmission lines or pipelines. The legislation is for water conservation projects and transportation utility corridors, period.

3:20

Amendment B sets out the mandatory consultation that has always been a centrepiece of Bill 19, but the amendment moves the

consultation provision into a stand-alone clause following section 2 of the legislation. It's done to better emphasize the importance of the consultation provisions in the act. We want to ensure that landowners are well informed and can provide meaningful input into the process. Consultation is required by law. These provisions did not exist under the old legislation.

The amendment also introduces time limits on the government to go forward and make a decision. Government must complete the formal consultation and make decisions about the project area within two years. This provides ample time for government to complete meaningful consultation with landowners, and it reduces the period of uncertainty for landowners while the project is being considered. Landowners will not be left on hold.

Amendment C. The government always intended to implement a land-buying program as soon as a project area was approved, and priority is to be given, of course, to landowners who want to sell their land as soon as possible, but landowners expressed concern that this policy was not laid out explicitly enough in the legislation. The proposed amendment does just that. Section 5 of Bill 19 is replaced. The amendment requires government to enter into negotiations to purchase the land at the request of the landowner. Additional protection is incorporated to add further assurance to landowners that the negotiation process is fair. The landowner has the option to ask for an independent third party to determine the price if a negotiated settlement can't be reached. The landowner can also appeal the decision to the courts if they are still unsatisfied. The amendment provides additional certainty for landowners, and it compels the government to move forward diligently with a project.

Amendment D. The amendment proposes the removal of section 13 in its entirety. The intent of section 13 was to confirm that the government's power under the act to designate a project area did not constitute de facto expropriation. This had been recognized by the courts. Some people took it to mean that section 13 meant that Bill 19 trumped the Expropriation Act. That was never the case, but section 13 has now been removed altogether to remove any confusion that may have been caused.

Let me be clear. Expropriation is still available, but it is a last resort. Our experience with land purchases for projects like our two ring roads shows us that the majority of land will be purchased through negotiation. If an expropriation is required, all the rights and protections afforded to landowners under the Expropriation Act will still apply, and landowners will not lose any legal protection.

We also have amendment E, and this is just housekeeping. Section 15 references parts of the bill that have since been amended, so those references have been updated. The amendment brings section 15 into line with the amended legislation.

Mr. Chair, as a fourth-generation farmer and rural Albertan I know land issues can be contentious. Bill 19 strikes the right balance between landowners' rights and the need for government to move ahead on important infrastructure projects. The proposed amendments will make this important piece of legislation even stronger, and the combined effect of these amendments is to clarify the bill's language, to provide additional reassurance to landowners that their interests have been given a fair hearing in the development of this legislation, to also provide certainty to landowners that they'll be dealt with in a timely fashion, and to assure them that they'll be fairly compensated for their land and have a right to appeal.

Those, Mr. Chairman, are my comments with respect to the amendments. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, you mentioned a point about severance. Is that what you want to speak to?

Ms Blakeman: Yes, please. Under *Beauchesne* 688 and the precedent tradition of this House I would ask that these amendments be severed for the purpose of voting.

The Deputy Chair: Hon. member, to be clear, you're asking that they be severed for the purpose of voting, but the whole thing can be debated as a whole. Is that what you're saying?

Ms Blakeman: Yes. It means that you can talk about anything you want, but they'd get voted on separately. So there would be five separate votes, given the divisions here, for sections A, B, C, D, and E.

The Deputy Chair: Correct.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Prins: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's a great honour and a privilege to rise today and join Committee of the Whole debate on Bill 19, the Land Assembly Project Area Act. This legislation clarifies the relationship between government and Albertans when land must be studied or used for transportation purposes or relating to the conservation or management of water.

Now, before I go on, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to just mention my own involvement in this process. I was privileged to be able to travel around the province and accompany many of my colleagues to a number of meetings around the province that dealt with issues surrounding Bill 19. Some of these members were the hon. members for Drayton Valley-Calmar, Livingstone-Macleod, Wetaskiwin-Camrose, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon, and the ministers of both Infrastructure and Transportation. I attended meetings in Warburg, Ponoka, Round Hill, Ryley, and Innisfail that were billed as meetings specifically called to discuss Bill 19. I also attended a number of meetings in my own constituency where I was able to discuss Bill 19.

The meetings that were sponsored or put on by opposition parties, parties that might not be in this House here today, were generally quite different than meetings that were put on by local groups that were mostly surface rights groups. There are people out in the province, Mr. Chairman, that are really interested in misinforming and creating fear among landowners for partisan reasons. There is no doubt about this. They have a small following that showed up at numerous places, the same people travelling around the province. I believe that they are using these types of forums more to peddle their own opinions and their message than to actually inform the public.

But we did listen to the public, and we suggested to the minister how we could add clarity to the intent of the bill and how we could amend the bill. Following consultation with Albertans, the government has introduced several thoughtful amendments for this Assembly's consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I was absolutely amazed that in some of these meetings, probably in most of them, after an MLA or the minister had the opportunity to explain the purpose of the bill or clarify some misinformation, people were actually quite in favour of the intent of the bill.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to one specific amendment, that I find particularly well thought out, following section 2. I'll only comment on the one amendment as I know that there are other hon. members that will speak to other amendments. Section 2.1(1)(a) stipulates that

the Lieutenant Governor in Council may not designate an area of land as a Project Area with respect to a public project unless the Minister

- (a) has prepared a plan, in accordance with the regulations, of the proposed project.

Bill 19 clarifies that the government may not appropriate any area of land for a proposed project unless the minister has established and set forth a specific plan for the usage of that land. Thus, Albertans will be well informed of the government's proposals for any affected area of land deemed necessary for a proposed project.

To this end, section 2.1(1)(b) ensures that the government upholds its responsibility to make the plan of any proposed project available to the public in accordance with the regulations. Mr. Chairman, this provision upholds this government's dedication to providing transparent and accountable government to Albertans. Ensuring that plans are made public provides Albertans the ability to overview any proposed project and thus empowers them to offer valuable insight and feedback.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, 2.1(1)(c) ensures that government provides the registered owners of land within the proposed project area with notice of the proposed project in accordance with regulations. Not only would the government ensure that the proposed project is provided publicly – that is, for everyone, including neighbouring Albertans – but also that registered owners of land within the proposed project area are provided notice in accordance with the regulation.

Subsection 2.1(1)(d) ensures that the minister consults with registered owners of land in the proposed project area. This provision guarantees the right of landowners to be consulted by the minister in order to have their views and input heard.

3:30

Mr. Chairman, I feel that the insertion of these provisions into Bill 19 will provide clarity to the rights of landowners and responsibilities of government for proposed project areas. It guarantees the right of landowners to be fully notified, informed, and, most importantly, consulted before any project that affects their land is approved by government. This is a new provision that did not exist before in the current legislation. It ensures that the ministry upholds its obligation to carry forth the necessary notifications and consultations. It is important to note that these measures weren't part of Bill 19, but they have been added for further clarification of all parties.

A further proposed amendment is the insertion of section 2.1(2), which states that "the Lieutenant Governor in Council may not designate an area of land as a project area if more than 2 years has elapsed since the plan of the proposed project was made available to the public under subsection (1)(b)." Mr. Chairman, as mentioned in subsection (1)(b), it is the responsibility of the minister to inform affected landowners of a proposed project. This amendment is absolutely critical as it prohibits the minister from designating the affected area of land of a project area if more than two years have elapsed since the date of notification. This timeline ensures that the government must proceed in a timely and orderly manner should it wish to proceed with a proposed project.

Another important amendment is section 2.1(3), which reads:

Where a project area order is amended to add land to a Project Area that does not exceed the maximum amount of land determined under the regulations, subsection 1(c) and (d) only apply to the registered owners of the land being added and of any land adjacent to the land being added.

This outlines which landowners must be consulted when land is added to a project area. Now, one may ask for an example of such an addition. Mr. Chairman, it could be that if after some years it is determined that a little more land is needed to build an intersection

around, you know, a planned intersection, much like we've done on the ring road around Edmonton, only the newly affected landowners would be required to be consulted.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the proposed amendments would serve to enrich Bill 19 by providing greater clarity as to the rights and responsibilities of government and landowners. I'm proud to say that these amendments were made following careful and extensive consultation with Albertans. For these reasons, I am proud to offer my full support for the proposed amendments to Bill 19 and urge my colleagues to vote accordingly.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much. That was an informative speech from the hon. member from Ponoka-Rimbey. Before I forget, I would remind the hon. member that even before this bill got to second reading, the government was making public commitments to amend it. The first amendments that were circulated publicly to my knowledge were in the middle of March, and the consultation process that the hon. member is referring to with his public meetings in Ryley among other places have occurred after that. So to say that these amendments are the result of the public consultation process is, in my view, certainly a stretch. In the time I have been a representative in this Assembly, I cannot remember – perhaps the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre can refresh my mind – where a bill, any bill, was introduced, and before it went any further in second reading, the government was providing amendments.

Without a doubt, this is an extremely controversial bill that limits landowners' rights and controls their land. The hon. member from Ponoka-Rimbey is right . . .

Mr. Prins: Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. MacDonald: Lacombe-Ponoka. I apologize. It's Joe Anglin that's from Rimbey. I forgot.

An Hon. Member: Who?

Mr. MacDonald: Joe Anglin. Joe is an Albertan with an interest in property issues, whether they deal with transmission lines or with acquisition of land for government projects. He is a very knowledgeable resource on a lot of these matters, and I'm sure many members of the Progressive Conservative caucus shared the public stage with Mr. Anglin this winter in regard to this matter. He's only one of three or four or maybe five parties that have had opinions on Bill 19.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member talked about public consultations, and we in the Alberta Liberal Party thought: well, let's have some real public consultations, where people would have time to make presentations to hon. members of this Assembly and others regarding this bill over the summer. We had anticipated that the government would give this bill in its current form, before these proposed amendments – and they certainly could be part of the discussion. There's no reason why they could not. But we would have a look at this on the policy field committee that would be dealing with matters of infrastructure, which is the Economy one. Over the summer they could have a look and perhaps even go to Ryley and hear first hand.

But the hon. member across is confident now with these proposed amendments. I think we're going to refer to them as A, B, C, D, and E. This is the political fix for this legislation.

Now, I've said this before, Mr. Chairman. If this government had not been embarrassed by the shenanigans that went on in Rimbey at the regulatory hearing – it'll be two summers coming up really quickly since those regulatory hearings occurred. There was a licensed private investigator who was confronted in the washroom of the local centre in Rimbey and asked what his business was at the hearings. To the local people, to their amazement, he said: well, I'm hired here to keep an eye on folks. It's just like the chairman is keeping his eye on me and making sure that I'm speaking to the bill and to the amendments, which I am.

Now, when we think of that private investigator and his admission to those individuals and how embarrassed this government was, they decided once and for all that this was not going to happen again. I can only guess how quickly individuals not only in the Department of Infrastructure but perhaps as well in Alberta Justice began to draft a bill to ensure that this doesn't happen again, and I think this is the bill. This is the way we're going to proceed so that nothing like that can ever happen again.

Now, when we look at the government's need for this bill, Mr. Chairman, they have a lot of ideas, and they have a lot of planned projects on the go. When we look at the first amendment here and dividing up section 2, I have to make a cautionary note here regarding the emphasis on consultation provisions. Perhaps the hon. minister can explain this to me, but it's not clear to me what this amendment actually does. It certainly changes the ordering of the bill, splitting the current section 2 into two parts. I heard the claim made that this emphasizes the consultation provisions, but the problem with this bill isn't the lack of emphasis. It is the fact that the consultation provisions are not good enough. By simply changing the order of the bill, it does nothing, in my opinion, to address this, so I don't know how this is going to work. Perhaps at some point we can get further clarification on this.

3:40

We're moving some things around here, but we still need to see the regulations. There are many different proposed regulations in this, and with all due respect to the hon. members across the way I do not for one minute believe that there are not draft regulations to this proposed bill somewhere in a filing cabinet in the office of the Minister or the Deputy Minister of Infrastructure. There have to be regulations, and because this is enabling legislation, the regulations are so important. That's why if you want to restore public confidence not only in the processes that led up to this bill but in the public confidence in this legislation, then I would suggest that the regulations have to be part of this. It's nice to present these amendments, and it's very respectful of the Minister of Infrastructure to have almost a month ago made these amendments public and allowed them to be circulated. People could give feedback. People could express their concerns. But let's have a look at the regulations.

Now, when we look further at these amendments and the time limit for the government to approve a project area, we are looking here, as I understand it, at placing a two-year time limit on the government so that they only have that period after they propose a project area to be actually put in a project area order. This does make a substantial difference or a substantive change, but it doesn't address, in my view, the major concerns of landowners. In particular, it doesn't change the fact that the project area orders themselves can last for an unlimited period of time; thus, landowners face those controls on their land for all that time. Unless I'm getting this wrong, I don't see that change.

The duration of the planning process isn't as much of a concern to landowners as the duration of the project area itself. When we talk

about these project areas, we have to have a look at some of the government's plans. The government has a 20-year strategic capital plan to address Alberta's infrastructure needs. I know the hon. Deputy Premier has read it. He probably wrote it. He says no, but I suspect he was involved in it.

It's on the website of the President of the Treasury Board. It's also on Alberta Infrastructure's website. It's a recent document. I think it was put out on the 29th of January, 2008, and it goes into a lot of detail here on what the infrastructure needs are now in this province and what they will be in the sort of medium term and, Mr. Chairman, also the long term. It's divided into three different sections, in my view. It is a very, very interesting document, and it's a guide to Bill 19.

Some of the medium-term plans or priorities of this government – this is where Bill 19 is going to come into play, and this is why we have to get it right with these amendments, Mr. Chairman – will include supporting new highways and expanding and upgrading existing highways, adding and upgrading interchanges on major highways to smooth the flow of traffic, completing ring roads around Calgary and Edmonton as well as planning ring roads for other major centres and outer ring roads for Calgary and Edmonton.

Now, I don't know where these outer ring roads for Calgary and Edmonton are going to be sited, but I would assume that has already been done.

Dr. Taft: Yeah. It's been sketched out.

Mr. MacDonald: I would say that it certainly has been sketched out, and I think this should be part of the debate on Bill 19. The government should let us know what they have in mind for these outer ring roads in Calgary and Edmonton and certainly for the ring roads and power lines in other parts of the province.

We know that "while Edmonton and Calgary's primary ring roads will be completed within a few years, it is critical to plan now for outer ring roads surrounding these two metro areas." This is on page 61 of the 20-year strategic plan, Mr. Chairman. In fact, "Alberta's population [is] projected to reach 5 million people by 2028." Four million of them will be Edmonton Oiler fans; 1 million will support the Calgary Flames. That's not in here. But there will be 5 million people living in this province.

Now, it's interesting to note that other

urban centres such as Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Airdrie, Lloydminster, will also require primary ring roads in the foreseeable future. Planning discussions must be accelerated in order for long-term plans to be established and parcels of land acquired to implement those plans [or ideas] at the appropriate time.

It goes on to say here, Mr. Chairman, that

the Government of Alberta must also determine the location of new corridors that will be required for additional roadways, irrigation requirements . . .

And get this.

. . . power lines and pipelines to accommodate future growth, and begin acquiring land parcels and rights-of-way well in advance.

So this 20-year plan is to follow Bill 19 and the amendments that we're discussing here this afternoon in committee, Mr. Chairman, and this is a significant plan. Now, when we look at all of these projects, again not only in Edmonton and Calgary but in the various cities that I mentioned and Sherwood Park as well, the government should make very clear to all landowners in those areas what their plans are and what property they have their eye on as necessary to facilitate these developments.

Now, Mr. Chairman, when we talk about power lines and pipelines to accommodate further growth, that contradicts what we

were told by the hon. members across the way, that Bill 19 had absolutely nothing to do with pipelines or transmission lines. I would like a clarification from the hon. minister or one of his colleagues regarding what is in the 20-year strategic plan and what was said earlier this afternoon in the House so that I can certainly understand that.

The hon. minister has been very respectful, and he has updated me, certainly, over the last month on some of the issues surrounding Bill 19, and I appreciate that. I missed his – I'm not going to call it a bear-pit – session that occurred at the AAMD and C just during the constituency break, where there was quite a discussion about this. In fact, there was an emergency resolution put to the floor by, I believe, some people in Grande Prairie. I'm not sure. They might have been from the county of Grande Prairie. But it was discussed, and they decided that they were going to stick with the minister's side of the story, essentially. We'll see how this develops as these projects develop in Alberta, Mr. Chairman.

There are certainly requests from this side of the House for information regarding this proposed legislation, but I think that it is very important that the government indicate where they are planning to site these infrastructure projects. These are the projects that we're talking about in this bill. Taxpayers are going to be funding the acquisitions, so they have every right to know what is in the details. Certainly, we should provide that.

3:50

Now, there are other projects that the government has in mind, and one of them that I find interesting is the six-lane highway on the QE II. It would be one of the largest infrastructure projects, I think, in the history of this province if we were to add an additional lane north and an additional lane south on highway 2 considered dedicated truck lanes. Bill 19 is part and parcel of that plan, Mr. Chairman.

Also, the government has a plan to purchase lands for the development of a faster and more efficient link between Edmonton and Calgary while corridor rights-of-way and options are still available. Now, I can only assume that this is the high-speed rail link that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview initially suggested in this Assembly two years ago.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, more than that.

Mr. MacDonald: I stand corrected. More than that. Four years ago.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, for sure. Five or six.

Mr. MacDonald: Five or six years ago, Mr. Chairman. They're distracting me again.

When you look at the importance of the high-speed rail link between Edmonton and Calgary – and I've been told this myself, not by engineers from Infrastructure but by other engineers – the largest cost of that rail link would be the acquisition of the rights-of-way. Mr. Chairman, I think the government also should come forward with their ideas on the acquisition of that land because, again, it's going to be the taxpayers who are going to have to fund it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Mr. Allred: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To start with, I'm sure pleased to hear that we're going to get a ring road around St. Albert. I'm not sure where it's going to go, but I guess I'd better have a little chat with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to find out.

Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 19, the Land Assembly Project Area Act. I would like to applaud the minister for his forward-thinking and pragmatic piece of legislation. Specifically, I would like to address the consultation processes outlined by section 2(3), which reads:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may not designate an area of land as a Project Area with respect to a public project unless the Minister

- (a) has prepared a plan, in accordance with the regulations, of the proposed project,
- (b) has made the plan of the proposed project available to the public in accordance with the regulations,
- (c) has provided the registered owners of land within the proposed Project Area with notice of the proposed project in accordance with the regulations, and
- (d) has consulted, in accordance with the regulations, with the registered owners of land within the proposed Project Area.

In my mind, Mr. Chairman, this legislation and particularly this section is absolutely essential for the efficient and effective planning of major infrastructure projects. Bill 19 will help to improve the process by which government identifies and assembles large sections of land for major public projects.

Our friends to the left complain that through the current system we've got "the most expensive highways in, if not in Alberta, the entire country." Mr. Chairman, members of the Liberal opposition appear to favour the problems that were created with the restrictive development caveats that were placed around Edmonton and Calgary in the mid-1970s.

Mr. Chairman, this government recognizes that the 1970s legislation created some problems, and that is exactly what this legislation is attempting to avoid. By giving the public advance notice of the plans for major projects, landowners and prospective purchasers are advised of what is being planned, and they can act accordingly. They have the opportunity to engage the government in discussions for the sale of their lands, or they may continue to live on the lands until the land is required. That sounds like a process that will create fairness and equity for all.

Large public projects such as transportation utility corridors, as in the case of the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads, are important for the future development of this province. Alberta has seen dramatic growth in not only our population but also in our industrial and infrastructure needs. Mr. Chairman, to the credit of this government we have recognized that the pressures associated with this growth will require long-term infrastructure planning. For example, projects such as major transportation and utility corridors require large amounts of land and capital and extensive planning. In order to ensure that these projects are completed in an economically responsible manner, land needs to be assembled well in advance.

Just as an aside, Mr. Chairman, I was reading a 1954 article the other day written by a well-known consulting engineer of a former era, Lou Grimble, entitled Highways and the Ring Road in the Metropolitan Area. Yes, that paper was presented in 1954, 55 years ago, to the Alberta planning conference. As I was saying, these major projects need to be planned well in advance. Bill 19, section 2(1), constructs a framework that directs the government to consult with landowners and other stakeholders with regard to these long-term projects.

Mr. Chairman, land planning and zoning have been part of our history for many years. For example, in 1913 the government of Alberta passed the first planning act and in 1929 created the Town and Rural Planning Advisory Board. Part 17 of the current Municipal Government Act sets out a comprehensive planning scheme that is the envy of many jurisdictions around the world. Planning is in our blood in Alberta. This province is built on sound planning, even

going back to the 1880s, when the dominion land surveyors laid out our township system in an orderly, systematic pattern of sections and townships. Planning legislation is designed to empower communities to consult with stakeholders and plan for future infrastructure needs.

Over the years we have continually strengthened this consultation process. But to truly understand how our land tenure system has changed, we need to step back and look at how the land tenure system in Canada has evolved. Land ownership in Canada descends from English feudal times. Historically, English monarchs were the direct owners of all lands in their nation. Rather than ruling these lands directly, they would assign them to nobles, who would, in turn, pay taxes and/or agree to perform feudal duties, including infantry or ecclesiastical services, for the king as compensation. In turn, these nobles would divide up their lands and let them out to the people, who would work on them, in turn, providing food or services to the noble, thus allowing the noble to fulfill his obligation to the monarch. In this system, Mr. Chairman, the monarch technically retained ownership of the land and had the right to tax, regulate, and even remove any parties from the property. These actions were undertaken without consultation or consideration of the affected landowners.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to say that we have come a long way from that early feudal system. We have a government that recognizes the value of consultation and the benefits of long-term planning with public input. Nevertheless, we retain remnants of that early feudal system. Land in Canada is still held as a tenancy from the Crown. The Crown retains certain rights to govern and regulate lands for the greater public interest.

4:00

Section 2.1 is further evidence of this recognition and has within it several measures that enhance the consultation process, recognizing the rights of landowners. For example, section 2.1 states that not only is consultation with affected landowners desirable; it is mandatory. The government must consult with both the public and affected landowners before any land is set aside for a project or development. Simply put, landowners will be informed of development projects, and they will have the opportunity to provide input. Furthermore, Mr. Chair, the Crown will not take land without due compensation, which will be determined by market forces.

I applaud the government for introducing Bill 19, not only for its foresight, dedicated future planning but for the commitment to public involvement and consultation. We must re-establish a due planning process that will enable us to plan and complete major infrastructure programs efficiently and effectively, with due consideration to the rights of all private landowners.

Therefore, Mr. Chair, I will be standing in support of Bill 19, the Land Assembly Project Area Act, and these amendments and urge all members to join with me in doing so.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to speak to the amendment that's being proposed by the minister. Actually, I'd look to the minister for some back and forth here because I'm trying to understand what we achieve through this amendment. I'm particularly focused on amendment A. [interjection] Okay. Thank you. I'm quite genuinely wanting to engage the minister so I can understand amendment A more clearly because when I read it, frankly, I don't know what it achieves. I know the minister spoke a bit about this in his opening comments, but I need some further explanation. Frankly, I think the public is going to as well because we all know this has been a controversial bill.

Amendment A amends section 2. I don't want to read the whole section; that will take too long, and I like to be efficient, Mr. Chairman. What amendment A does, first of all, is strike subsections (3) and (4) under section 2. So in subsection (3) what's being pulled out is "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may not designate an area of land as a Project Area with respect to a public project" unless the minister has done the following, and there are four sentences there under subsection (3). Is the minister with me?

Mr. Hayden: Yeah.

Dr. Taft: Okay. Subsection (3). It strikes that out. What that subsection seems to do, to me, is actually curtail, put some boundaries around, what the Lieutenant Governor in Council can do. So I'm not sure what we achieve by getting rid of that.

The amendment as well leaves in a couple of things that are, I think, the subject of some real concern, from what I've heard. It says – and I'm quoting here now from the amendment – that Section 2 is amended and subsection (2) will read as follows:

- (2) For the purpose of this Act and the regulations, a project is a public project if the project is
- (a) a project related to the transportation of people or goods, which may also include as part of that project a corridor of land for pipelines, pipes or other conduits, poles, towers, wires, cables, conductors or other devices, including any ancillary structures, or
 - (b) a project related to the conservation or management of water.

I guess my simple question to the minister is: tell me what the heck this achieves, because I don't see it achieving anything right now.

Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the hon. member for the question because it offers us an opportunity to clarify. In a way you are correct. When you look at it, the protections were already in place. But what we found in speaking to Albertans all across the province is that there was a concern. Because subsections (2)(a) and (b) were separate, with the reference in (a) to transportation of people and goods and then (b) as a separate heading, talking about pipelines, pipes, conduits, poles, towers, there was a concern and a fear that a project could be set aside for one or the other. In discussions with Albertans we saw that the intent was clear. I think that you understood the intent, but a lot of people, because of the confusion, were more comfortable to have it plainly stated that, first and foremost, this was for transportation of people and goods but that these other things could be part of that. First and foremost, it was transportation of people and goods.

By combining (a) and (b), that satisfied the concerns of people. They see that it means that it's transportation, and then, like other roadways, there could be power lines or high-speed fibre optics, distribution gas lines. Those sorts of things could be in a transportation utility corridor. It just solidified the fact that this cannot be used for pipelines or power lines, which is plain, anyway, when we say that it's for public projects. These are private undertakings when we talk about transmission lines and major pipelines. So that's with respect to (a) and (b).

With respect to (d), the change that's made in the amendment, there were concerns, and people were uncomfortable that "a project designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council," which, as you know, is cabinet, "as a public project" left open too much discretion. I trust cabinet's decisions, but at the same time, I understand people's concerns with that particular clause. It really didn't add

anything to what we were trying to do. We are trying to acquire land for transportation utility corridors, similar to the Anthony Henday and the Calgary ring road. Having clause (d) in there really didn't enhance the purpose of the bill. So that's the explanation to it. It's just for clarification. I'm glad that the hon. member was comfortable with it the way it was, but I think this makes it more clear for the public.

If I could, for a moment, just respond to the other questions with respect to regulation. Of course, the bill guides the regulation. I feel that we can have regulation ready fairly early in the fall once we have the bill through. The bill guides the regulation, gives the direction, but much of the regulation, of course, will still go back to the land acquisitions practices that we did under the RDA. The main components here, the things that have been added to what has been done in the past are mandatory consultation, mandatory triggering of purchase of the land by the landowner, and a set time period by which a landowner will know with certainty when the project goes ahead.

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

Dr. Taft: Thanks. I appreciate the minister's comments. That helps me a bit. It still feels a bit broad.

Could he also, then, elaborate on why in this amendment we are striking out subsection (3) of section 2? I think his previous comments, if I've followed them, were just dealing with subsection (2). So just elaborate on subsection (3) again for me, please.

Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned at the start of my remarks, the consultation portion of Bill 19 was deemed to be important enough that now under the new numbering system for it section 2 will deal strictly with the consultation portion with the landowner. So there will be renumbering.

4:10

Dr. Taft: Okay. I think I see that now. There we go. All right.

My next comments and questions relate to the regulations. I am concerned that, whether we're talking about the amendments or the rest of the bill, the regulations are so terribly important to this. Really, it's in the regulations, as the minister knows, that the meat and potatoes, the real action, occurs and the real decisions are made. I am of course concerned that the penalties under the act talk about the regulations – and there are some extraordinary powers here relating to the regulations – yet we don't know what the regulations are. That debate will probably occur more extensively once we're through the amendments, but to the extent that the regulations will relate to the amendments, I think we need to be very, very concerned about this.

I think, Mr. Chairman, I'll turn to my other colleagues for a second while I prepare my thoughts on the next amendment.

Thank you. I do appreciate your comments.

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

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you very much. This is one of these bills that I wanted to see the principle of succeed because I think the government does need to plan, and they do need to prepare. I'm one of those people that has urged the government all the way along to carefully lay these sorts of things out. As a citizen in this province I look around at too many projects where I think: that should have

happened, and it should have happened a long time ago. But because there was a lack of planning around it and a lack of consultation, projects got derailed and delayed by quite a bit. So I was looking forward to some mechanism that the government could bring forward that would allow it to move some of these larger projects along.

For example, I would really like to see a high-speed rail plan start to come into place. Clearly, we're not going to pay for it now. We're not going to pay for it this year or next year or probably the year after. But I'm also thinking that those are huge projects, and if you don't start planning them and implementing them and getting all your ducks in a row on those kinds of things, we'll be here 10 years from now and we still won't even have started into this. So I wanted to see those processes start to move forward.

I think what we needed and what the public wanted to see was a secure, transparent model that could be used to assemble, acquire land for these kinds of large projects. Expropriation is and should be a last-ditch, a last – what's the word I'm looking for?

An Hon. Member: Last resort.

Ms Blakeman: A last resort – thank you – for dealing with these kinds of projects. Clearly, I don't think anybody enjoys that process. Certainly, the government doesn't, the taxpayers that have to pay for the court bills don't, and the landowners don't. We need a process that works better than that. Expropriation is still there for a reason. If government needs to move ahead with it, and we've got a landowner holding a project hostage, the government needs the tools to be able to move forward, and they certainly have that.

But I think the government got itself in a bit of trouble with this one. What I've seen is a long progression – and I've talked about it lots of time in this Assembly – of the government bringing forward shell bills in which essentially it says: the minister can decide to do whatever they want, and everything else will be decided under regulations. Thank you very much. On it goes. We complained at the time, and we raised the issues at the time. We said, "This is where you're going to get into trouble on this." "No, no, no," said the government. "Just trust us." Well, it got you into trouble this time because people that thought they would have a direct interest in this looked at this bill and said: "I don't think I'm going to be well served by this. The truth is that I can't tell if I'm going to be well served or not because there are no details in this bill." I think it overreached itself and got a lot of people very upset about what the government was capable of doing. With more detail, more transparency, more accountability the government wouldn't have dug the hole they're in quite so deep, but they did, so we ended up with an amendment.

Okay. Well, points to the minister for going: I've got to stop digging here and do something, build a ladder to climb out of this one. I think he's made some wise moves in making the idea of the amendments available, although he couldn't make the specific amendments available some time ago, to try and deal with this. Goodo.

When I look at these amendments, I think: "Okay. Is this going to solve the problems that have been identified?" On the surface, on the face of it, on the first skim reading you go: "Well, yeah." It's addressing a lot of the areas that were brought up over and over again: lack of consultation, lack of a timeline, the definition of acquiring that land and holding it to one side, which I have just lost the exact terminology for. But when you start to get into it and go, "Okay; really, what does this mean?" once again we're looking at – and almost every single phrase has this.

Under section A, for example, subsection (2) is "for the purpose of this Act and the regulations," and then it goes on setting it out;

section B, “the Lieutenant Governor in Council” yada yada “in accordance with the regulations, of the proposed project.” You keep going on to the next section, (b), “has made the plan of the proposed project available to the public in accordance with the regulations,” and to (c), “has provided the registered owners of land within the proposed Project Area with notice of the proposed project in accordance with the regulations.”

Well, guess what? We don’t have the regulations. There’s an ancient saying about buying a pig in a poke, which I think was about buying livestock in a bag. Basically, you couldn’t see what you were purchasing. That’s what’s in these regulations, so the government has made the same mistake again. It is borne largely out of this being a one-party state, out of the government having so many members and being able to get its way so easily in almost everything so that it doesn’t have those built-in checks and balances, and the same mistake is made here. People cannot see the specifics of what’s in here. To say to people, “We’re going to consult with you,” the first thing I do is say: “How? How are you going to consult with me? What are the specifics of that consultation?”

That’s going to lead me into something that I am seeing, themes that I’m seeing repeated several times in important legislation that’s before this Assembly this spring. I’m starting to call it the 3Cs. We’ve got control, compensation, and consultation.

I just want to talk about consultation right now. This government has tried very hard over the years to try and perfect the system of consulting under a very controlled situation. Some years back we had the round-tables when the government was sort of trying to reorganize itself. Interestingly, those round-tables, which were sector specific, actually excluded professionals that worked in the field. So when we had health round-tables, no doctors and nurses were allowed to sit at the table. It was a very interesting choice.

4:20

Then we moved into the summits, so we had the growth summit and the justice summit, and I went to a gambling summit in Medicine Hat at one point. Then we ended up with the Future Summit, which was, I think, supposed to be the be-all and end-all of consultation. But people catch on to all of these different very controlled consultations, and they know when they go to these things what’s pinned up on the board, what everybody has discussed. When they look at what the government actually starts to implement and say: “But this isn’t what we talked about. Where’s the thing that was up on the board that was so important to me?” they say: “Oh, well, yes. That’s number 79 on the list, and we’re picking other things.”

It puts that whole idea of consultation – people question it and say: “Well, then you really didn’t consult with us. You really didn’t listen to what was going on.” I argue that the government has embarked on yet another round – maybe this is the new millennium version – of consultation. What I’m seeing the government do is consult very widely but very generally and very vaguely on a concept, and then once they implement the final version of what the government wants to do, there is no consultation on the specifics because everyone just refers back to that big general consultation and says: “That was it. You had your chance. Why didn’t you tell us what you were worried about then? Now we’ve made our decision. We’ve passed the act. No more consultation.” I think that is what this government is up to and what we will see roll out over the next three to five years.

I know that my colleague is eager to get back up again, so I will cede the floor to him and look for another opportunity to speak at another occasion.

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

Dr. Taft: Thanks. I wanted to seize the opportunity of the minister being here to now move down through the amendments, and I’m on amendment B now. I’m looking at B, and it proposes to add a number of paragraphs after section 2. One of those, subsection (2), reads, “The Lieutenant Governor in Council may not designate an area of land as a project area if more than 2 years has elapsed since the plan of the proposed project was made available to the public.” I’d be interested to hear the minister’s comments on why that amendment is there. I can see that it gives some reassurance, I guess, to landowners who might be affected and don’t want it to go on forever and ever.

You know, the time frames of many of these things will be measured in decades, I’m sure. The land for the Anthony Henday Drive was assembled 30 years ago, and we’re assembling land now for an outer ring road that could be built in 30 more years. First of all, can you talk to the purpose of that amendment and, secondly, talk to how the minister ended up with two years as the right time frame?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I’m pleased to speak to that for the hon. member. The two-year period does not put a restriction on the land during that first two-year period, and I think that the member understands that. The restriction would not happen until after cabinet goes forward with the project. The concern for landowners was that a decision to actually go forward with the project could draw out and could have implications because of possible restrictions that their land could be facing in the future. Time certainty was what landowners told us they wanted. They wanted time certainty on a period of time so that it was a sufficient amount of time for proper consultation to take place, not only with respect to how the project . . .

The Deputy Chair: Hon. minister, I hate to interrupt, but it is 4:25, and we will rise and report progress.

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

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

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 4. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 19. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: Does the committee concur with the report?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, sir. In light of the hour I would move that we call it 4:30 and adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, April 20.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:26 p.m. to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 27th Legislature - 2nd Session (2009)

Activity to April 16, 2009

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 200 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills with lower numbers are Government Bills. Bills numbered Pr1, etc., are Private Bills.

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

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

1 Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act, 2009 (Stelmach)

First Reading -- 6 (Feb. 10 aft.)
Second Reading -- 90-93 (Feb. 17 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 503-4 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 583-84 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)

2 Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)

First Reading -- 9 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 93-94 (Feb. 17 aft.), 121-23 (Feb. 18 aft.), 212-14 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 575-79 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 609 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)

3 Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009 (Berger)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 123-24 (Feb. 18 aft.), 202-03 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 579-80 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 609-10 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)

4 Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2009 (Bhullar)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 124 (Feb. 18 aft.), 353-56 (Mar. 11 aft.), 585-86 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 680-83 (Apr. 16 aft., passed)

5 Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (Griffiths)

First Reading -- 17 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 125 (Feb. 18 aft.), 214-15 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 506-07 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 585 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)

6 Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Amendment Act, 2009 (Forsyth)

First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 356-60 (Mar. 11 aft.), 586 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 633-38 (Apr. 14 aft., adjourned)

7 Public Health Amendment Act, 2009 (Liepert)

First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 437-38 (Mar. 17 aft.), 439-40 (Mar. 17 aft.), 586-87 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)

8 Feeder Associations Guarantee Act (\$) (Groeneveld)

First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 203-08 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 580-83 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 610 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)

- 9 Government Organization Amendment Act, 2009 (Campbell)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 360-61 (Mar. 11 aft.), 587-88 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
- 10 Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 18 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 361-62 (Mar. 11 aft.), 588 (Apr. 8 aft., adjourned)
- 11 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2009 (VanderBurg)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 362-63 (Mar. 11 aft., adjourned)
- 12 Surface Rights Amendment Act, 2009 (Berger)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 383-85 (Mar. 12 aft., adjourned)
- 13 Justice of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 385 (Mar. 12 aft., adjourned)
- 14 Carbon Capture and Storage Funding Act (\$) (Knight)**
First Reading -- 138 (Feb. 19 aft.)
Second Reading -- 208-10 (Mar. 3 aft., adjourned)
- 15 Dunvegan Hydro Development Act (Oberle)**
First Reading -- 105-06 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 210-11 (Mar. 3 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 504-06 (Mar. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 584-85 (Apr. 8 aft., passed)
- 16 Peace Officer Amendment Act, 2009 (Lindsay)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 385-86 (Mar. 12 aft., adjourned)
- 17 Securities Amendment Act, 2009 (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 386-87 (Mar. 12 aft.), 622-26 (Apr. 14 aft., passed)
- 18* Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement Implementation Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Stevens)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 211-12 (Mar. 3 aft.), 349-52 (Mar. 11 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 381-83 (Mar. 12 aft.), 446-54 (Mar. 17 aft.), 472--81 (Mar. 18 aft.), 482-83 (Mar. 18 aft.), 574-75 (Apr. 8 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 604-09 (Apr. 9 aft., passed)
- 19 Land Assembly Project Area Act (Hayden)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 438-39 (Mar. 17 aft.), 626-33 (Apr. 14 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 683-90 (Apr. 16 aft., adjourned, amendments introduced)
- 20 Civil Enforcement Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)
- 21 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2009 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 283 (Mar. 9 aft.)
Second Reading -- 377-80 (Mar. 12 aft.), 386 (Mar. 12 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 440-43, 454 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 468-71 (Mar. 18 aft.), 481 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 23 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 23, 2009; SA 2009 c2]

- 22 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2009 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 344 (Mar. 11 aft.)
Second Reading -- 380-81 (Mar. 12 aft.), 386 (Mar. 12 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 443-46, 454 (Mar. 17 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 471-72 (Mar. 18 aft.), 481-82 (Mar. 18 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Mar. 23 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 23, 2009; SA 2009 c1]
- 23 Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2009 (Danyluk)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
- 24 Animal Health Amendment Act, 2009 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)
- 25 Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2009 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 283 (Mar. 9 aft.)
- 26 Wildlife Amendment Act, 2009 (Mitzel)**
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)
- 27 Alberta Research and Innovation Act (\$) (Horner)**
First Reading -- 466 (Mar. 18 aft.)
- 28 Energy Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)
- 29 Family Law Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
- 30 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2009 (Drysdale)**
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)
- 31 Rules of Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 402 (Mar. 16 aft.)
- 32 Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (Horne)**
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)
- 33 Fiscal Responsibility Act (Evans)**
First Reading -- 545 (Apr. 7 aft.)
- 35 Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**
First Reading -- 591 (Apr. 9 aft.)
- 52 Health Information Amendment Act, 2009 (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 436 (Mar. 17 aft.)
Second Reading -- 436 (Mar. 17 aft., reinstated), 437 (Mar. 17 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Health)
- 201 Traffic Safety (Vehicles with Unlawfully Possessed Firearms) Amendment Act, 2009 (Hehr)**
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)
Second Reading -- 165-76 (Mar. 2 aft.), 284-86 (Mar. 9 aft., defeated on division)
- 202 Municipal Government (Municipal Auditor General) Amendment Act, 2009 (Johnston)**
First Reading -- 138 (Feb. 19 aft.)
Second Reading -- 286-96 (Mar. 9 aft.), 406-08 (Mar. 16 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Community Services)
- 203 Local Authorities Election (Finance and Contribution Disclosure) Amendment Act, 2009 (Johnson)**
First Reading -- 251-52 (Mar. 5 aft.)
Second Reading -- 408-16 (Mar. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 204 Provincial-Municipal Tax Sharing Act (Blakeman)**
First Reading -- 498 (Mar. 19 aft.)
- 205 Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 649-50 (Apr. 15 aft.)

- 206 School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009 (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 621 (Apr. 14 aft.)
- Pr1 Beverly Anne Cormier Adoption Termination Act (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)
- Pr2 Caritas Health Group Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Elniski)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)
- Pr3 Les Filles de la Sagesse Act Repeal Act (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 376 (Mar. 12 aft.)

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