



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

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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, May 14, 2009

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

Let us pray. We give thanks for the bounty of our province, our land, our resources, and our people. We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Visitors

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

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a very special person, someone who was a former member of this Assembly for 11 years and as so did a terrific job serving his community and his province. He also did a fantastic job raising four terrific kids with my mother. I would ask my father, LeRoy Johnson, to please rise and receive the familiar warm welcome of the Assembly.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly some 58 enthusiastic grade 5 students from the Webber Academy school in my constituency of Calgary-West. This is a class that makes an annual visit to our Assembly, and I know it's a class that both the Member for Calgary-Foothills and myself are very proud of, a school we're very proud of in our constituency. They're accompanied today by teachers Mr. Ash, Mr. Mondaca, Ms Ferguson, and Mrs. Webber and by parent helper Mrs. McCurdy. I think they're seated in the public gallery. I would ask them all to rise and have members give them an enthusiastic welcome.

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

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature a group of 26 people from the Edberg Countryside Christian school. There are 19 students in grades 8 and 9 and one teacher and six adult helpers. The teacher is Steve Penner, and the adults with him are Andy Friesen, Trish Friesen, Menno Siemens, Nelda Siemens, Kerry Baerg, and Rachel Baerg. I believe they're seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 17 visitors from the Radway school in my constituency. There are 13 grades 5 and 6 students accompanied by group leaders Darlene Kuzik and Sandra Moschansky and parent helpers Tammy Kuefler, Randy Prockiw, and Corine Wilchiw. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Mr. Olson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions today. One is a group of people who are sitting in your gallery. There were I thought five but I maybe only see four people who, along with the other people I'll introduce, are here to celebrate Norwegian Independence Day, which I'll speak to in a few minutes. They are Mr. Wayne Nordstrom, the president of the Sons of Norway Solglyt Lodge and his wife, Joyce – if they wouldn't mind standing as I call their names and remain standing – Mr. Roger Bruce, treasurer of the Solglyt Lodge; Mr. Ivar Traa, the former honorary Norwegian consul general from Quebec, visiting from Montreal; and his son Olaf Traa of Armena. I was looking for Mr. Lloyd Reed, of the Ronning Lodge in Camrose, but I don't see him there. I'd ask that this Assembly give them the warm traditional welcome.

There are also a host of other people of Norwegian descent in both galleries today who are here to celebrate with us. I won't attempt to name them all, but I'm very pleased to welcome them all here. I should single out my wife, Mardell, though, because tomorrow is our 33rd anniversary. If they would all rise and receive the welcome, please.

**The Speaker:** Just how big a diamond does one get for the 33rd anniversary?

The hon. Minister of Education.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a very dedicated and inspiring public servant whose innovative work on Speak Out, Alberta's student engagement initiative, was acknowledged on Tuesday at the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, Edmonton region's recognition dinner. Jennifer Keller, director of student engagement at Alberta Education, is the winner of the first annual Institute of Public Administration of Canada, Edmonton region's new public servant award of excellence. This award recognizes Jennifer's tremendous attitude towards work and learning, her commitment to providing consistently excellent service beyond the scope of her usual role and responsibilities, and her drive towards improving the public service. I'd ask Jennifer Keller to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome and thank you from this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is, indeed, a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly today the grade 9 class from l'école Beausejour in Plamondon. We have 16 students visiting together with their teachers, Claude Lamoureux and Étienne Vaillancourt. I had the opportunity to take a photo with them along with the Minister of Employment and Immigration. They are having a great day in Edmonton touring the Legislature Building. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. We welcome you to Edmonton.

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

**Mr. Webber:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a very special person in my life who served the last 27 years of her life in the career of law enforcement, protecting both the citizens of Edmonton and later the citizens of greater Victoria on Vancouver Island. Her work as an undercover police officer had her tediously infiltrating

organized crime gangs and crime rings, often putting her in very dangerous situations. This lady would pursue and harass and persecute those who preyed on the sick and the vulnerable. Often the most cherished in society, our children, would be the targets of these ruthless criminals. Most recently, up to her retirement, she supervised a highly specialized and passionate group of undercover police officers within the child abuse and youth section on the island. As a sergeant she was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's medal of valour for outstanding service on the assignment. Best of all is the fact that this lady just happens to be my sister. She is here today, somewhere up here under cover. I'm not too sure where she is, but I think she's with the students of Webber Academy. I'd ask that my sister, Barbara Webber, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to talk about the commitment the government of Alberta has made to assist low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. I have received phone calls from constituents and people have stopped on the street to say thank you. It is very encouraging to have constituents – is this introductions? I don't have any guests to introduce.

**The Speaker:** Well, that is very unique. You are not on any other list that I have.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a very, very great pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a wonderful woman whom I've known for a number of years, Lorna Thomas. Lorna is a documentary filmmaker. She is joined here today by Kern Goretzky, who is a broadcaster for Access television. But, really, the star of today and of tomorrow is Ken Thomas, her brother. Ken is an activist, an athlete, and the subject of the documentary *Catching My Breath*. I'm going to do a private member's statement later describing Lorna's film about Ken and his participation in the Masters Games. But in the meantime, Ken would like me to remind all of you that May is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. I would like to congratulate them all on the broadcasting tomorrow, May 15, of Lorna's and Ken's documentary on Access television. I would ask you all to please rise or signal your acceptance of our welcome to the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

1:40

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

#### Norwegian Heritage

**Mr. Olson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've already indicated, we have many people in the galleries today who are proud of their Norwegian heritage. We have actually the largest number of people of Norwegian descent in Canada living here in Alberta. My informal survey indicates, too, that we have 17 former and nine current MLAs who are of Norwegian descent. We're actually using this occasion today – we're a few days early – to celebrate the 17th of May, or syttende mai, to recognize the country of Norway and its independence from Sweden. Now, a former MLA from my area, Gordon Stromberg, who is actually of Swedish descent but lived at New Norway, was fond of saying that syttende mai was really a celebration by the Swedes for having finally gotten rid of the Norwegians. I would suggest that's a bit of revisionist history.

The real reason we are celebrating, though, is to recognize our ancestors, our people who came here, many of them at or just before the turn of the last century. In that sense the story of our ancestors is the same as many other groups from many other parts of the world. There is a lot of similarity. It may be a generalization, but these people all were probably from underprivileged classes in their own countries, and they came here on a quest for political and religious freedom, economic opportunity, and educational opportunity for their children.

These new Albertans may have had little in terms of worldly possessions, but they had great hopes, they had a strong and abiding faith, and they had a huge work ethic, and that stood them in good stead as they built their communities. They built schools; for example, Camrose Lutheran College, which is now the Augustana faculty of the University of Alberta. They built many communities, communities like Bergen, New Norway, Viking, Valhalla Centre, Camrose, which for a time was known as Oslo, Bardo, Vang, and Armena, which was originally Thordenskjold.

I just want to point out, if you'll indulge me, that the staffs on the outside of this door have the reeds that are bound together, and it's that binding together of all of these groups that makes Alberta strong.

Thank you.

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much. That's a very hard act to follow, but let me see if I can match that.

#### *Catching My Breath*

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is the first broadcast on Access television of Lorna Thomas's documentary about her brother Ken Thomas, entitled *Catching my Breath*. It's not easy to make a film, never mind to get it screened and then to nail a broadcaster, so I really want to celebrate Lorna's artistry and her tenacity in getting the documentary this far. It has already been nominated for two different cinema awards. Please watch for it at 8 o'clock tomorrow, Friday, the 15th of May, on Access television.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, tenacity runs in the family. Ken has cerebral palsy, and his tenacity has carried him through a lifelong fight for inclusion and independence, for housing, for home care, for education. Not surprising to those who know him, he's also a winning wheelchair athlete and a fierce competitor on behalf of the Alberta and Canadian cerebral palsy sports associations in the '80s and '90s. The film shows his battle to participate in one more race being held in his hometown of Edmonton during the 2005 World Masters Games. *Catching my Breath* witnesses his heated e-mail correspondence to convince race organizers to let him race his way, which is racing backwards in his wheelchair, and his family, friends, and volunteers all get in on this. I'm not going to give away the outcome. You will have to watch and see for yourself.

I do want to extend my congratulations to Ken Thomas on his many victories on the track and in life and a big cheer to Lorna Thomas for her wonderful film. Many thanks to the support of her brother Bryan and family and for the great folks at Access television, including Kern Goretzky.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Okay, hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill, go.

#### Support for Seniors and Disabled Persons

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise today to talk about

the commitment the government of Alberta has made to assist low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. I have received a number of phone calls, and people have even stopped me on the street in my constituency to say thank you. It is very encouraging to have these constituents make these comments.

They are thankful because the government has increased the maximum monthly benefit through the assured income for severely handicapped program and the funding to address the increase in client caseload. This year's AISH budget of \$709 million allows us to increase the maximum monthly living allowance for AISH recipients by \$100 per month to \$1,188 per month.

I'd also like to highlight this government's ongoing commitment to low-income seniors through the Alberta seniors' benefit program, which supplements federal benefits by providing monthly cash benefits to low-income seniors. As a result of this budget presented to the Legislature, approximately 6,000 more seniors will be eligible for the Alberta seniors' benefit. In addition, those that qualify under this new income threshold will receive up to an additional \$40 per month for a single senior and \$60 a month for a couple.

I'm proud to be a part of this government that is making a difference in the lives of those who most need it. We define ourselves by how we treat the most vulnerable in our society, and by this definition I think each and every Albertan can be proud of what this government is accomplishing on their behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert.

#### Lois Hole Day

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has been very fortunate to have had many fine citizens serving as the Queen's representative in our province. This morning in St. Albert we honoured one of Alberta's and St. Albert's finest, Her Honour the late Lois Hole, 15th Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta.

Lois Hole became well known in the late '50s and early '60s for her generosity to patrons of the family market garden on the edge of St. Albert. She would always add a few extra carrots to everyone's purchase. This was a defining characteristic of Lois. She always went that extra mile, adding those few extra carrots in whatever she did. In fact, she was even known to add a few extra gems when she read the annual Speech from the Throne.

This small market garden evolved into Hole's greenhouses, a business that attracted customers that came from far and wide not just for the produce but for the friendly gardening advice and the hospitality that was part of every visit.

Lois was very interested in education, children, and libraries, which led her to serve on local school boards, the Athabasca University Governing Council, and as chancellor of the University of Alberta. She was named to the Order of Canada in 1999.

We all know her very well as our 15th Lieutenant Governor. Lois was very special to all of St. Albert and all Albertans and, in fact, everyone that she met. As the queen of hugs Lois broke through traditional social barriers. As a woman of the earth Lois was always very down to earth in her approach to issues. Whether they were school board, civic, or political issues, she always took a very practical approach and she always took the high road.

The city of St. Albert has declared May 14 Lois Hole Day in recognition of Her Honour. A sculpture was unveiled this morning in St. Albert, which will initially stand in front of St. Albert Place until a suitable location is available in Lois Hole provincial park. The intention is that when the interpretive centre is constructed on Big Lake, the sculpture will be relocated at a suitable location near

the interpretive centre. This sculpture by Barbara Paterson is a fitting tribute to a great lady who brought honour and grace to our province and to the city of St. Albert. In a few years everything will come together when the interpretive centre is completed in Lois Hole provincial park.

Thank you.

#### Oral Question Period

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

#### Surgery Reductions

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, no matter how the minister of health spins it, the Royal Alexandra hospital has cut surgery in response to pressure from this administration. Right now the issue, though, is not budgets; it's not dollars. It's about people, people who have a right to an honest, straight answer from the Premier. To the Premier: now that the administration has forced these cuts on the Royal Alex, how much longer will people be expected to wait for elective procedures like hip, knee, cataract, and hernia?

1:50

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the board has received an additional \$550 million in operating funds – that's about a 7.7 per cent increase to the Alberta Health Services Board – and they're now working with health care providers in the province to try and work within the money that was given to them. At the same time there was a substantial increase to the medical profession, a billion dollars over the next three years. As to the detail of the plan I'll ask the minister to respond.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. How can the Premier explain the rationale that reducing surgery will strengthen public health care and reduce wait times?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in the House before, we have quite a challenge before us, and that is to protect a publicly funded health system for the next generation and the generation after that. At the rate of increases that we've seen in health care delivery – and we've been rather fortunate as a province because we did grow our wealth. But in this particular case when we see substantially declining revenues, this year we took money from all other departments and gave health the largest increase to try and maintain services through this province. At the end of the day it's a long-term vision to make sure that our grandchildren enjoy this system that we enjoy today.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, it's a puzzle to Albertans how we're going to cut efficiency and improve services in the long term. Again to the Premier: how long will Edmontonians expect the Royal Alex's operating rooms to be forced to perform at less than full capacity?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to put on the record in this House that this particular government spends more per capita on health care than any other province in this country. This particular member has said on several occasions that we've got to spend our money smarter. I agree with him. We have to spend our money smarter. We can't continue to do what we've done in the past and expect to get different results. We have a health board. We

have a new CEO, and he is taking the action that will be required to ensure that this system becomes more effective and more efficient and that we no longer are spending 23 per cent more per capita than every other province in this country.

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

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, people and organizations, including the Alberta Medical Association, are saying that these cuts will spread to other hospitals and to other surgery. The fate of many services throughout the province is being called into question. This is unacceptable. To the Premier: will he tell Albertans what percentage reduction in surgery we'll be seeing at other hospitals, including the University of Alberta, the Peter Lougheed, the Foothills hospital in Calgary?

**Mr. Liepert:** I'd like to answer that question because I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to show me where the Alberta Medical Association has said what he just said they did. He can't prove that, Mr. Speaker. What I would suggest is that, yes, we've got the United Nurses of Alberta saying that, we have the two opposition parties saying that, and we have the odd doctor saying that, but when I meet with the Alberta Medical Association, they are committed to work with us to ensure that we make this system more effective and more efficient for all Albertans.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, again to the Premier, will the Premier tell Calgarians how much reduction in cancer surgery to expect in the coming year?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, again, this particular leader is trying to convey a message that is wrong. We have been very clear yesterday and will be as clear again today: there are no changes to cancer and urgent surgery that are required. We're talking about elective surgery. Until the hon. member will acknowledge the fact that he is – I won't say what he's doing, but until he starts to ensure that what he is saying is consistent with what is fact, then I'm not necessarily going to respond to his questions on that.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, again to the minister, then, despite what he and the Premier are saying, the fact is that Albertans are seeing surgery delayed further and even cancelled. People are leaving the province to get the service they expect. How can he claim to be improving the system when Albertans actually experience cuts?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, this particular leader is suggesting that somehow when we've added \$550 million to the system, it's a cut. Now, yes, of course, it's not as much as they would want us to spend because today is a spending day. Tomorrow will be a savings day. We've got to be consistent on this side of the House if we want to have any credibility with Albertans.

**The Speaker:** Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Rural Hospitals

**Dr. Swann:** Well, back to the Premier on the issue of rural hospitals. Mr. Premier, this administration is planning to close specific rural hospitals, it's clear. The plan was approved in the former David Thompson health region. It falls into line with the Premier's Vision 2020. It means cuts for rural hospitals in Alberta. Beyond generali-

ties the fate of specific small-town hospitals, however, is still a mystery to Albertans. To the Premier: why is the Premier so secretive and reluctant to tell Albertans what the plans are for rural hospitals in Alberta?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, the government's decision around the future of health care is very clear. We've released the Vision 2020 document, which lays it out very clearly. We have committed that if there are any changes to what current facilities in rural Alberta are providing, we will discuss that with the communities involved. For this leader to suggest that somehow he and a few of his friends think they've got some kind of secret document here is just ludicrous.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, there's nothing secret about it, Mr. Speaker. It was approved by the David Thompson health region. Will the minister then tell the people of Rimbey, Ponoka, Lacombe, Innisfail, Coronation, Consort, Sundre, Three Hills, and Hanna if their hospitals will be downgraded to urgent care? They know that's on the block. What is the plan, Mr. Minister?

**Mr. Liepert:** Where has this guy been for the last year and a half? There is no David Thompson health region anymore, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the reasons why we went to one health board, so we can deliver equitable health care across the province. It just shows how out of touch he is, using a document that is some year and a half old with a board that doesn't exist anymore.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, if this administration is already cutting access in the cities and now the plan to cut services in small towns, where are rural people supposed to get their services, Mr. Minister?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, rural people will get their services where they're getting them today and as long as we're providing that service, Mr. Speaker. This particular member is doing nothing but fearmongering in this particular Legislature.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

### Health System Restructuring

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Senior doctors say that cuts to operating rooms will affect cancer patients, and they say that Alberta Health Services is lying about it to Albertans. My question is to the Premier. Why is your government cutting cancer surgeries at the Royal Alex hospital and then denying it to the public?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, we're not. Once again, he comes forward with misinformation. The minister yesterday answered the question very clearly, and he'll be able to respond in terms of the level of activity at Royal Alex and all other hospitals in Alberta.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, it's not enough that this government is cancelling hip and knee and cataract surgeries. Now cancer surgeries will be delayed, and people may die as a result. Again to the Premier: when will you accept responsibility for Albertans' health care and rein in that one-man wrecking crew you call a health minister?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, you know, Albertans have an opportunity here to judge. Do they believe the leaders of Alberta Health Services and this government, or do they believe that member and

the *Edmonton Journal*? That's what we're talking about. There's an issue around credibility here, and I would suggest that Albertans consistently show that they happen to believe this government and not those two over there who do nothing but spread fear throughout this province.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, this Premier has unleashed a shock wave of unplanned change that is shaking the very foundations of our public health system, yet he did not seek nor did he receive a mandate from Albertans for these changes. Will the Premier agree to stop wrecking our public health care system until he goes to the people for a mandate? Run an election on cutting cancer surgeries, Mr. Premier. I dare you.

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, we were very clear during the campaign that our goal was to increase access, also to increase the quality of care, but most importantly to ensure that we preserve this publicly funded health care system for the future. I mean, if that's a challenge that I hear today in terms of the operation of government, I'll take them on any time. First of all, they wanted to shut down the oil sands. Then all of a sudden he reverses his position. He's going to keep it open. Even with a little slowdown and all of a sudden thousands of people out of work, now he's changing his position.

There would be more to come, but I used up my time.

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

#### 2:00 Capital Power Corporation

**Mr. Benito:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Some of my constituents have questions about a recent move by EPCOR in the city of Edmonton to create a new publicly traded company called Capital Power. They are concerned that this move will affect the price they pay for their electricity and the services they receive. My questions today are for the Minister of Energy. Will this change in ownership affect the prices Edmontonians pay for electricity?

**Mr. Knight:** In a word, Mr. Speaker, no. EPCOR's retail and distribution services will remain the same. The change actually only affects EPCOR's electricity generation facilities. Electricity prices are determined here in a fair and open, competitive marketplace. The move will not impact electricity services, nor will it have any direct impact on the rates that these Albertans are paying for their power.

**Mr. Benito:** To the same minister: does the creation of this new publicly traded company change the way the services are regulated?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, no. The province continues to regulate the rates and service levels of EPCOR's distribution customers and the regulated rate retail customers. The creation of another publicly traded company in our competitive electricity market is good news for all Albertans.

**Mr. Benito:** Mr. Speaker, I've heard a number of concerns about electricity, the regulation, the role of power retailers and so on. Some might think that this latest move by EPCOR is further evidence that the electricity market is more focused on corporate interests than protecting consumers. What assurances can the minister provide that the market is fair and working as it should?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is that all of the work done relative to the generating side and the distribution transmission of power in the province of Alberta is done under the scrutiny of the Market Surveillance Administrator. Private investment is responsible in the province for about 5,000 megawatts of new generation since 1998, an approximate value of over \$5 billion invested in this province, money that was not paid for by the provincial taxpayers. We believe that the system is working.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

#### Provincial Fiscal Policy

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The current recession has shown us that this government's fiscal policy is not sustainable. Whether this recession ends this year or in five years, we must use this experience as an opportunity to take a different path, yet this government has failed to develop either a long-term vision or the fiscal discipline to implement it. To the minister of finance. I'm going to try to get an answer to this question one more time. What specific plans does the minister have to reduce Alberta's reliance on funding core programs with nonrenewable resource revenues?

**Ms Evans:** I'm sorry; there were at least two points in that question that weren't clear. But if it's relative to the financing of government programs with nonrenewable resource revenues, we have certainly been privileged in Alberta to have such a healthy economy, such a largesse of fortune from nonrenewable resource revenues. We have been operating with the full knowledge and consent of Albertans in the expenditure of those types of revenues not only in the development of infrastructure that supports development but in the support of the families that have lived and worked in the oil and gas industry.

**Mr. Taylor:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I said I'd try.

The budget says that the government wants to encourage a culture of savings with Albertans because "it is timely to enhance Albertans' awareness of the importance of individual savings." Can the minister explain the hypocrisy in asking Albertans to be more prudent in their savings when this government is completely unwilling to do it itself?

**Ms Evans:** Well, Mr. Speaker, our track record on saving is second to none in any other part of the country. Today Albertans have the benefit of over \$10,000 worth of assets on an individual basis if you divided up some 36 billion dollars and ascribed it to every man, woman, and child. Contrast that with Ontario. If they cashed in their chips in Ontario, they would owe \$13,000 for every man, woman, and child. With the heritage fund, the sustainability fund, the assets we've accumulated in the endowment funds, we have shown that, clearly, we are savers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister of health has already floated the idea of upping gasoline taxes by 5 cents a litre to bring in additional revenue, will the minister of finance clarify if this government is going to be increasing the gas tax or not?

**Ms Evans:** Mr. Speaker, we have not entertained that type of discussion. We have certainly been looking at the challenges that lie

ahead in this fiscal situation. We've seen some ideas and other things floated that might gain traction, but at this time I have no knowledge of that. What we are looking at, though, is a very serious situation when we have in fact used \$4.7 billion from our sustainability fund. We take that seriously, and our intention at the time that we have recovery is to pay those dollars back.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

### Financial Literacy Education

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night Junior Achievement of northern Alberta hosted its 29th annual Alberta business hall of fame gala here in Edmonton, a great way to celebrate the accomplishments of two of Alberta's finest entrepreneurs and the work of an outstanding community organization. To the Minister of Education: what are you doing to support the work of organizations like Junior Achievement to ensure that our students learn how to properly manage their money?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was, indeed, an honour and a privilege to be at that banquet last night with the President of the Treasury Board to say thank you to Junior Achievement for the great work they do in our community, partnering with our schools to make sure that our children have an opportunity to develop entrepreneurial instincts and to learn financial literacy among other things. JA's economics of staying in school program is an excellent way for grade 9 students, for example, to think about their financial future and make sound financial investments. There were 70 teachers at that banquet last night, representing over 400 teachers across our school jurisdiction who partner with JA to make this possible for our students.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Junior Achievement not only teaches students how best to manage their personal finances but the entrepreneurial skills needed to turn bright ideas into a successful business. What is the minister doing to ensure that Albertans have the skills that will keep our province a hot spot for entrepreneurship?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's important to recognize the role of Junior Achievement and the many members of Junior Achievement who are role models and mentors for students across our system. Every study shows that to encourage students to finish high school, one of the strongest incentives for students who are successful is that they have an adult in their life who has made a difference. That can't always be the teacher. Often it is, but it can't always be the teacher. Sometimes it can be someone from the business community – a role model, a mentor – who comes in to help the students find their passion, learn financial literacy, and improve. We have programs like CTS and others that help with financial literacy instruction, but we really have to thank Junior Achievement and the role models and mentors that go into our schools to help our children.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary to the same minister. The 2009 federal budget includes a plan to establish an independent task force to develop a national strategy on financial literacy. Is Alberta going to participate in this?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue. Particularly in this downturn that we are experiencing across the country and around the world, many people have talked about the need for more education on financial literacy. We've got a very good head start on that with the program that Junior Achievement does in our schools and the partnership that it has created with our schools, and again we need to thank them for that. But we do need to do more. We're talking with the Ministry of Finance and Enterprise and some of our colleagues in government about how we can do financial literacy across the spectrum on an even broader scale.

### Building Construction Review

**Mr. Hehr:** Mr. Speaker, this government has been reviewing the building codes since last summer. It's now a year later. An increasing number of people are losing their leaky, mouldy condos because the government is sluggish to improve Alberta's building codes. The industry knew three years ago that stucco in Alberta is a problem, and this government is still monitoring, still reviewing, still sitting on their hands. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister's review of building codes began last summer. When will the recommendations to improve the building codes be made public?

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. We did have a consultation last summer. Through the fall and into the winter the report was assembled and was presented to me. At the present time we are reviewing it, and we hope to have recommendations coming forth in the very near future.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that is good to hear, but it still doesn't reveal how many condo buildings this government has identified to date in Alberta that potentially have faulty stucco.

2:10

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what did take place is that we mostly looked at single-family dwellings. We did have consultations with individual families that reported to us that they had concerns. We examined those buildings. We do not have a number of how many buildings were or are affected. We have very good safety codes in Alberta. The discussions, that the hon. member mentioned, that were looking at the consultation very much talked about what needs to happen to ensure that we have good workmanship.

**Mr. Hehr:** Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, many people in my constituency have had their condominiums built in the last number of years, built in the boom time, and they are really worried about what has happened. When will these new building codes be put into place to better protect homeowners from faulty construction?

**Mr. Danyluk:** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. There's not a suggestion from our department that there will be new building codes. We examined the quality of construction to ensure the protection of new homeowners. As I said before, we're reviewing the recommendations. We want to ensure that we do have safe and reliable homes for Albertans to live in. We're confident, as I said before, that the codes are appropriate, and we want to ensure that



Albertans have the confidence in the construction industry that they should have.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

### Postsecondary Application System

**Mr. Cao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the school year gets closer to an end, caring parents and eager students are looking forward to higher education. Now is the time that tens of thousands of students are looking forward to applying to postsecondary education for the fall program. Alberta's province-wide postsecondary enrolment system should be up and running by now. My first question is to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. Why is the new enrolment system taking so long to implement?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that everybody is anxious to get ApplyAlberta working across the province. It was a huge undertaking, getting all 21 of our publicly funded postsecondary institutions online, with well over 140,000 students. There has been some pilot testing along with the students to test the usability of the system. The University of Lethbridge conducted those tests, and it did pass with flying colours. By the fall of this year all 21 postsecondary institutions will be expected to be using ApplyAlberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Cao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same hon. minister: with the ApplyAlberta system running, will the students from out of the province and out of the country wanting to apply be able to use the system? Will it be the same as it is for Alberta students?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Out of province students and international students will be able to use the ApplyAlberta system, and it will be the same as it is for Alberta students. The only difference is that those out of province or international students would have to provide their own transcripts from their high schools or the schools that they're coming from as they would have to do currently. We don't have access to those; therefore, we can't tie them into the system. Alberta students do not have to pay for high school transcripts that are applied for through the ApplyAlberta system. That's one of the benefits of the new system that we're putting forward. Most of the postsecondaries do charge a fee, but there is no fee for ApplyAlberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Cao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last supplementary question to the same hon. minister. I understand that the ApplyAlberta system is part of a larger initiative called Campus Alberta. Is the framework for Campus Alberta now complete, or is there more work, as ApplyAlberta, to complete it?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of years ago we brought forward into this Legislature the roles and responsibilities

framework document, which put the six-sectoral model in place, which is unique to North America, I would say, and we should be very, very proud of that system. It's working very, very well. As we roll out the other pieces of it, one piece being the APAS system and another piece will be the Campus Alberta management of that system, we will bring all of these pieces together, have that support system as a single source of support so that as new projects come along, whether that be space utilization or other things that we can do, we have one place we can go to.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

### Personal Care Aides

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The vast majority of the care that is provided in Alberta's continuing care facilities is through personal care assistants. Personal care assistants are not a regulated profession, so there's no requirement for continuing competencies or standard level of training. To the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports: is the minister concerned that the majority of the care provided in Alberta's continuing care facilities is through an unregulated profession?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, my ministry is responsible for overseeing accommodation standards in long-term care and supportive living facilities. Accommodation standards include housekeeping, meal quality, and resident safety. To help ensure that Albertans receive quality continuing care accommodation services, my ministry staff monitor operators for compliance to these standards. If the member would like to talk specifically about qualifications for personal care aides or any other health professionals, she should talk to my colleague the Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Ms Pastoor:** Whoops. That was perhaps a little bit too prepared.

My next question is to the same minister. Do you have any plans or discussions to advocate that PCAs be included in the Health Professions Act and give seniors and their families the peace of mind that they're receiving a standard level of care? I think that would be your discussion with the minister of health.

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, I'm familiar with personal care aides. There are courses in our colleges that people take in order to be certified as a personal care aide. I've experienced many good people who are part of this profession, and it's a conversation that I would consider having with the Minister of Health and Wellness later on.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm just going to upstage you here, and I'll ask the minister himself. Can the minister answer if there are any plans or discussions that PCAs would come under the Health Professions Act now or in the future? It's very important because in the future we're going to be relying more and more on PCAs to deliver that care.

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, the member actually raises a very good issue. Through the department a couple of years ago we had brought forward some certification standards that we felt would enhance the quality of care that was being provided. As we all know, in the last few years we've had a real challenge relative to finding workforce, especially in facilities like long-term care. So what we've done is

worked with the long-term care providers to relax those guidelines. Now, that doesn't mean to say that the quality isn't the same. Long-term care providers were having difficulty not only attracting people but keeping them and training them. We are working with Alberta Health Services to see how we can make this a certified profession, but we have to work with all of the players in the system.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

#### Rural Health Care Facilities

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An Alberta Health Services document outlines this government's plans to downgrade 10 hospitals in the former David Thompson health region. Now, this is the heartland of rural Alberta, where people can't risk driving hours to a major medical centre. To the minister of health: what other plans to downgrade and shut down health facilities in other areas of the province are you not telling the public about?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's little doubt this is just fearmongering on behalf of these members and a few of their friends. There is no plan in place to do anything of the sort, what the member has just referred to. What I think she is talking about, I suspect, is the same question that came from the Leader of the Opposition. I don't have the document in front of me, but it sounds to me like it's a couple-of-years-old document by a no longer operating health region.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, this plan was repeated in an Alberta Health Services newsletter that was published a month and a half ago, and it outlines the closure of long-term care facilities in Trochu, Bentley, and Breton. Now, this government promised to build up long-term care in the province. Instead, it appears they plan to take long-term care beds out of the communities where they're needed. The minister says that this is an old plan. Will he stand up here today and commit that every facility listed on the DTHR capital plan will be maintained?

2:20

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to is what I said earlier in the House, that if there are changes planned for any facilities in a community, we would ensure that we have discussions with that community. There are no plans that I'm aware of that follow the path that this particular member is talking about.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, by downgrading 10 hospitals and closing five other facilities, this government would be making health care for over 100,000 rural Albertans less accessible. To review, that's just the one region we know about. Now, there's no doubt this government has similar plans in other rural regions of the province. Rural communities at this point feel as though they're being left out of the process. When exactly will the minister consult rural Albertans about what health care facilities they need in their regions as opposed to dictating what facilities he thinks they can do without?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, I think I beat the member to the question because that was my exact answer to her last question. I said that we would be consulting with the communities. If she would just quit yipping away there, as she has become accustomed to, Mr. Speaker, she could listen to the answer and she might have heard when I answered her previous question.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

#### Rural Physician Recruitment

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm advised by one of my constituency's five local doctor recruitment committees that until recently the province provided incentive funding or a relocation allowance to attract doctors to rural areas of the province. This is a valuable program, and they are concerned that it may have been eliminated. My questions are all to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Can he tell my constituents: has this program recently been eliminated for rural doctor recruitment?

**Mr. Liepert:** Finally, we have a question from a rural member who actually has real concerns about rural health care, not some wannabe rural member from across the way. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what funding the hon. member is referring to, but we continue to provide dollars through our trilateral agreement with the Alberta Medical Association through the rural, remote, and northern program to provide financial incentives to physicians to practise in rural and remote regions.

But I do want to add that physicians do not work for government. Physicians make their own decisions as to where they want to locate. I think it's very important for communities to do whatever they can to ensure that they make it easy for physicians to locate in that community.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another community working very hard to keep their emergency room services open, and they are concerned that we will pay a doctor from another town significantly more money to do an ER locum, yet we will not offer that same amount of money to incent a local doctor to cover extra on calls at the local emergency room. Can the minister tell us: is that accurate? If so, why do we do that?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, I don't believe it is, Mr. Speaker, because my understanding of how the locum service works is that locums are paid equivalent to what a permanent physician in that community would be paid. Now, where the differential may come in is that, obviously, if it's a locum, it's someone from outside the community, so there would be expenses that that individual would incur, and that would obviously have to be paid for.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some rural hospitals have empty wings or pods, areas we maintain yet are sitting empty. We are also as communities trying to provide incentives to get doctors to come and practise in our rural areas. My constituents would like to ask the minister: why do we not provide these empty hospital spaces at a reduced rate or no rate to general practitioners to house their clinics in our hospitals that are underutilized?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, finally a constructive suggestion on how we start to fix situations in rural Alberta. I think that has some merit. Each one would have to be looked at on its own by Alberta Health Services, but I would suggest that if it makes sense, we should be looking at that. At the same time, I can guarantee you that when we do that, we'll hear all kinds of screaming over here for closing down rural hospitals because they'll be exaggerating exactly what we're doing.

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

#### All-terrain Vehicles in Parks and Protected Areas

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is the official kickoff of the 2009 camping season. To date, due to the lack of proactive government policy and enforcement a small minority of irresponsible off-roaders have caused millions of dollars of damage in the Ghost-Waiparous, Indian Graves, and most recently in the McLean Creek area. Government inaction has simply moved the destruction around. Due to the increased camping registration costs in a growing number of campgrounds, more families will be driven to wilderness random camping, where much of this destruction has taken place. To the Solicitor General: how far ranging will the RCMP and sheriff support be for SRD and conservation officers this weekend?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity asks an excellent question, certainly a question that's a concern of many Albertans. Based on, you know, what the hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development said yesterday, he's going to have, I believe, over 280 officers out patrolling those areas. I can assure this member that our sheriffs and the RCMP will also be patrolling the surrounding roads to ensure that proper vehicle registrations are in place and will be monitoring the liquor control act as well. We believe we have a good handle on it.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. That's reassuring. For the last number of years conservation officers have been stretched very thin. This added support will be very much appreciated. I'm hoping that this increased presence will reach out into the wilderness areas to offer 24-hour security responsiveness.

Again to the Solicitor General: will the vehicles of irresponsible off-roaders be seized if they have caused destruction in undesignated trail areas?

**Mr. Lindsay:** What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that we will utilize the legislation that's in place to the best of our ability to ensure that these wilderness areas are not abused.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I think a tough-on-crime approach in the rural areas, particularly wilderness, would be welcomed.

Again to the Solicitor General. Yesterday the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation indicated that there would be a temporary liquor ban in only eight of Alberta's hundreds of parks and protected areas. Given that the overconsumption of alcohol is at the heart of most campground confrontations, will you be reviewing the liquor policy and enforcement support in campgrounds?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I believe the minister responsible for parks indicated the steps that we're taking this weekend, quite similar to the steps that we took last year. They have created the results that we were expecting. We're not looking at or considering a total ban of alcoholic beverages in Alberta's parks.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

#### Crime Prevention Initiatives

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've all seen and heard media reports suggesting that crime in Alberta is on the rise. Gangs seem to operate without any fear of getting caught, and every day brings new stories of more crime and violence in our cities and towns. This government has introduced a number of initiatives to help prevent and reduce crime so Albertans feel safe, but crime prevention also requires a partnership between Albertans, police, and government. My questions are to the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. Can the minister tell us what his ministry is doing to help prevent and reduce crime in our province?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This hon. member knows that this government does have a plan and is taking action to ensure that Albertans are safe in their homes and communities. We've added more police officers. We will continue to do that. More probation officers, as well, will monitor those that are out on release. We've launched a new program that targets chronic, repeat offenders. We have four new integrated gang enforcement teams that will be taking to the streets of our cities and province over the next month or so. We also have a province-wide gang reduction strategy that's been developed. A new grant program is providing \$60 million to support programs in our communities. We are moving ahead to ensure that our communities are safe.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what can individual Albertans do to help share the responsibility for preventing crime in their own neighbourhoods?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, crime prevention works best when it's a community effort involving residents, police, and all levels of government. When a neighbourhood experiences a problem, often all it takes to fix it is one person to get involved. Then others come on board, and great things happen. We encourage all citizens in our province to get involved by being vigilant and to take action to reduce crime.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: where can Albertans get the information that they need to help them become effective partners in crime prevention?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Mr. Speaker, we have a number of programs and educational materials available for Albertans who want to take an active role in preventing crime in their communities. The ministry's website offers practical information on how to organize community crime prevention activities and tips on how Albertans can protect themselves, their neighbourhoods, and their workplaces. Crime Prevention Week ends this Saturday, but crime is a reality all year long. I encourage all Albertans to continue working with their neighbours and the police to prevent crime in their communities.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

2:30

**Bitumen Royalty in Kind Program**

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Royalties on oil sands are very price sensitive, and when prices are low, royalties almost disappear. When those royalties are paid to the government in the form of bitumen instead of cash, then when prices are low, the flow of royalty in kind bitumen will slow to a trickle. My question is to the Minister of Energy. How will this government establish local upgrading through the bitumen royalty in kind program when royalties can drop to such a low level?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, again, the questions that the hon. member opposite raises are questions that are all predicated on a snapshot in time that's about three months long. The vision of this government relative to this resource for the people of the province of Alberta spans 40 or 50 years, and the amount of time that we're talking about relative to this resource and the wealth creation that it will provide for Albertans is a much longer time horizon than a three-month snapshot from someone's public document.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to get at the policy issue here when we have such wild swings in the production. A good bitumen royalty in kind program, I think we agree, could be a useful tool for stimulating Alberta-based upgrading, but it is a very unstable tool. Right now it's very low. Last year it was very high. Who knows, next year? Again to the Minister of Energy: what measures will the government introduce to ensure greater stability in bitumen supply for local royalty in kind upgrading?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, again, I think that if we go back and take a look at what the provincial government did relative to this business kind of in the mid-90s, took a look at a specific framework, a generic regime to allow for the investment and increase in production of bitumen for the future of the province of Alberta, no one – no one – in those days would have expected the tremendous amount of investment and the tremendous uptake relative to production of bitumen in the province of Alberta. Right now we do about 1.2 million barrels a day, and that will increase over time.

**Dr. Taft:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. Well, reaching the government's objective of having 70 per cent of bitumen upgraded in Alberta is going to be tough. It's a stretch target. With so much upgrader and pipeline construction surging along in the U.S., it's going to take some kind of dramatic step from this government very soon, or it's going to be too late, and we'll end up, in the Premier's words, shipping topsoil from the farm. Back to the same minister: is this government prepared to consider a regulatory requirement on producers to upgrade a per cent of bitumen here in the province?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the situation, of course, with respect to bitumen royalty in kind and the royalty structure that we have in place is that bitumen royalty in kind, as the member opposite very well knows, is the subject of ongoing debate relative to how it will perform for us in the long term. What I will say is that the government of Alberta and this government under the current administration will not overcommit supplies to any project for the province of Alberta or the producers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Marketing of Agricultural Products**

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are currently some advertising campaigns, especially in local newspapers, rural newspapers, and some on air. These campaigns are being paid for by producer associations, and they are showing opposition to some government initiatives related to agriculture. My question to the minister of agriculture: what do you plan to do to address this?

**Mr. Groeneveld:** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the focus is on the organization itself rather than on a successful future for the producers in the industry. It is also unfortunate that producers' money is being spent on this when it should be supporting initiatives that create a better future and growing industry for producers. We are not focusing on the negative. We are focusing on new initiatives, research, new increased market access in order to create a more profitable and competitive future for the industry.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of these organizations are actually saying that making check-offs refundable might be the end of these organizations' existence. My question to the same minister: what are you doing to prevent this from happening?

**Mr. Groeneveld:** Mr. Speaker, nine other commissions operate very successfully in Alberta. They are able to represent their producers very effectively. For these commissions their membership base is engaged, and the commission is responsive, and it's positive. You know, there's a saying that comes to mind: if you think you can or if you think you can't, you're probably right. These commissions will survive and they will prosper if they turn their attention to ensuring the future of the industry and their producers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Minister as well. My final question to the same minister: are there really new markets and opportunities for Alberta's livestock and meat industry around this world?

**Mr. Groeneveld:** Mr. Speaker, there certainly are. We've recently opened new markets offshore, and we're trying to get a foothold into the European market. We're now in Hong Kong and we're in Taiwan, which are great strides into the Asian market. If we can provide these markets with what they want, we will be more competitive in the global marketplace and have more customers, which will put more money, certainly, into the pockets of Alberta producers. For producers ALMA is working. The strategy is working. It will continue to work and it will continue to prosper as long as we work together.

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

**Groundwater Monitoring**

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The point of collecting data is to understand an issue and then make decisions to either benefit or to reduce harm. The province's own report states that the government can't make good decisions on groundwater and aquifers because it doesn't have enough data. In other words, it risks making bad decisions. My questions are to the Minister of Environment. How can the minister know what the acceptable amount of

water that can be diverted from aquifers is if he doesn't have the data?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. That's precisely the reason why we've identified learning more about the connection between groundwater and surface water. How the groundwater aquifers contribute to surface water, and vice versa, is critical as we go forward and deal with what will inevitably become a decision that needs to be made at some point in the future. I can assure the member that that point is not today. We don't have the huge stress that we anticipate is going to come in the future. At this point in time there is plenty of time for us to gather the information, have that information in place so that we can make those appropriate decisions in the future.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Back to the same minister: why does the government consider damage to aquifers not relevant in situations where there are no other identified users in the immediate vicinity?

**Mr. Renner:** I don't think I agree with the premise of the question. I'm not so sure where the member gets the idea that the government considers damage to aquifers not to be relevant. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the reason why we engage in the work that we do. Damage to anything, clearly, is relevant. It's a question of determining what is the impact that we have on anything related to the environment, be it aquifers or be it surface areas, and determining what is an appropriate level of impact and what is the point at which that impact becomes something that we need to address.

**Ms Blakeman:** Well, I'll send the minister the quote. It's from government documents.

Final question to the same minister: is the sparse population in northern Alberta the reason why the government accepts high levels of risk in groundwater contamination when approving water allocations?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, there are various types of groundwater that we deal with. There are water allocations in northern Alberta that are dealing with saline sources of water, deep well sources. There are sources of water where water is in contact with bitumen, where there are some natural contaminants that are located within the water, and then there are groundwater sources that would be more traditionally associated with what you would encounter in southern Alberta. All of those various sources and realities have to be taken into consideration when making decisions with respect to allocation of groundwater.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that was 102 questions and responses today. In a few seconds from now we'll continue the Routine.

2:40

### Members' Statements

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

#### Jennifer Keller

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased and honoured to rise today to recognize a young, passionate, and dedicated member of Alberta's public service. She was introduced to us earlier today by the hon. Minister of Education for her role as

director of the Speak Out Alberta student engagement initiative, to engage Alberta's youth in an ongoing province-wide forum on education, and as the recipient of an IPAC award.

Over the last 50 years, Mr. Speaker, IPAC, or the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, has been advancing excellence in public service through learning, networking, and celebrating the successes of public service. Jennifer Keller received the Edmonton IPAC new public servant award of excellence to recognize and showcase her significant achievement in driving and succeeding in fulfilling a challenging government mandate. The inspiration for the Speak Out initiative came from the February 2008 throne speech, when government announced it would strengthen Alberta's education system by establishing a youth advisory committee to provide a fresh and youthful perspective on learning.

This past year Jennifer has successfully engaged youth from across the province, and on May 4, 2009, the Minister's Student Advisory Council on Education was officially formed. Over the past eight months Jennifer has criss-crossed the province, visiting 37 high schools to engage students and gather their opinions and ideas on education. Asking for students' input and taking action on their ideas will move us toward creating more actively engaged citizens and a stronger education system in our province. One student's mother wrote:

My son returned home last night after having the "best time of his life" at the conference. He is super motivated, and unbelievably positive about what he learned and experienced. Thank you for hosting an excellent conference for the kids.

As a parent of two children, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty amazing to have your teen motivated to get involved and motivated for success. This speaks to the outstanding work that Jennifer Keller and her team have done on behalf of Alberta students. Thank you, Jennifer, for your dedication.

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

#### Rural Communities

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rural Albertans have the largest representation in this government, including the Premier, since the Soled days. They rightfully expect that their issues will be heard. But ever since the election this government has abandoned their needs in so many areas. They've attacked small producers and favoured large corporate farmers. They've abandoned hog farmers, who are in crisis. They've broken many promises about rural health care. The Peace region is just one example of a region that is being ignored by this government, with broken promises about building a new regional hospital in Grande Prairie while in Beaverlodge the hospital may be closed altogether. This region is not alone.

Small family-owned farms are struggling to compete against the large corporate farms that are favoured by this government. Producer associations that support small farmers are being weakened while this government spends public money to lobby against the Canadian Wheat Board. Most recently, the hog producers have been left stranded by this government's lack of a plan for H1N1 flu. It isn't enough for this government to attend photo ops and say that everything is just fine. The farmers need assistance and a plan, and they need it now. What about the people of Rimbey, Lacombe, Ponoka, Coronation, Consort, Sundre, Three Hills, Hanna, Innisfail, Castor, Beaverlodge, Athabasca, and others whose hospitals are now under threat of closure?

The social and human impact of this lack of commitment to the very rural communities who helped elect this government has yet to be determined. So much of our provincial pride stems from our rural identity, and we celebrate it every day. It's time for this government

to stop ignoring the needs of Alberta rural communities and start fulfilling long-awaited promises.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, do you have a tabling?

**Ms Notley:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of two e-mails from Albertans concerned about the amendments to the human rights act in Bill 44. Lyndia Peters is concerned about the bill's effect on teachers and the public education system. Zoya Svitkina is concerned that postsecondary institutions will have to require students who did not learn about evolution at the secondary level to take remedial science classes before entering the regular program.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk Assistant:** I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, responses to questions raised by Dr. Taft, hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview; Ms Notley, hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona; and Mr. Webber, hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills on May 4, 2009, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development main estimates debate.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Goudreau, Minister of Employment and Immigration, pursuant to the Architects Act Alberta Association of Architects annual report 2008; pursuant to the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Act Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta annual report 2008.

On behalf of the hon. Mrs. Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, response to Written Question 11, asked for by Ms Notley on behalf of Mr. Mason on April 6, 2009.

### Projected Government Business

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition House leader.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. According to Standing Order 7(6) I would ask the Government House Leader to share with us the projected government House business for the week of May 25, with government business commencing on May 26.

Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday evening at 7:30 under Government Bills and Orders we anticipate being in Committee of the Whole on Bill 27, Alberta Research and Innovation Act; Bill 43, Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2); and Bill 45, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2009.

On Tuesday, May 26, in the afternoon we anticipate dealing with second readings, including some of Bill 20, Civil Enforcement Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 26, Wildlife Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 29, Family Law Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 30, Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 31, Rules of Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 32, Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act; Bill

35, Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 41, Protection for Persons in Care Act; Bill 42, Gaming and Liquor Amendment Act, 2009. In the evening at 7:30 under Government Bills and Orders we would anticipate dealing with bills 20, 23, 24, 26, 35; Bill 44, Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009; and Bill 52, Health Information Amendment Act, 2009, presuming it's been reported back by that point.

Wednesday, May 27, in the afternoon we would anticipate being in Committee of the Whole on Bill 28, Energy Statutes Amendment Act, 2009; Bill 29, family law; Bill 30, traffic safety; Bill 31, *Rules of Court*; and Bill 32, public agencies. At 7:30 in Committee of the Whole we anticipate dealing with Bill 34, Drug Program Act; Bill 36, Alberta Land Stewardship Act; Bill 41, Protection for Persons in Care Act; Bill 42, Gaming and Liquor Amendment Act; and as per the Order Paper.

On Thursday, May 28, in the afternoon we anticipate dealing with third readings. There is a long list of third readings. Obviously, we won't be able to deal with all of them: bills 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 52.

**The Speaker:** The House will sit on the evening of Monday, May 25, if I heard correctly, for government business. Okay.

Hon. members, before we go further, might we revert briefly to the Introduction of Guests?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

### Introduction of Guests

*(continued)*

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

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions. It indeed gives me pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a very renowned builder, an entrepreneur, and a very consistent supporter to the community of Edmonton and Alberta. Greg Christenson and his mother are in the members' gallery. He has been the past president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. He's with the Home Builders' Association. If I could ask the two to rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, I am also honoured to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a very upstanding and exceptionally united, solid Alberta family. If I could please ask the guests to rise when I introduce them. Firstly, I would like to introduce the mayor of Lac La Biche county, His Worship Peter Kirylchuk, who is visiting the Legislature today with his wife, Alma, and their three daughters and one son; the Shultz family from Lac La Biche – if you could remain standing – the Lane family from Airdrie; and the Vandervalk family from Claresholm. If we could give them the traditional warm welcome for all coming from different parts of Alberta to unite here today to watch this Assembly.

Thank you.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

**The Chair:** The chair would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

**Bill 37****Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2009**

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to rise today in Committee of the Whole to present Bill 37, the Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2009. The Alberta Corporate Tax Act is generally amended every year, and it's to ensure that Alberta maintains a fair, equitable, and competitive tax regime. The support received at second reading of this bill is greatly appreciated, but there are some points raised by the opposition that I would like to discuss.

A concern was raised that we are amending a section to legitimize claims in the oil and gas industry for companies that were breaking the law because of the industry's misinterpretation of the program legislation. I'd like to point out that the transactions in question were not structured to avoid the Alberta royalty tax program parameters. Exempting these transactions from their restricted resource property rules ensures that companies that met the policy objectives of the program and the spirit and the intent of the program when they drilled a new well will indeed receive the benefits under the program of which they truly are deserving. The industry's general misinterpretation of the existing legislation did not preclude individual companies from receiving program benefits when the policy objectives of the program were met.

With regard to the scientific research and experimental development tax credit, the proposed legislation does not change any parameters of the program introduced last year. Proposed amendments will correct several minor technical errors in the legislation and clarify administrative rules for the program. For example, the assessment of the tax credit or the credit is generally later than the assessment of other taxes payable. Therefore, the proposed legislation provides a separate reassessment period for the credit.

I encourage all members of this House to give their full support to Bill 37. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments we just heard from the Member for Athabasca-Redwater. They are useful to us in addressing this bill, which is a bill that we're inclined to support.

I wanted to comment in particular on one thrust of the bill. As far as we can tell, most of this bill is pretty much housekeeping. The bill does address one issue around the Alberta scientific research and experimental development tax credit, and I just want to comment generally on that and the need to continue to do things that stimulate the development of research and development in this province. That's a full range of initiatives, including things like a tax credit, granting, providing direct support through universities and colleges and the Alberta Research Council and those kinds of organizations. So I am heartened. I think we're all heartened to see that any issues that could be causing friction or confusion around a tax credit for research and development are being addressed.

I, just by coincidence, was reading earlier this afternoon a report indicating that the level of research and development investment in Alberta is actually relatively low by some measures compared to most other provinces. In the long term – if I've said it once, I've said it a hundred times – decades from now Alberta's future is not going to be built on oil and gas or agriculture or the existing pillars

of the economy. It'll be built on something new, and we don't know what that is, but we can be certain that whatever it is, it's going to depend on terrific education and on an ongoing, stable, generous, and far-sighted support for research and development.

This bill is just one little, tiny part of filling in that picture. But, you know, the little bits add up to a large whole, and I am hoping that this little bit in this bill will contribute to stability and prosperity for Alberta's future by supporting further research and development.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'll take my seat. I think that's probably it from our caucus.

**The Chair:** Does any other hon. member wish to speak on Bill 37? Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 37 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

**Bill 38****Tourism Levy Amendment Act, 2009**

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Dr. Taft:** Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. A moment ago when I was commenting on the previous bill, I spoke about the need for a stable, reliable, far-sighted, generous strategy in relation to research and development. Exactly that same approach needs to apply to the development of tourism. This bill and the bill that we just voted on are both components of building the longer term prosperity of this province and securing Alberta's future from the day when our fossil fuel wealth diminishes. I think we need to be moving aggressively on that.

3:00

I want to just reflect briefly, Mr. Chairman, on the history of tourism development in this province. You know, an easy place to begin would be the establishment of Banff national park, when the Canadian Pacific Railway first went through Banff and discovered the hot springs there. I suppose that in many ways Banff remains the keystone of Alberta's tourism development, but shortly after that – and we're talking well over a hundred years ago – you had Banff, then you had Jasper, and you had the rise of things like the Calgary Stampede, which, as everybody knows, is the greatest outdoor show on earth, I think it's called.

Those kinds of initiatives provided a foundation for Alberta to build a remarkable tourism sector. In the 1970s and through the 1980s this provincial government understood that and worked hard to advance the interests of tourism, understanding that it was a diversifying of our economy, that it was a relatively green industry, that it was interesting, that it didn't just provide services to people who visited here but that all of us benefited. So we saw a number of initiatives under tourism in the '70s and '80s because tourism was a priority for this government.

That included the development of attractions like the Tyrrell museum in Drumheller, the Remington Carriage Centre in Cardston, and the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin and support for a

whole host of festivals, a lot of which arose in the late '70s and the very early '80s, things like the original Fringe festival in Edmonton, which now has taken its place as one of the largest festivals of its kind in the world, the Folk Festival in Edmonton, Jazz City, and so on. All of those were part of a movement that the government of the day led in enhancing tourism. It was part of a larger strategy to make tourism a central part, and probably it culminated with the Olympics in Calgary in 1988, which, of course, was an enormous international success.

The reason I bring that up is that through the '90s and until just a very, very few years ago this government seemed to almost abandon tourism. There was confusion around the mandate for tourism. The tourism initiative got passed back and forth around industry groups and the government. It wasn't clear who was in charge. There were issues around how it would be financed. In the last couple of years there seems to have been some progress on that issue, and I think this particular bill, Bill 38, will help in consolidating some of that progress and help in addressing some of the confusion.

I want to drive home the point here to all members of this government that tourism, like research and development and like so many other things, needs government to take a far-sighted, predictable, stable leadership role. Government needs to work with partners, needs to be there year after year after year. There's no point in spending vast amounts of money over two or three years and then abandoning it.

I hope this government understands that tourism can grow significantly for Alberta and that it's a good employer, that it's a good cornerstone for this province's economy, that it's something that can be enjoyed by people who live here as well as by visitors, and I really hope – really hope – that this government sticks to it when it comes to a far-sighted tourism strategy. I think this bill is part of that thinking, so we will support this bill.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question on Bill 38, Tourism Levy Amendment Act, 2009.

[The clauses of Bill 38 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

### **Bill 39 Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009**

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Mr. Weadick:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to rise today in Committee of the Whole to present Bill 39, the Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009.

This bill implements the tobacco tax rate increase announced in Budget 2009. Support received at second reading of the bill is greatly appreciated, Mr. Chairman, but there were some points raised by the Member for Calgary-Currie and other opposition members that I would like to address.

The government believes that the tax increase strikes a balance between encouraging individuals to quit smoking while not increas-

ing illicit activity, black-market tobacco smuggling, and theft. Even with the increases in tobacco tax rates Alberta's tobacco tax is comparable to the other western provinces after factoring in other provincial taxes such as a provincial sales tax.

The opposition asked: how much of the tobacco tax is used for the tobacco reduction program? The collection of tobacco taxes is an important component of the Alberta tobacco reduction strategy as higher tobacco prices continue to be one of the most effective ways of encouraging individuals to quit using tobacco. Tobacco tax revenues are not dedicated. Rather, they flow into the general revenue fund. In general, the government is opposed to dedicating revenues to specific initiatives primarily because it limits the government's ability to direct dollars to its highest priorities.

Proposed amendments to the act will also strengthen the tobacco tax framework and support the province's safe communities initiative. The measures outlined in Bill 39 will help curb illegal tobacco trade by increasing the economic consequences of doing so. By way of background, the act imposes a tax on tobacco purchased in Alberta. It also prohibits various activities and requires industry participants to register in order to import or sell tobacco in Alberta at the wholesale level.

Concerns were also raised regarding the severity of illicit tobacco and the extent of smuggling in Alberta. It is estimated that Alberta could be losing tobacco tax revenue of \$12 million a year to illicit trade. Illicit tobacco trade has a number of negative impacts. Not only does it erode the tax base; it also puts an additional burden on the health care system by dealing with the impacts of tobacco which has not met health standards. In addition, the proceeds of illegal tobacco could help fund gangs and crime.

The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission has reported a steady increase in the presence and seizures of various types of illicit tobacco, especially black-market cigarettes. The equivalent of one carton of cigarettes sells on the street for \$30 to \$40 compared to the retail price of \$75 to \$90 for legitimate cigarettes. These black-market cigarettes do not have the Health Canada warnings.

The opposition also wanted to know how Alberta compares to other jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions in Canada are facing similar and even worse problems with illicit tobacco trade. The RCMP released a report last year on this problem, noting that

linkages between the illicit tobacco market and organized crime have increased exponentially over the last six years. While tobacco is a legal substance that is consumed . . . a growing number [of Canadians] are purchasing contraband tobacco without realizing the negative impact it is having on Canadian communities and Canada's economic integrity

and also on their health since the contraband tobacco may not meet tobacco standards.

Amendments are needed as the current Tobacco Tax Act does not effectively prohibit unwanted activity, and prosecutions are becoming difficult. To help ensure that tax is properly paid and that only legitimate participants are involved in the industry, the amendments strengthen prohibitions and clarify their application. The act also broadens seizure powers and adds the ability to seize joint bank accounts in proportion to ownership for those in default.

The opposition Member for Edmonton-Strathcona also raised concerns around seizure and the ability to search without warrants. Officers in this province have long been able to seize vehicles without warrant where the officer believed that the vehicle was used in contravention of the act. Officers have always been restricted by the test that they must believe on reasonable and probable grounds that a contravention of the act is being or has been committed. The wording was also brought up as a concern. The term "reasonable and probable grounds" is generally considered equivalent to "reasonable grounds," and the Supreme Court of Canada has said that it is essentially the same thing. The change of wording does not



affect the bill, and personal residences are still exempt from search and seizure without warrant.

3:10

This bill also adds a temporary seizure power for items that are used in contravention of the act within the previous 60 days. Temporary seizure provisions can act as an additional tool to fight those conducting illegal tobacco trade. Since these measures are targeting illegal activity, legitimate participants should not be affected by these measures. Since seizure provisions vary among provinces, it is difficult to draw a direct comparison. However, many jurisdictions have some form of seizure power.

For example, Saskatchewan's legislation contains the ability to seize a vehicle if it contains a certain amount of unmarked tobacco. Although the offences are different in each jurisdiction and it is difficult to draw a direct comparison, Alberta is on the low end for the amount of the associated fine. To bring Alberta in line with other jurisdictions, fines are doubled and civil penalties tripled for unlawful possession or sale of tobacco on which tax has not been paid.

A late-filing penalty for tax collectors will be imposed. Changes also enhance requirements for tax collectors and make reporting obligations more transparent.

In summary, these proposed amendments raise the tobacco tax rates, clarify prohibitions, and make enforcement more effective and more efficient. In addition, providing more serious penalties will act as a greater deterrent to prohibit these activities.

I encourage all members of the House to give their full support to Bill 39. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I just want to briefly raise an issue of potential hypocrisy or conflict of interest with regard to the raising of the tax on tobacco. While I support raising this tax, a sin tax, which can then be potentially plowed back into general revenue and eventually make its way proactively to support health issues, I would like to know if we still have over a \$600 million investment in tobacco in our heritage trust fund. If we do, I would consider that, particularly at this time, a very unethical investment.

I would also express concerns that given the government cutbacks or failure to fully fund expansion of the Tom Baker cancer centre in Calgary or sufficiently support the Cross cancer centre in Edmonton, the funds that have been received through this tobacco raise go specifically to fight the diseases which tobacco caused in the first place. Rather than having that money disappear into the black hole of general revenue, I would like to see this money specifically targeted.

If there is a member here who can answer the question as to whether we are still investing in tobacco companies, this is very important because down the line there's talk about us joining other provinces in pursuing tobacco companies for the health effects that they have caused on our citizenry. I would look forward to having that matter cleared up. I know it has been the case in previous years. Is it still the case?

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other hon. members? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Dr. Taft:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice we have some guests in the gallery, and I'll just take a moment to explain what we're doing here. I have no idea if they're tobacco users or not, but just for your information we are in the final minutes of debating and then voting on a bill that will make tobacco use more expensive. It's

actually quite a far-reaching bill. It isn't just about adding a few cents to the cost of tobacco. It addresses issues around search and seizure, law enforcement. It's quite a significant bill.

I appreciated the comments from the Member for Lethbridge-West, who spoke about the need to balance raising the price without making it so high that we encourage growth in the black market for tobacco. I know that has been a problem, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, where there are easier channels of smuggling across the border to the United States because of the placement of some Indian reserves, but it is an issue we have to watch here as well. We can only put it so high before we create a black market that becomes, actually, a bigger problem than the one we're solving. That's an important point.

I would like to see this government in its initiatives to reduce tobacco use also rely on other strategies. At some point I'd be interested to hear more about what those are. I know there have been restrictions on how tobacco can be marketed. I'd like the government to continue to tighten that up.

I'm particularly concerned that the one segment of society that is seeing a significant growth in tobacco use, particularly smoking tobacco, is young women. It's a bit of a mystery to me, except I think the marketers have got it into the culture of young women that it's cool, it's fashionable to smoke.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thin.

**Dr. Taft:** Yeah. Maybe it goes with being thin. I'm not sure. That's what the Member for Edmonton-Centre is suggesting, that smoking can be an appetite suppressant. I'm sure it's linked to many things. I think we as a government need to particularly target those people because if they start when they're 16, 17, 18, they're going to be smoking for decades and decades and then becoming very ill.

That leads to my next point, which would be that I'd love to see a more systematic and routine reporting from this government on the costs to the health care system of tobacco use. I'm sure those would be calculated if the minister of health moves forward with taking tobacco companies to court, which I hope he does. It would be terrific in the government's reporting somewhere to try to count year by year how much money the health care system is having to spend because of tobacco use and report that publicly, and we could see whether it's rising or falling.

I also noted in here, of course, the specific mention of cigars. Probably about four years ago, after one significant increase in tobacco taxes, there was a very aggressive lobby – this was when the former Premier was in place – to single out cigars and to reduce the cost of cigars. I found myself wondering: why are we doing this? Is there some kind of cigar industry in Alberta that I don't know about? In fact, it was the result of some very serious lobbying by former senior officials of this government. I don't need to name names, but a couple of them were well paid here. I think that was one of the issues that led to the creation of the lobbyist registry, which we're still waiting to see implemented. It's a kind of interesting history around tobacco and lobbyists in Alberta.

Finally, my last comment is around the strategies of the tobacco industry to shift tobacco use from smoking to smokeless tobacco, which I think is nefarious. I would encourage this government to continue to work very hard to address all forms of tobacco use: chewing tobacco, snuff, all forms of smokeless tobacco as well as cigars and cigarettes. Tobacco is one of those few legal substances that no matter how you use it, even if you use it according to directions, it's bad for your health.

I'm happy to support this bill. I think our caucus will get behind it. The Member for Calgary-Varsity and I have both raised a handful of issues. We understand that this is an ongoing strategy, and for

each move we make as a government, the tobacco industry makes a countermove. But I think we are as an Assembly sending a clear message that, you know, ideally, tobacco use would be eliminated in Alberta. Let's hope that day comes along, and we can look back and think of this particular moment as one of the steps toward that day.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

3:20

**The Chair:** Do any other hon. members wish to join the debate?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question on Bill 39, Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009.

[The clauses of Bill 39 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

#### Bill 40

#### Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered relating to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Mr. Vandermeer:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak only briefly to Bill 40 in Committee of the Whole on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill. As he stated during debate on second reading, the proposed amendments will accomplish two objectives. First, they will ensure that Alberta's dividend tax credit is administered in accordance with existing Alberta government policy and that the status quo is maintained in light of changes to the gross-up factor applicable under the federal Income Tax Act on dividend income. If we did not adjust the formulae in our tax act, we would in effect be double-taxing Albertans on the portion of their dividend income. Secondly, they will align the eligibility for tuition credits to reflect the way our tuition credits for foreign students are currently administered. This is required under the Alberta-Canada tax collection agreement. The objective of the change is to ensure that one does not have to obtain 90 per cent plus of one's income from sources in Canada in order to claim the tuition credit.

Mr. Chairman, I urge all hon. members to support the movement of Bill 40 on to the third reading stage. Thank you.

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

**Dr. Taft:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will keep my comments brief here. As the MLA whose constituency includes the University of Alberta I just want to make particular note that in this bill it does address the eligibility for the Alberta tuition credit. To the extent that that makes it easier and more affordable for students to attend postsecondary education, I think that's a terrific idea.

I noticed that this particular amendment removes the requirement that a student has to obtain 90 per cent or more of their income from sources in Canada in order to claim the tuition credit. That raises a question for me, which perhaps the sponsoring member or somebody on the government side may be able to answer when we get to third reading: will that have any effect on foreign students studying here in Alberta? Will that make it easier for them, or does it have any

impact at all? Or possibly does it have any impact on students from Alberta studying internationally?

I have no idea about the answer to those questions, Mr. Chairman. But because the University of Alberta and I'm sure the University of Calgary and others are wanting to become bigger players on the global stage and attract students from around the world to add to their mix, particularly at the graduate level, I'd be curious to know if this particular amendment will have any impact whatsoever on that. If it does have an impact, I certainly hope it will be a favourable one because I think attracting more students from abroad to Alberta and encouraging more Alberta students to study abroad would be a great thing.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Does any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question on Bill 40, Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009.

[The clauses of Bill 40 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee now rise and report bills 37, 38, 39, and 40.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**Mr. Allred:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 37, Bill 38, Bill 39, and Bill 40.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would those hon. members concurring in the report please say aye?

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

#### Bill 47 Appropriation Act, 2009

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Snelgrove:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move third reading of Bill 47, the Appropriation Act, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Finance and Enterprise and her department – her deputy Mr. Bhatia; in fact, all of the deputies – Mr. Ramotar in Treasury Board; and certainly Mr. Brian Manning, chief of deputies, and all the CFOs that were very, very diligent in putting together this budget and the thousands of hours that were spent by our staff in compiling the document that allows us to deliver the programs and the services that are important to all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, today around the world governments of all stripes are trying to balance the issues of the situation that we're in right now, and in many ways they take different methods to try and achieve the same result. I think it's quite obvious that there is no absolute right or wrong when it comes to determining what a budget can be. I think the opposition has done a very good job of pointing out some of the priority differences they may have, and certainly internally the government spends a lot of time working on the different policies and struggling to find the balances in the spending. So I would want to also thank the House for the work they've put into it. I think the people of Alberta are being well served by the budget that's being voted on today, and I want to thank all hon. members for their participation in the budget debate.

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

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Those were very nice opening remarks from the President of the Treasury Board. I have a number of issues that I want to raise. Unfortunately, I was trying to get on the list yesterday for Committee of the Whole, but thank you for the opportunity to speak in third reading to Bill 47, which is, in essence, the budget bill, the Appropriation Act, 2009.

We had a new structure for debating the main estimates, which is what the budget is, but that's the parliamentary language for it, this year that I really didn't like. I didn't make any secret of that. I think, having gone through it, that some of the concerns that I had and my colleagues had did not manifest themselves. But two of my major concerns going in did, and they've resulted in my having to try and raise questions now.

3:30

One of the two biggest issues for me was the doubling up of the committees. As an opposition member that's a critic for two portfolios and who has a very active and interested and engaged constituency, I couldn't be in two places at one time, yet I needed to be in two places at one time. I really find that the structure of running two full committees each night for the budget debates was an impossibility for me, and it placed an impossible burden on me and my colleagues in the Official Opposition. That actually manifested itself triply because we're assigned to various policy field committees and are expected to be there and were there.

We also often had to be in a different room as the Official Opposition critic for a given portfolio. Then we have our own constituent concerns. They want us to raise questions. So I will raise some of the questions I wasn't able to just because I couldn't get into both committees at the same time, and I think that's a real flaw.

I understand that the government has got 72 members and they're going to get what they want, but it doesn't make them a government for life. I didn't know whether to be amused or horrified when I heard one of the rural members talking the other day in the Electoral Boundaries Commission debate about the tyranny of the majority over a minority. I mean, that's exactly what our lives are every day, and this was a perfect example of it. The government doesn't want to spend time in budget debate, and they made darn sure that I couldn't either. Frankly, I resent that because there was work I wanted to do, and I couldn't do it.

The second issue around that process was the allocation of how much time was spent. Essentially, the opposition most nights could manage to get about 80 minutes of debate on a given portfolio, a given ministry. At times we were debating hundreds of millions of dollars a minute. I mean, it's an impossibility. I don't think it's transparent, I don't think it's accountable, and I don't think it serves the citizens of the province well.

If the government is proud of its budget and they believe that it

will stand up to scrutiny, then let it stand up to scrutiny and do what the other provinces do, which in one case is to allow unlimited debate on a bill until all questions are asked and everybody is ready to move on. In some of the other provinces with a committee structure for examining estimates there's a 20-hour limit of time that can be spent on a given ministry. That's in Quebec. I think in B.C. it's 10 to 15 hours. In Ontario it's 10 hours per ministry. We got one hour and a total of three hours if you include the third-party time and the time for the government members.

I don't understand in a lot of cases what the government members were doing. There were a few that clearly had prepared and were asking reasonable questions and others that were reading from a script. I just don't understand why we were doing that. I just don't understand that. If the government believes that it'll stand up to scrutiny, it should let it stand up to scrutiny, and we should take as much time as we need.

So the areas where I had questions. The Minister of Justice: I understand that there's been a request for a review of all programs under legal aid and that there are some statutory requirements of what Legal Aid must look after; you know, difficult custody battles and children that have been taken as wards of the state and various things that they're required to look after under family legal aid. My concern is: what is the expectation for what will happen to those programs that aren't statutorily covered if the money runs out or all the time has been allocated based on those statutory requirements? What is supposed to happen to the rest of those programs?

As I'm sure the minister is aware, coming from a vigorous law practice in this province, women more than men, I would argue, need that assistance. They have in some ways two barriers that they face when trying to seek a remedy in the court, and one is monetary. Often those that are involved in that system are working on a wage basis, and to appear in court or to be required to appear in court repeatedly to answer and argue, for example, a custody battle is a financial hardship aside from the money that they actually may have to be paying out for a lawyer. So assistance through a legal aid program is particularly essential to them.

I find – it certainly was the truth in the past, and I'm not seeing that much of a difference now – that a way that some male partners can continue to control and abuse female partners is by bringing them back into court over and over and over again. There's a need there for access to justice in more than one way. I was really concerned about what would happen to that program under this review and what the end expectations are for it.

I'm switching departments now to Housing and Urban Affairs. I'd like to get a clear answer of how the money for homelessness really has been reallocated. There was money taken out of programs and then a new hundred million dollar program set up, but that's over 10 years, so that's \$10 million a year, which for what needs to happen there and the expectations of those programs is, frankly, a drop in the bucket. This is not to say – where's the President of the Treasury Board? – that I'm insisting that more money be spent, but I think we need to be really careful on that one.

I'm still trying to figure it out, and I'm not a stupid person. It looks to me like there was a shell game of money coming out of a couple of areas around homelessness and affordable housing and a blurring of lines there. We just managed to get to the point where everybody did understand the difference between that, and now it appears to me that money has come out of both homelessness and housing funds and has been shifted to this 10-year homelessness program. So I would like some real clarification about that.

I've also tried to seek answers through some of the other large agencies that are working with this, and they're not able to help clarify for me. Often the opposition is the last one to get the answers on things, so I've developed various end routes to try and go around

and get information through organizations that are working in the community. They didn't really have a clear enough answer given to them to be able to provide it to me. So I'm just wondering what exactly is going on there. I think it would be better if we actually knew. Even if it's bad news, I'd rather know it because then I'd know what I'm dealing with, and maybe I could go looking for another way of working with this. Right now it looks like it's \$100 million, but I don't think it is. I'd like to know how that's affecting the programs that the money came out of.

Under Children and Youth Services, which I think ran at the same time as Housing and Urban Affairs, I'm wondering what our numbers are on violence against women and their children. The province stopped publishing the turn-away rates from the shelters several years ago because, frankly, the rates just kept doubling and doubling and doubling. I think at the point that we hit the 11,000 turn-away rate, they stopped publishing the numbers. Let me clarify. That doesn't mean that women didn't get some kind of assistance from the shelters. They did, and the shelters try very hard to do that. But it's not the same as actually getting admitted into a shelter and having the immediate on-site and consistent assistance and programming and counselling and support that's available.

If you're a woman that arrives at a shelter without children in this day and age, the chances are pretty good that you're going to be turned away. You'll probably never get a spot. Obviously, the priority is to women and children, and you can understand that, but it does mean that we've left a whole bunch of women out there without support. They can get access to an outreach program, but you know it's not immediate. It's not there 24 hours a day. It's not in the next room. It makes a difference because we end up with a lot of women returning to a violent situation because they don't have the financial resources to just walk away from it and go somewhere else. So I'm interested in what the turn-away numbers are.

3:40

I'm also interested in how the funding is working out for support for the shelters at this time. There was an increase, but I continue to hear out of that sector and other sectors that there continues to be a wage gap between what they're able to offer their employees and equivalent positions in government social services. The vacancy rate, I think, is almost directly correlated to that wage gap.

Further to that, I would like a clear undertaking by the government and by the minister to explain what the government expects or how the government expects to benefit from moving to a request for proposal system in the social services sector. I mean, in a number of areas there is only one provider or possibly one provider large enough to do it and maybe one small provider.

Expecting these, again, in many cases volunteer-based not-for-profits to jump through the hoops of writing up an RFP and then being, according to criteria – and some of the stuff I'm seeing is making my hair stand on end, you know, where if somebody gets a contract to look after troubled youth and the youth don't improve under their care, the organization won't be paid. Well, I don't know how that's an incentive for an organization to continue to take in troubled youth when it looks like they could do a whole bunch of work and not get paid for it. This drive, this unholy belief that business is best and the free marketplace always produces the most amazing results just is not true when we are trying to work with having a large number of the NGO sector provide services that the government doesn't wish to. They're getting a heck of a deal. I have serious reservations about where this is going to take us.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, the social service sector is too good. I think there are times when they should step aside and say: "No, we're not taking that person on our doorstep. No, we're not keeping this program. No, we're not taking one more whatever because the government is not paying adequately for it." But we have people

there who, in their hearts, cannot leave that person on the step and will continue to run a program and take more people in even when they're not getting adequate contractual compensation from the government.

There's something happening behind the scenes there that I think is sort of creeping along at the government's instigation, and I don't like the direction it's going. Let's hear the government's reasoning behind it.

For Employment and Immigration I'm interested in what has been the advancement on the cultural workers strategy that was released under the then Minister of Employment and Immigration, the previous Member for Lethbridge-West. There was an entire study done on cultural workers, and as far as I know, nothing has ever been done with it. I'm interested in where that is in the process. Hopefully, I'm wrong that nothing further has been done with it. Seeing that we now have Conservative cousins provincially and federally, I would have expected that there could have been a better working relationship between the province and the feds on strategies around cultural workers.

It costs considerably less to create a job in the cultural sector than it does in the manufacturing sector or, for example, in the oil and gas sector or nonrenewable resource sector. As we are looking to try and encourage employment of all of our population, you know, the knowledge-based creative sector is where we're supposed to be going, yet I don't see the government investing in that sector at all. So I'm looking for information about how much investment has happened there. What has been the follow-up to that particular policy that was produced by this government specifically around cultural workers?

Just by the by, it would be very helpful if we could actually get the minister of community services to protect our cultural workers that are working in large touring houses from getting the short end of the contractual deal when we have related reselling practices that are going on that end up ripping off our cultural workers – our stagehands, our union members, our artists, backup musicians, and people like that – whose original contract is based on the original ticket price times the number of seats that are in a house.

When we end up with a reselling practice, none of our people in Alberta get a piece of that action. It all goes, you know, in a nanosecond across the Internet waves and ends up landing in the pocket of a shareholder in the States. I would prefer that that kind of practice doesn't go on, because I think the ticket buyers don't appreciate it, but if the government is satisfied to let those reselling practices go on, then, for heaven's sake, could we not get some of that money staying here in Alberta and going to our own cultural workers?

I should mention that in my constituency office I've had a number of concerns raised about delisting of the chiropractic services. It's a significant number of letters that I've had. I haven't brought them all in and tabled them, but suffice it to say that I've certainly had them, and people are very concerned about the delisting of that service.

Of course, I raised the issue of gender reassignment surgery and the cuts there. The specific question I have around that is: when is the cut to the tariff in effect? It doesn't appear in any official document, but the minister did talk about it in media conferences, and then there was a series of questions in question period. The question that I'm now being asked and I can't answer, so I'd appreciate the minister's help, is: when was this in effect? Is this in effect as of the 1st of April? I realize that he said he would cover the people that were already in the pipeline, who had already started on hormone therapy or who were scheduled for surgery and were far enough along. But for those otherwise did this come into effect on the 1st, and where would I find the delisting of the tariff or the

change in the tariff that the physicians would have normally billed for? I just need something on paper, if I can find that somewhere. The minister can send me a note about where I'd locate it. That would be very helpful.

I'm not doing too badly here. I'm going to run out of time again. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that for the rest of the issues that I was looking to raise here, I don't think I'm going to have time. But I do want to reiterate again my frustration around the lack of time that we spend on the budget debates, particularly opposition getting an opportunity. I didn't have any spare time in any of the debates I was involved in this year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, on Bill 47.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you. I'm pleased to be able to rise to join debate at third reading of Bill 47. I believe this is the first time I've actually had a chance to rise on this particular bill. I want to start, of course, by talking a little bit about the process through which we went to discuss the individual ministry budgets. I, too, having had the opportunity in a previous life to work in politics in a different jurisdiction, was, as I've mentioned in the past, quite taken aback at the amount of time that opposition is given to engage in any sort of debate or, more to the point, fact-finding with respect to the budget decisions being made by government. I was intimately involved in estimate debates that went on until the opposition was finished asking questions. That was basically an understanding of how the system was supposed to work, how people, whether they were actually opposition members or government members, were going to keep the government accountable on behalf of taxpayers for these huge amounts of dollars that were being spent.

3:50

It was quite a shocker to discover that, instead, with ministries, many of which were multibillion dollar ministries, we would get in our party between 20 and 40 minutes for each ministry to inquire into the spending decisions, the priorities that went into making these decisions to spend billions and billions of dollars. I mean, it's quite ludicrous, obviously. You know, it really puts the system in question in a lot of different ways.

Nonetheless, that's what we dealt with, so we gamely attempted to embark upon that process and do so in a way that would disclose even the remotest amount of information on behalf of taxpayers. Personally, I had the opportunity to participate in estimate debates for 10 different ministries, typically one night after the next night after the next night, of course with the House sitting during the day between those estimate debates. So, not surprisingly, it was often a challenge to be able to really prepare in a way that would allow taxpayers to get the benefit of any sort of comprehensive oversight of the way in which their dollars are being spent. Nonetheless, we are here today.

We're talking about globally a budget that would allocate spending of \$36.4 billion with expected revenues of \$31.7 billion, such that in this budget we are forecasting a deficit of roughly \$4.7 billion, although I don't think it's actually \$4.7 billion because I do believe that, again, the government brought in an unfinished budget, which is what this budget is, in that they were unable to find a quarter billion dollars of revenue and/or cuts. So it's just sort of this extra deficit floating around unallocated and undescribed to taxpayers, you know, a quarter billion dollars we couldn't quite make work. It seems to me to be a little bit of an unfinished job. That's sort of the overall plan that we're dealing with.

The government, to its credit, does project down the road in terms of what they're expecting. They indicated to us that they were also

expecting a \$2 billion shortfall next year, so somewhere that money had to be found unless, you know, the magical oil revenue fairies started unexpectedly showering the government with happy revenues that they had otherwise had nothing to do with creating.

Anyway, we're in this position where we're looking at this budget. Now, as our party has said in the past, the notion of a deficit periodically where it is needed to carry a province through a period of economic shortfall is not something that we're necessarily going to say is wrong. We've said this in the past, that there is wise, good economic sense to periodically relying on a deficit in the bad times and then figuring out how to increase your revenue and balance things out in the good times. As I've said before, of course, we think the government grossly mismanaged the good times, but that was discussed in a different bill, so I won't get into that.

In this one I just want to talk a little bit about some of the cuts that we observed or some of the priority in spending decisions that, at least, I observed in the course of engaging in estimates debate and some of the decisions for which we have some great concern. I will start with the ministry of health. This is a ministry where we have a tendency to hear that the sky is falling and, for that reason, big changes need to happen. About every three or four years the government rolls out another dramatic set of changes, and they attempt to actually, in a way, scare Albertans into accepting significantly less and into accepting very different models of health care and significantly lower service levels.

There's nibbling around the edges in that respect, and we see that in this budget. We see the start of service delisting – and I have no doubt that it is merely a start – and again delisting, that was not really saving them a whole bunch of money, but it was about starting a process, in our view. So we saw delisting of chiropractic services and gender reassignment surgery. Of course, we delist chiropractic services, a significant preventative benefit, ultimately a long-term savings, I would suspect, to the health care system. And gender reassignment surgery, well, that's just a group that is, you know, easy to pick on. We can do that, and then we can create a precedent of delisting services so that, you know, when we move on more next year, people are kind of used to it. This, of course, all flows from previous directions given to government through previous reports. In particular, I believe, it was the Mazankowski report.

We also have a new drug plan, which, say what you will – we may be doing things more equitably; we may be giving seniors more choice – whatever the language is, at the end of the day the new drug plan this year will save government \$20 million, and it's structured in a way to save it more money every year, so it is about one thing and one thing only, which is transferring services away from seniors and making them pay more for what they currently receive. The numbers don't lie, and that's what it's about. You can dress it up in any other kind of spin, but that's what we're doing. We're saving money on the backs of seniors.

We talked already, of course, at long length about the plans the government has with respect to long-term care. We don't really have the time to get into that much more than we already have except to say that that particular method of saving money is not a good one.

The only other thing in health care that I'd like to talk a little bit more about is the issue of mental health services. I believe that our caucus was able to share with Albertans some pretty reliable information about the state of mental health care services in this province. I believe that we were able to show that it is pretty much a disaster, that we are not providing services at anywhere near the rate that's happening in other provinces, that we have significant regional disparities, not just rural to urban regional disparities but also Calgary to Edmonton regional disparities. Even in places like Edmonton, that, theoretically, has more resources, we still have

nowhere near the support that we should have. This is a huge issue because there are so many cost implications and social and community and health implications from failing to treat mental illness in the way that it should be. We're just not doing a good job in this province.

I was very disappointed to hear, you know, the government suggest that they believe they're doing a good job because of a community anticrime strategy, which is truly just a drop in the bucket. Were this government to actually be taking this issue seriously, there would be a much more significant investment in that area. It's something that is needed because we have a real problem. We have a homelessness plan, which the government claims it's going to spend billions of dollars on – but I'll get to that in a second – and that's just a small example of the cost to the system of untreated mental illness. So I'm quite disappointed to see that, really, there's nothing of any significance in our budget to address that.

4:00

Another area that we have some concerns about I'll just mention quickly. Children and family services essentially maintained its budget in order to stay at a maintenance level after you factor in population increase and inflation. I have said before and I will say again that I don't believe this government is coming anywhere near to doing what it needs to do on the issue of child care. I know there's been a lot of recent talk about: oh, look at all these new spaces we've created. I don't believe that the spaces they're talking about are truly high quality or affordable. The affordability of those spaces remains a very significant problem, and of course many of the spaces the government is counting are not really dealing with the primary crisis area, which is full-time care for preschool children. Of course, the numbers that the ministry has been talking about include a whole bunch of other categories that are not that issue. At the end of the day we're at about half the number of child care spaces for that age group that we should be at, and we are nowhere near providing the number of affordable child care spaces that we should be. So I was disappointed to see that we're not really moving forward on that key priority area.

I also mentioned briefly that I think there's a lot of work to be done with respect to the environment in terms of monitoring, in terms of controlling, inspecting, and ensuring that our environmental resources are protected. Earlier today there was some reference to the fact that we have a long way to go before our groundwater resources become a matter of concern, but I actually don't believe that that's the case. I believe we have studies that show that we could well be at the tipping point in the lower Athabasca region, yet we have nowhere near the resources out there to properly address water quality, groundwater, and surface water usage in that area. I think we are letting Albertans and certainly the people of that area down by not doing a better job there.

Finally, I would like to talk just briefly about the homelessness strategy. Government spent a heck of a lot of time and probably a little bit of money giving itself a lot of credit for adopting a homelessness strategy earlier this spring, but the reality is that there is not one new dollar put into that program. Every dollar going into the homelessness strategy is coming out of other resources which are required to meet the broad spectrum of housing needs in the province. So we take a hundred million dollars out of affordable housing. Affordable housing is designed to assist those people who are at risk, who are housed now but are housed in a tentative way. They need low-income housing, and if they don't have low-income housing, their access to housing becomes vulnerable. We're taking money out of that program to put it into the homelessness program.

Now, you know, I understand that the homelessness program needs money, but at the expense of the next level of the overall

program that we need to put into place to ensure that all Albertans have high-quality housing? That makes no sense. More to the point, what is frustrating to us is to see the government attempt to characterize their action in this regard as something that it's not. If they choose to prioritize homelessness at the expense of other types of housing, that's fine, but be up front and honest about the fact that that's what you're doing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have five minutes for question and comment. The hon. member.

**Ms Notley:** I'd like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 34 Drug Program Act

[Adjourned debate May 6: Dr. Swann]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 34.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved, hon. minister. You spoke to it when you moved it according to our documents.

We continue on the debate. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you. It's a pleasure to be able to rise to speak to this bill in second reading. This is a bill with which we have some concerns. There are some parts of the bill which actually make some sense. Let me start out that way for a change.

You know, the bill does move from policy to regulation certain practices with respect to managing our drug programs. Of course, not a big surprise, moving stuff from policy into a legislative framework is always a good thing. As well, it is very possible that this bill, from what I understand, could provide some foundational support for moving towards bulk pharmaceutical buying initiatives. Of course, that too is a good thing and is something that our caucus has been promoting for years and years and maybe even decades at this point.

The concern that we have about the bill, though – and I will try to be relatively brief at this point – is the role that it plays with respect to operating as a vehicle for the recently announced seniors' pharmaceutical plan. As I mentioned ever so briefly in the discussion about Bill 47, this is a pharmaceutical plan with which we have some great concern. We have heard a lot about how this plan ensures equity and availability and choice. As I said, I can't remember the exact communications buzzwords that were used in this particular press release, but as I've said before, I think the key measure on this as a starting point is that this plan saves the government money. It is anticipated that this plan will save the government \$20 million this year, and it is anticipated that with demographic projections being what they are in terms of both the number of seniors and their projected income levels, this plan will ultimately save the government a great deal more than \$20 million a year. It's not really about improving things for seniors; it's about saving money.

How are we going about saving money? Well, no question, one part of the plan and the part of the plan that they'd hoped would receive the most attention and distract people from the other components of it is that low-income seniors are now paying fewer

if not, in fact, in some cases no fees at all with respect to receiving prescriptions. There's no question that that's important. I will say that during the last election, when I was out knocking on doors, seniors would talk to me over and over and over again about how much money they were being asked to spend on their prescriptions. The system that was in place with the \$25 per prescription was very significant and really a problem. Now we've seen that go down to \$15. You know, this is an improvement. The key, though, is: what are we paying for this improvement with? In the long term, the way we put this all together, the one positive thing is that we need to accept all these negative things. Is that a reasonable approach to providing for medical care for seniors?

Let's not be unclear about this: pharmaceuticals and the provision of drugs are medical care. This is more and more how people receive their medicare in our province and in our country. Having fair and equitable and affordable and, I would suggest, universal access to it is critical.

**4:10**

One of the key points with this plan is that it denies and abandons the principle of universality. We start to make the access to these treatments, because pharmaceuticals are a form of treatment, something that is incumbent upon income and where prices go up and down and you're paying on the basis of income. Well, I'm a New Democrat, and I'm always about, you know, progressive systems, but as far as I'm concerned, the progressive system we should be looking at is a progressive tax system. We should not be loading a bunch of costs onto one particular group in society, in this case seniors, and saying: you guys get to pay for this because you guys have started to be too expensive for the rest of us, so we're going to move that cost over to you. That's essentially what we're doing through this. We're abandoning universality, and we're asking seniors to pay more.

As time goes on, as the demographic projections unfold, seniors will pay more and more and more, and that's what this act effectively brings into play. It is with that in mind that we have some very, very serious concerns about what the act is trying to bring about. Of course, as most members across the way know, we're not the only people to outline those concerns. I suspect that almost all members of this House have received tremendous feedback from seniors in their constituencies and across the province telling them how incredibly angry they are with this plan, and of course it's for that reason that the government had to back down a bit and tweak it. Nonetheless, as far as I'm concerned, it has not been sufficiently well tweaked.

As a starting point we have concerns about this bill and at this point are not prepared to support it. For now I will sit down and allow others to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any hon. member wish to speak at second reading of the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a second time]

**Bill 23**

**Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2009**

[Adjourned debate April 21: Mr. Danyluk]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. member wish to speak on Bill 23?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a second time]

**Government Bills and Orders  
Third Reading**

**Bill 47  
Appropriation Act, 2009  
(continued)**

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. Very quickly, I want to get onto the record that I am not pleased with this government's accountability in terms of its deficit: \$8.6 billion in unfunded liability; \$10 billion at least, of which \$1.5 billion is Education deferred infrastructure; a \$4.7 billion deficit. Add on another at least \$1.5 billion in unfunded public pension liabilities. That brings the total to \$23.8 billion. We've got \$17 billion as our sort of desperation parachute fund that's supposed to carry us over the next three recessionary years in terms of our combined sustainability-capital fund. We have no accurate accounting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, sorry. It's 4:15. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, but in accordance with Standing Order 64(5) the chair is required to put the question to the House on the appropriation bill on the Order Paper for third reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:16 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Allred	Fritz	Ouellette
Amery	Goudreau	Prins
Bhardwaj	Groeneveld	Quest
Bhullar	Horne	Redford
Boutilier	Jablonski	Renner
Cao	Johnson	Rogers
Dallas	Klimchuk	Sarich
Danyluk	Knight	Sherman
Denis	Leskiw	Snelgrove
Doerksen	Liepert	Tarchuk
Evans	Oberle	Vandermeer
Fawcett		

Against the motion:

Blakeman	Notley	Taft
Chase		

Totals: For – 34 Against – 4

[Motion carried; Bill 47 read a third time]

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

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly now stand adjourned until Monday, May 25, at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:28 p.m. to Monday, May 25, at 1:30 p.m.]





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

**Activity to May 14, 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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c4]

### **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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c5]

### **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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 1, 2009; SA 2009 c3]

### **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)  
Third Reading -- 912-15 (Apr. 30 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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 c6]

### **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.), 861-65 (Apr. 28 aft., passed)  
Third Reading -- 899-900 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)

### **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)  
Committee of the Whole -- 865-70 (Apr. 28 aft., passed)  
Third Reading -- 900 (Apr. 29 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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2009 cF-11.1]
- 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)  
Committee of the Whole -- 895-97 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Third Reading -- 915-17 (Apr. 30 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.), 889-91 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 920-21 (Apr. 30 aft.), 980-83 (May 5 aft.), 1118-20 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 11 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2009 (VanderBurg)**  
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 362-63 (Mar. 11 aft.), 891-92 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 983 (May 5 aft., passed)
- 12 Surface Rights Amendment Act, 2009 (Berger)**  
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 383-85 (Mar. 12 aft.), 892-95 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1120-21 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 13 Justice of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)**  
First Reading -- 19 (Feb. 11 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 385 (Mar. 12 aft.), 895 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1121-22 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 14 Carbon Capture and Storage Funding Act (\$) (Knight)**  
First Reading -- 138 (Feb. 19 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 208-10 (Mar. 3 aft.), 884-89 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 921-22 (Apr. 30 aft.), 1114-18 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 20, 2009; SA 2009 cD-18]
- 16 Peace Officer Amendment Act, 2009 (Lindsay)**  
First Reading -- 106 (Feb. 18 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 385-86 (Mar. 12 aft.), 919-20 (Apr. 30 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1122 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 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)  
Committee of the Whole -- 737 (Apr. 21 aft., passed)  
Third Reading -- 917-19 (Apr. 30 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., amendments agreed to), 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)  
Royal Assent -- (Apr. 20 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 20, 2009; SA 2009 c7]

- 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.), 737-53 (Apr. 21 aft., amendments agreed to), 770-84 (Apr. 22 aft.), 797-806 (Apr. 23 aft.), 857-61 (Apr. 28 aft., passed with amendments)  
Third Reading -- 897-99 (Apr. 29 aft., passed)
- 20 Civil Enforcement Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**  
First Reading -- 161 (Mar. 2 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 767 (Apr. 22 aft., adjourned)
- 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.)  
Second Reading -- 735 (Apr. 21 aft.), 1195 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 24 Animal Health Amendment Act, 2009 (Griffiths)**  
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 735-36 (Apr. 21 aft.), 969-70 (May 5 aft., passed)
- 25 Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2009 (\$) (Evans)**  
First Reading -- 283 (Mar. 9 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 767 (Apr. 22 aft.), 970-72 (May 5 aft.), 1105-06 (May 12 eve., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1167-69 (May 13 eve., passed)
- 26 Wildlife Amendment Act, 2009 (Mitzel)**  
First Reading -- 303 (Mar. 10 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 736 (Apr. 21 aft., adjourned)
- 27 Alberta Research and Innovation Act (\$) (Horner)**  
First Reading -- 466 (Mar. 18 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 767-69 (Apr. 22 aft.), 1003-06 (May 6 aft.), 1094-98 (May 12 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1170-73 (May 13 eve., adjourned)
- 28 Energy Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**  
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 769-70 (Apr. 22 aft.), 1006-07 (May 6 aft., passed)
- 29 Family Law Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**  
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 851-52 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 30 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2009 (Drysdale)**  
First Reading -- 401 (Mar. 16 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 736-37 (Apr. 21 aft., adjourned)
- 31 Rules of Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2009 (Denis)**  
First Reading -- 402 (Mar. 16 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 852-53 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)

- 32 Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (Horne)**  
First Reading -- 467 (Mar. 18 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 853 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 33 Fiscal Responsibility Act (Evans)**  
First Reading -- 545 (Apr. 7 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 853-54 (Apr. 28 aft.), 972-79 (May 5 aft., passed on division)  
Committee of the Whole -- 998-1003 (May 6 aft.), 1109-14 (May 12 eve., passed)
- 34 Drug Program Act (\$) (Liepert)**  
First Reading -- 882 (Apr. 29 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 979-80 (May 5 aft.), 1014-15 (May 6 aft.), 1194-95 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 35 Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 2009 (McFarland)**  
First Reading -- 591 (Apr. 9 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 854 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 36 Alberta Land Stewardship Act (\$) (Morton)**  
First Reading -- 818-19 (Apr. 27 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 882 (Apr. 29 aft.), 1134-40 (May 13 aft., passed)
- 37 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (\$) (Evans)**  
First Reading -- 701 (Apr. 20 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 854-55 (Apr. 28 aft.), 1106 (May 12 eve., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1187 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 38 Tourism Levy Amendment Act, 2009 (Evans)**  
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 855 (Apr. 28 aft.), 1106 (May 12 eve., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1187-88 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 39 Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (Evans)**  
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 855-56 (Apr. 28 aft.), 1107-08 (May 12 eve., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1188-90 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 40 Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009 (Brown)**  
First Reading -- 702 (Apr. 20 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 856 (Apr. 28 aft.), 1108 (May 12 eve., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1190 (May 14 aft., passed)
- 41 Protection for Persons in Care Act (Brown)**  
First Reading -- 766 (Apr. 22 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 856 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 42 Gaming and Liquor Amendment Act, 2009 (Anderson)**  
First Reading -- 734 (Apr. 21 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 857 (Apr. 28 aft., adjourned)
- 43 Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2) (Griffiths)**  
First Reading -- 850 (Apr. 28 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 883 (Apr. 29 aft.), 1149-53 (May 13 aft.), 1155-61 (May 13 eve., passed on division)
- 44 Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act, 2009 (Blackett)**  
First Reading -- 850 (Apr. 28 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 883-84 (Apr. 29 aft.), 1007-14 (May 6 aft.), 1036-38 (May 7 aft.), 1140-47 (May 13 aft.), 1161-66 (May 13 eve.), 1173-74 (May 13 eve., passed)
- 45 Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2009 (Redford)**  
First Reading -- 933-34 (May 4 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 1098-1103 (May 12 aft.), 1147-49 (May 13 aft., passed)
- 46 Gunshot and Stab Wound Mandatory Disclosure Act (Quest)**  
First Reading -- 966 (May 5 aft.)

- 47 Appropriation Act, 2009 (\$) (Snelgrove)**  
First Reading -- 1049 (May 11 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 1085-94 (May 12 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1166-67 (May 13 eve.), 1169 (May 13 eve., passed)  
Third Reading -- 1190-94 (May 14 aft.), 1195 (May 14 aft., passed on division)
- 48 Crown's Right of Recovery Act (Liepert)**  
First Reading -- 1049 (May 11 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.), 829-31 (Apr. 27 aft., passed)  
Committee of the Whole -- 1053-64 (May 11 aft., passed with amendments)
- 204 Provincial-Municipal Tax Sharing Act (Blakeman)**  
First Reading -- 498 (Mar. 19 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 831-32 (Apr. 27 aft.), 934-41 (May 4 aft, defeated on division)
- 205 Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009 (Anderson)**  
First Reading -- 649-50 (Apr. 15 aft.)  
Second Reading -- 941-46 (May 4 aft., passed on division)
- 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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**STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

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 Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund  
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