

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, November 14, 2001**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 01/11/14

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. Our Father, we thank You for Your abundant blessings to our province and ourselves. We ask You to ensure to us Your guidance and the will to follow it. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. NORRIS: [remarks in German]

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly His Excellency Mr. Christian Pauls, ambassador of Germany. Accompanying him is Mr. Fritz Koenig, honorary consul general stationed in Edmonton. Would they please rise. I would like to welcome His Excellency to Alberta on his first official visit since his appointment this year.

More than half a million Albertans are of German descent, Mr. Speaker, and there are about 60 active German-Canadian organizations across Alberta. From junior high schools to universities, German is taught in over 54 schools. Early next year Alberta expects to open a new international office in Munich to enhance our already outstanding trade opportunities with Germany. Trade with Germany is an important part of Alberta's economy, with two-way trade totaling over \$358 million, and there is great potential to expand. We trust that this will serve to enhance our already existing excellent relations between Alberta and Germany.

I would ask that our honoured guests please receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. HUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here from 3,814 individuals that would like to encourage the Minister of Learning and this government to support libraries and librarians in this great province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented yesterday regarding discrimination against Falun Gong be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government of Alberta to make recommendation to the Federal government to condemn the Chinese government's crackdown on Falun Gong and the Heilongjiang Government's mass killing of Falun Gong practitioners.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Bill 25

Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act for first reading. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act is a bill which will establish a process through which property and profits gained from unlawful acts will be used to repair the harm caused to the victims of those crimes. It will also make it easier for Albertans to regain their property or obtain court-ordered restitution for losses suffered as a result of illegal activities.

[Motion carried; Bill 25 read a first time]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Bill 26

Trustee Amendment Act, 2001

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also beg leave to introduce Bill 26, the Trustee Amendment Act, 2001.

This bill will legislate the prudent investor rule that will allow trustees to diversify investments, control risk, and improve financial returns to a trust fund.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have a number of tablings. I'm pleased to table today with the Assembly the following annual reports for the year 2000-2001: the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation; the Alberta Opportunity Company; the Livestock Identification Services Ltd. manager's report, which includes the Brand Act, the Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection Act, the Livestock and Livestock Products Act, and the Stray Animals Act. I am also filing the Farmers' Advocate annual report for the year 2000. Copies of all these reports are available in my office.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to file copies of the program from the October 18, 2001, investiture ceremony for this year's recipients of the Alberta Order of Excellence; namely, Louis Armand Desrochers of Edmonton and Colonel (Retired) Donald Stewart Ethell of Calgary. Worthy gentlemen both.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table five copies of a letter addressed to Mr. Ashok Sharma, president, Council of India Societies, extending sincere best wishes on behalf of all of us to those tens of thousands of members of our East Indian community in our province who today begin the very special celebration of Diwali, which, as we all know, is the festival of light.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Though from time to time we seem to dwell on negative news in this Assembly, I would like to table today the Ervin & Associates gas price survey for all of Canada, which shows the capital city of Alberta, Edmonton, having the lowest gas prices in all of Canada.

Continuing on the side of good news, I am also tabling today a

press release from Suncor Energy that talks about its Voyageur project, Mr. Speaker, that is part of the \$32 billion U.S. investment in oil sands in this great province, which moves production up to 550,000 barrels per day over the next 10 years.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to table a letter from Grande Yellowhead regional division No. 35 on the aspects of Bill 16.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of the outline of the Good Neighbour fund. They held their Poor Boy luncheon today at noon. This is a fund that generates moneys to help individuals who are without other sources of support in the community.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With permission I have two tablings: one, notes on cost containment strategies and, the second, expenditure forecasts for the second quarter of 2001-2002.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I at this time would like to table for all members of the Assembly a letter that I received from Lee and Maria Kruszewski from Edmonton-Gold Bar. They are concerned about the large number of students in kindergarten through grade 3 classes at St. Gabriel school.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table five copies of a letter from a constituent, Margaret Hislop. The letter is addressed to the Premier and is CCed to me. She was very concerned in outlining her concerns with the difference in government promises before the election compared to the tighten your belts scenarios that are being heard after the election.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a letter written by Ms Audrey Mancini of Red Deer addressed to the Minister of Health and Wellness in which she is asking why important drugs like Remicide and others are not covered under the Alberta drug plan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five copies of a report by the Alberta Wilderness Association, Albertans for a Wild Chinchaga, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Edmonton chapter, and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists entitled Structural Impediments to FSC Certification in Alberta: Overcoming Barriers to Well-Managed Forests.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to section 61(1) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I'm pleased to table with the Assembly the annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. It covers his activities to the period to March 31, 2001.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week commemorates the anniversary of the death of Louis Riel, and it is a time when Metis people honour his memory and celebrate their heritage. Today we have a very special guest with us, and it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Ms Audrey Poitras, who is president of the Metis Nation of Alberta Association. Audrey is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that she please rise and receive the warm, traditional welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to introduce some special guests who are also here with us as part of Metis Week in Alberta. In your gallery today are Rick Blyan, the president of the Metis Settlements General Council, executive members Gerald Cunningham, vice-president; Donna Lakey, secretary; Marcel Desjarlais, treasurer; and Dale LeClair, executive director. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to be able to introduce to you and through you to Members of this Legislative Assembly a friend, a colleague, and a columnist with the *Calgary Herald*, her first appearance in the Chamber of the Alberta Legislature. I'd ask that Danielle Smith rise and receive the warm applause of this congregation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I have two introductions. First of all, I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly seven people who do an incredible job on a daily basis working in victims' assistance programs throughout the capital region and who are representative of the many people who work throughout our province assisting victims on a daily basis. They are joining us today to see the introduction of Bill 25, the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act, which was just approved for first reading in the Assembly. With us today are Sergeant Bob Pagee and Shelley Juchli of the Edmonton Police victim services unit, Terry Krahn of the Edmonton John Howard victims assistance program, Kim Goodwin of the Leduc and District Victim Assistance Society, Shirley DenBraber of the Fort Saskatchewan victim service unit, and Marlene Morris and Lynne Fowler of the victim service unit that serves Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and district. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd like them all to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly and our thanks as representatives of the victims services people all over the province.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated that I had two introductions. It's also my

pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly an enthusiastic and fantastic group of 105 grade 6 students from St. Mary's school in my constituency. Teachers and student teachers accompanying the students are Miss Liz Esposito, Mr. Brad Ostopowich, Mrs. Lillian Turner, Mrs. Denise D'Agostini, Miss Krista Murray, Miss Dayna Heuver, Mr. Don Henderson, Mrs. Michelle Armstrong and parent volunteers Mrs. Judy Brotto, Mrs. Mary Sikora, Mr. Sam Amelio, Mrs. Teresa Stewart, Mrs. Mary Healy, Mrs. Virginia Harris, Mrs. Christina Harrison, Mrs. Janet Clanachan, Mrs. Cathy Jabusch, Mrs. Flavia Anger, Mrs. Virginia Tracy-Roth, Mrs. Colleen Smith, Mrs. Eva Powers, Mr. Dwain May, Ms Diane Dagleish, Ms Silva McCann, Ms Jeannie Vaage. As I indicated, 105 wonderful students from the Edmonton-Whitemud constituency. I hope that they will be able to watch question period and see the questions and answers that go on today, because with so many of them I wasn't able to answer all their questions at the time we had pictures taken. I'd ask them all to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

MRS. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you the members of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, a group of hardworking individuals who help to protect one of our most valuable resources in this province, the children. I'd like to welcome recently appointed and reappointed members to the committee: Jean Wilkinson, vice-chair; Lori Brooks; Nancy Donnelly; Dawne Fowler; Del James; Mickey McMaster; Yvonne Slemko; and Edith Zawadiuk. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Miss Shannon Knack. Shannon volunteers and also does the janitorial work at my constituency office. Shannon is seated in the members' gallery, and I would like her to rise at this time and receive the warm welcome of this House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce members from Fort McMurray who belong to local municipal government. Let me just say that many members of this Assembly have belonged to local municipal government. It is an important fraternity. In fact, today commences the 98th annual convention of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, which they are attending. So it's my pleasure today to introduce His Worship Mayor Doug Faulkner from the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo as well as Councillor Mickey Madden and Councillor Tom Weber. I would ask them all to rise and receive the very warm welcome of this House in keeping with the spirit that nous aons l'energie.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Mr. Gary Mize, president and chief executive officer of ConAgra Malt, as well as Mr. Don Grambsch, senior vice-president, global risk management and procurement for ConAgra Malt, and Mr. Andrew Raphael, ConAgra Malt's Canadian government relations representative.

ConAgra is an international company which owns Canada Malting in Calgary. They're the largest grain processor in Alberta, processing high-quality Alberta barley into malt. The Calgary facility is their largest and most modern and produces about 250,000 metric tonnes of malt per year. Our guests are in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you today to the members of this Assembly a very special person to Red Deer-North and indeed to all of Canada. She's well known to the members of this Assembly, and we're very glad to have her here today. Oh, another special person has just arrived. We're all quite familiar with him, and we're very pleased to have them both here: Mr. and Mrs. Stockwell Day. Will you please stand.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: I really don't know what to say because the hon. Member for Red Deer-North stole my thunder. For such an eloquent guest I think that we should have a slightly longer introduction.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce through you to all members of the Legislature a very familiar face to most of us, Stockwell Day. As you know, Stockwell is the leader of the Canadian Alliance and Leader of the Official Opposition in Ottawa, and before going federal, Stockwell was a longtime member of this Assembly, representing the constituency of Red Deer-North. He also served in several cabinet portfolios, most notably as Provincial Treasurer. Above all, Stockwell is a true friend of Alberta, and I'm delighted that he is here with us today. I get to do an additional introduction because Stockwell is joined by his delightful and amazing wife, Valorie; Valorie's sister, Jude Hanson; and Stockwell's executive assistant, Shane Bourke. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Legislature.

1:50

head: Ministerial Statements

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Metis Week

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a Metis I rise proudly in the House today to acknowledge that this is Metis Week in the province of Alberta. In fact, I'm pleased to have our special guests from the Metis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council with us today, who have donated the lapel pins on your desks.

Metis Week began on November 12 with the proclamation of Metis Week and the flag-raising ceremony by the Metis Nation of Alberta. My colleague from Edmonton-Calder represented the government extremely well at this important event, and I thank him for that. Commencing with the flag-raising ceremony, Metis Week will be honoured with a presentation of many important events through the entire week. I urge my colleagues to consider attending one of the many of these events.

On November 16 the Metis Nation of Alberta will hold its annual commemoration in honour of Louis Riel here at the Legislature at 11 a.m. The Metis Nation of Alberta has played and continues to play an important and integral role in our society, working hard on behalf

of the Metis people of this great province. I commend their remembrance of a great symbol of independence and struggle for equality and recognition. Louis Riel has been denounced as a traitor and extolled as a hero, someone who helped shape the destiny of the west as a place built on fresh ideas and strong convictions. One hundred and sixteen years have passed since his death, and much of what he wanted for Metis people flourishes.

Metis leaders have a history of working with the Alberta government to make life better. Together we are moving Alberta Metis closer to self-reliance, self-determination, and self-management. The land base of our eight Metis settlements and its uniqueness in Canada is something to be proud of. Off-settlement Metis have a strong partnership with the Alberta government through the Metis Nation of Alberta Association.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta government is committed to its partnership with Metis people in this province. We share a mutual goal, to improve socioeconomic opportunities, and we are continuing to move forward in our efforts with the Metis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council. Through our aboriginal policy framework and aboriginal policy initiative Alberta is also continuing to work with other governments, the private sector, and stakeholders to make sure that social and economic issues are properly addressed.

Today, for example, I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of the Infinity Business Training Centre, a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship. The centre is a new initiative of the Metis Business Development Corporation, a relatively new division of the Metis Nation of Alberta Association. The Infinity Business Training Centre was established to provide training to Metis people who have a business idea, develop a business plan, and provide support to those individuals as they start their businesses. The timing of the grand opening of this important facility is ideal as we celebrate Metis Week.

Metis Albertans are leaders in business, government, and the nonprofit sector and contribute as wonderful performers, entertainers, people with a variety of artistic abilities. On behalf of this Assembly I offer my best wishes to all Metis people living in Alberta. May they always stand proud of their heritage and the important role that their ancestors and our ancestors played in the making of the west.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My compliments to the minister for a very moving statement. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Official Opposition to the minister's statement.

Metis Week is an opportunity to reflect upon the many contributions of the Metis people to Alberta. It is vitally important to continue to work to ensure more growth in Metis independence, equality, and self-sufficiency. I'm glad to hear the minister speak of government partnership with Metis people because I was concerned that recent government cuts forced the Ma'Mōwe child and family services authority to layoff four aboriginal managers. As the aboriginal pillar was the fourth pillar upon which our current children's authorities were based, I find this a surprising move, especially considering that Metis youth are overrepresented in the case files of children's authorities.

So while we honour this week the Metis culture, it is important not to forget that the government has vital responsibilities to the next generation of Metis youth. Strengthening the next generation of Metis is an undertaking that I think Louis Riel would himself most surely have championed.

Thank you.

head: Oral Question Period

THE SPEAKER: First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Health Care Reform

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the weekend the Premier speculated in the media about changes to Alberta's health care system. However, yesterday he refused to answer questions, and he strongly advised everyone to wait for Mr. Mazankowski and his group of experts to bring their report together. My question is to the Premier. Why is it okay for the Premier to speculate about changes to the health care system and it's not for us to ask you questions in the House?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, he can ask all the questions he wants, and I will answer them to the best of my ability. The word "speculation" is a misuse of that particular word. There's no speculation whatsoever. I was alluding quite specifically to the interim report that was tabled with me by Mr. Mazankowski, the very preliminary report. I explained to the media yesterday – and I'm sure that either the hon. member was in attendance or one of his representatives was; they usually are at the daily scrum – and I indicated the procedure from here, that on November 16 Mr. Mazankowski will sit down with me to give me an overview of the report, and on or about the 26th of November the final report will be tabled. It will be introduced to the government caucus. It will go through the normal process of cabinet, the standing policy committee, and caucus. Government members will have an opportunity to examine it, and shortly thereafter it will be released publicly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on all of that process, will you commit to having an open debate on the results of that report here in this Legislature?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again, that question was asked. We don't know what components of that report, if any, will require legislative changes or regulation changes or what can be adopted simply as policy. So it is too early to say, but certainly if there are any components that require legislative changes, it will naturally be debated in this Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier also commit to making sure that average Albertans, the citizens who receive health care from this province, will be included in that debate process?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the extent to which a lengthy public debate will take place is something that certainly will have to be considered by this caucus. I can inform the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition that Mr. Mazankowski and his committee went through a public process. As a matter of fact, there were opportunities for people to fax their input. I believe there was a 1-800 number. They solicited openly and very aggressively, to my knowledge, input from the public.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the findings of the Mazankowski report, some of which might be adopted, probably will be adopted by this government, will also be fed to the Romanow commission. Mr. Romanow has made it quite public that he will hold across this

country a very aggressive round of public hearings relative to health care reform, and that's needed.

THE SPEAKER: Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

2:00

Delisting of Health Services

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that the Premier has speculated about has been delisting of services. How will this improve the public health care system if you delist and take away from Albertans some of the health care they now receive?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again, the Mazankowski report alludes – alludes – to the delisting of some services. He talks in his report, in the preliminary report, about the whole issue of comprehensiveness and how the expectations of Canadians and of Albertans in particular, because this relates specifically to Alberta, must be tempered somewhat, that the health care system is not there for all people for all time, for all causes. In other words, the expectation that it's there to cover absolutely everything is one, just one, of the factors that are driving up costs.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier says that that's just alluded to in that report, then why is it that you have singled out delisting as the item that you are talking about on a regular basis?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, that is not true. That is simply not true, and I wish the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition would quit telling fibs. That is not true. I have not been talking about delisting. As a matter of fact, the point that I've been stressing is the whole point of perhaps a challenge to the interpretation of the Canada Health Act as it affects the whole issue of comprehensiveness.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier again: Mr. Premier, when you talk about delisting, taking away from Albertans services that are included in the public health care system, isn't this moving from the public health care system to an insurance health care system or to a wallet health care system?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the only one talking about delisting anything is the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition. Will this hon. member stand up in this Legislative Assembly today and tell this House, this Legislative Assembly, specifically what I have mentioned in terms of delisting? He can't, because I haven't mentioned anything.

THE SPEAKER: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Health Care Spending

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier said that spending on health care had risen, in his words, roughly 30 percent over 10 years. He has also spoken about health care spending being out of control. Is it this government's policy that a spending increase of 30 percent over 10 years is out of control?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I did allude to the fact that health care

spending over the past five years has doubled – and even this member should be able to understand that – from just over \$3 billion to just over \$6 billion. Figure the math. Do the math. You're a professor. You're an educated person. Can you figure that out? Doubled.

DR. TAFT: I was just quoting his own figures.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: if the Alberta government's spending on health care is out of control, is that not the fault of the Alberta government?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I have never said that it is out of control. I have alluded to the fact that if spending remains at the same level or increases year after year after year, we will be facing a crisis in health care, and I'm not the only one saying that. His Liberal counterparts in various provincial jurisdictions are saying the same thing. His Liberal cousins in Ottawa are saying the same thing. That's why the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Romanow, a member of the NDs, so we can come to grips as a nation with the spiraling costs of health care and arrive at a solution that will make health care spending sustainable and make sure that we have for future generations of Canadians a sustainable and quality health care system. That's what it's all about.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given his great interest in saving money, will the Premier make the commitment that no contracting out of clinical services will be done in Alberta unless it can be publicly shown to save money?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we have in place an act in this province; it's called the Health Care Protection Act, formerly Bill 11. You know, I'm sure that the Liberals went out and they thought that they were going to make political hay on Bill 11. Well, guess what happened? Their numbers dwindled to seven, and our numbers increased to 74.

Mr. Speaker, the Health Care Protection Act lays out very strict and very definite guidelines relative to the ability of regional health authorities to contract out certain minor surgery procedures.

MR. MAR: By way of supplement, Mr. Speaker, I should add that in reviewing the 36-some contracts that have been approved under the Health Care Protection Act, the total budget amount in aggregate is roughly \$10 million out of a \$6 billion-plus budget. It is some one-fifth of 1 percent of the total budget.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

Delisting of Health Services

(continued)

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is a politician who used to pride himself on keeping his promises. Not anymore. Before the election he said that "no one . . . will be denied needed health care in this province because of an inability to pay." You'll recall he waved his health care card and he said: "If you have your health care card, it will be there for you." If the Premier succeeds in delisting services or introducing user fees, Albertans will need their credit cards, not their health care cards, to pay for their basic health care. My question is to the Premier. Why is the Premier threatening to delist health care services and introduce user fees when he said on April 10 last year right here in this House that sick and injured

Albertans will only need their Alberta health care card to access public health care?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm bewildered. First of all, no one in this Legislative Assembly – no one – has introduced user fees. User fees violate one of the fundamental principles of the Canada Health Act. It's enshrined in our law, the Health Care Protection Act, that we will abide by the fundamental principles. That doesn't preclude us from challenging the interpretation of certain components of the act. The only persons who've talked about deinsuring or user fees are the members of the Liberals and the NDs. No one has talked about that.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a process that will be followed relative to the release of the Mazankowski report. At that time there will be some certainty as to where we are headed as a government to bring about meaningful health care reform and still provide a service for those who are sick and injured in society under a publicly funded health care system.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why is the Premier and his government putting the comprehensiveness principle in question by threatening to delist health care services when the then minister of health said on April 6 last year that "we have absolutely no plans to delist coverage for necessary medical services"?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, that goes to the essence of what we will probably have to consider relative to comprehensiveness. What is "comprehensive"? Perhaps the hon. leader of the third party could stand up and give us his definition. I was asked yesterday for my definition of comprehensive. My definition might be different than the definition of any member of this Legislature. I would like to know what the hon. member means by comprehensive. Does he mean to say that health care is there for all people at all times for every single cause no matter how minor? Is that what he is saying?

AN HON. MEMBER: That's not the definition.

MR. KLEIN: Well, is that what he is saying? I would like to hear from the leader of the third party what his definition of comprehensiveness is.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

2:10

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What Albertans would really like to know is: why did the Premier mislead Albertans over and over again about the government's true health care agenda? Was it to win the election?

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

THE SPEAKER: Well, you know, words are used in context, and the word "mislead" has a connotation that may not really be appropriate. I would suspect that the hon. member has used the word in such a way that it is not in the context that the majority of people would understand it to be.

The hon. the Premier.

Delisting of Health Services (continued)

MR. KLEIN: I'm not sure what the question was. I know what the allegation was, that I misled Albertans. Mr. Speaker, I've never misled Albertans.

You know, the Minister of Health and Wellness and myself and

other members of this caucus have always said that we have to bring about meaningful reform to health care to make it sustainable for future generations, and I believe with all my heart that the leader of the third party believes that as well, that we have to find a way to ensure that health care is sustainable for future generations. That's what the national exercise is all about; that's what the Romanow commission is all about. That's what Don Mazankowski's advisory council on health is all about. That's why other Premiers and other ministers of health in virtually every other jurisdiction in this country are trying to find meaningful and significant ways of bringing about health care reforms, to make sure it is sustainable and at the same time to ensure that those who are truly sick and injured and hurting in society are looked after. That's what it's all about.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

North/South Trade Corridor

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta's public revenue is down due to the downturn of our world economy and that our responsive government reduces our public spending accordingly, reflecting my constituents' concern about our Calgary transportation infrastructure, my questions are to the Minister of Transportation. What highway links through Calgary are under the responsibility of the provincial government, and how will they be affected by the corrective measure to keep the budget balanced this year?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department and the government have assumed full responsibility for all major trade corridors through cities in the province. In the city of Calgary it's the Deerfoot, which is part of highway 2 and which is the north/south trade corridor. By assuming full responsibility, we're committed to maintaining that road that goes through the city of Calgary. By that, I mean snow removal, line painting, illumination of the road, and also crack sealing and all of the other things that come with maintenance. We also assumed full responsibility for the construction of a number of interchanges along that trade route as well. Due to some of the corrective actions that we've had to take, we've deferred the interchange development. But with respect to the maintenance portion, that relieved the city of about \$4 million to \$5 million a year in costs which we've assumed responsibility for, that and also the full cost of the construction. Now, the corrective action was a 15 percent reduction in municipal grants, which is a bit of a reduction in the 70 percent increase that they've received over the last three years.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. CAO: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplementary is to the same minister. In the October 18 announcement the Department of Transportation indicated that it is still planning to open the Deerfoot extension by 2002. Is this still achievable?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, the plan has hit a bit of a glitch, only because the city of Calgary has been unable to obtain the land that's necessary to complete the extension north of the Bow. We probably will be missing the construction season, you know, to grade the road and then pave in conjunction with part of the north/south trade corridor grading that has been completed from the Bow River south. So we probably will lose one construction season not because

of a fiscal issue but because of the fact that we can't obtain the land in time.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last supplementary to the same minister: what can the minister commit to that will ensure that the Deerfoot Trail will be able to handle the demands of traffic growth in our city of Calgary?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, that portion of the north/south trade corridor, highway 2, the Deerfoot, is a very important link of the Canamex highway. Given that our trade with the Americans is about a billion and a half a day and trade with Mexico is increasing on a daily basis, all sorts of manufacturing sectors, especially agriculture as well, we are committed to completing the north/south trade corridor and making all of the necessary improvements so that we can gain efficiencies in moving goods and services north and south.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Intensive Livestock Operations

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the minister of agriculture. While the NRCB will be responsible for approving individual applications for confined feeding operations, who will monitor the cumulative impact of all of the CFOs on the soil, air, and water quality across this province?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Natural Resources Conservation Board will be responsible, as the member indicated, for the siting, the auditing, the monitoring, and the compliance of confined feeding operations in this province. Those will be the functions of the NRCB.

I should mention to the hon. member that because this government recognized some dozen years ago that there could be a problem in a cumulative manner of the effects of intensive agriculture, not just livestock, on groundwater and the soil, we instituted a groundwater study in southern Alberta, where a great deal of intensive farming operations, including confined feeding operations, occur, and over that 10-year period monitored the effects on groundwater and did some soil monitoring as well. That information was very valuable to us, and we continue to monitor today 23 sites to ensure that, in fact, we are not impacting negatively groundwater and soil in those intensive areas.

The NRCB will have that authority. There will of course be the interaction with Environment if there is a breach and a necessity for environmental protection to come in and assist with remediation of the problem.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, this addresses the issues of groundwater and soil, but what about air?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, when we announced that the Natural Resources Conservation Board would be responsible for this legislation, we made it very clear that their authority would be to monitor the quality of the air, soil, and water in this province, and that will be a major part of their mandate.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: why does she not support the Official Opposition position that there should be

consistent and enforceable provincial regulations to protect soil, water, air quality, and municipal autonomy in deciding the final siting for CFOs?

MRS. McCLELLAN: I mentioned yesterday and I find it interesting yet – in fact, I believe it was this very member who was the critic for environmental protection when a news release was put out. There are a couple of things that are in it. I'll paraphrase what I quoted yesterday, and I'd be happy to table this, Mr. Speaker, as is the practice: it was important that this government ensure that there is consistency. A couple of things I want to just point out, and these are statements from that: "Most municipalities not only lack the expertise to determine or regulate the impacts of intensive hog operations or feedlots, they lack the specialist staff to ensure compliance." Speaking of the minister of agriculture, "He should ensure that the siting and operation of intensive livestock operations prevents any environmental contamination." It goes on to say that one municipality may be more lenient than the other.

2:20

If the hon. member reads the bill that was introduced in this House yesterday, she will see very clearly that that legislation is enabling legislation that will ensure that the codes of practice that are set out are indeed complied with. I'm sure her comeback would be, and rightfully so: well, most of this is in the regulations. Well, let me assure the hon. member that the regulations in draft form, because of course that's the only way they could be – you can't have regulations until you have legislation passed – to show and demonstrate to all, not just to this Legislature but to the people who will operate under this act, will be in place for their review and people's review before this act is passed.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Corrections Facilities Riots

MR. CENAICO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans were shocked this week about news of riots at the Edmonton Institution and the prison in Drumheller. These riots, that resulted in injuries to several inmates and one death, raise a number of concerns. My questions are to the Solicitor General. I understand that the prisons in Edmonton and Drumheller, where these incidents took place, are federal institutions, but can the Solicitor General advise what role, if any, her department has in investigating these riots?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is correct. Where the riots took place are both federal institutions. My department has no direct involvement in the investigation into these incidents. However, under the provincial Police Act the RCMP and the Edmonton Police Service will investigate the incidents within their jurisdiction and will recommend charges if they deem them appropriate.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. CENAICO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is also to the Solicitor General. What plans are in place in Alberta correctional centres to prevent or deal with incidents such as those at the Edmonton and Drumheller federal institutions?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta correctional officers in this province are very well trained, and they're all very professional. I've had the opportunity to travel the province in the last couple of months and meet these officers in the institutions and have been very, very impressed. In addition, we have specially trained tactical teams to deal with a riot in our Alberta correctional centres. I'd like to say that due to security reasons I can't elaborate, but I can tell you that we have professional, well-trained correctional officers in our facilities.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Foster Children

DR. MASSEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Children's Services told the House, "We have worked very hard to make sure that the reductions do not happen on the level of dealing with the child." My questions are to the Minister of Children's Services. Given that the West Yellowhead must cut \$147,000 to support and train foster parents, does the minister still stand by her claim that children won't be affected?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do say that we are making cuts furthest away from the child. I don't know the specific reference from West Yellowhead, but let me assure the members here that beyond the cuts, let's talk about what we're doing that's positive, and let's remember that in Alberta we spend . . . [interjections] Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. We spend \$647 million on children in this province through Children's Services, one of the largest budgets in Canada. This year and over the next year we will have a 15 percent increase in basic maintenance fees for foster families. This will look after the needs for foster families. I met with representatives of 3,500 foster families just last week, and they are very pleased that since April this year we have been putting in additional supports, including supports for respite and additional training for foster families.

I'd like to go one step further. Mr. Speaker, with foster families requiring training and respite, we are working to reconfigure the way that contracts administer services through foster families. We've had authority foster families and agency foster families, and much of the work that the CEOs are doing is trying to make sure that the contracts themselves don't have built in layers of administration and valuation that could be better spent up front with the child.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand by my claim that the administrative cuts and the teamwork that we're bringing in to work with foster families will do a lot to improve the system and that we are not directly taking away from those services that interface directly with the child.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that West Yellowhead projects a \$1 million deficit in child welfare services alone, how will the reduction in administration be enough to avoid direct services to children being cut?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, every single authority is working on their plan. Since we had the business plans approved earlier this year, they are going back and looking at cost containment strategies, but more than that they are working on some very specific new initiatives.

I'll give you an example from the hon. Member for Red Deer-

North. She visited Neegan Awas'sak up in Slave Lake. They are working to have their social workers become permanency planners, working with the family, working with the child, and working with the extended family to make sure that children aren't necessarily taken into the child welfare system and become so-called statistics in child welfare but working right in the home to ensure that we can do better things to enable that family to overcome their problems and the child to grow up in a loving family.

One more thing, Mr. Speaker. Some of the initiatives for home visitation and early childhood development that are in place in this province will net and yield very strong dividends in the future as we bring in prevention strategies in the early years that will avoid some of the problems that we have with children who have extensive history in child welfare.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of the close to 500 frontline staff the minister promised to hire at budget time, how many are actually on the job today helping children?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, today child welfare services has 2,655 employees. Of the 475 that were in the budget at the first of this year, 75, as I indicated at one time previously in this House, were transfers to accommodate the Children's Advocate and some of the other departmental transfers. We have about 300 new social workers in the system. We are still missing some outreach workers in some of the remote areas, but the teams themselves are working to overcome that.

If I might just add one more point, not all child welfare is delivered by staff that are members of our government department. It is delivered by agency supports through at least 10,000 people and several agencies throughout Alberta: Boys and Girls Clubs, Catholic Social Services. Our configuration and mix of child delivery services extends far beyond the staff in the department.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had questions pertaining to funding for foster children and foster parents and also with respect to direct funding for children's services, and the questions have been asked and answered appropriately by the minister.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Drivers' Licences

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The only thing slower than the motor vehicles registry system in this province is the government's response to fixing it. My first question this afternoon is for the Solicitor General. Which law enforcement agencies have approached the hon. minister's department requesting better security features in the card stock to reduce the cases of counterfeiting and fraud with the Alberta drivers' licence?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the hon. member, and I am going to give it to the Minister of Government Services.

2:30

MR. COUTTS: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, let me reassure the hon. member and all Albertans that even though there are people out there who have the technology today to counterfeit money, to do forgery on any document or any piece of paper – let me advise this House that our driver's licence process is constantly being looked at and constantly being upgraded. Yes, we do have to do some individual improvements on our equipment to keep up with the technology that's available today, but let me reassure you that drivers' licences are safe in Alberta today.

Thank you.

MR. MacDONALD: To the Minister of Government Services: can the hon. minister please explain the memo dated July 17 of this year from the deputy minister's office that was found fluttering on the lawn of the Legislative Assembly? Talk about a security issue. This memo states that law enforcement agencies have also requested better security features on the card stock to reduce the incidence of counterfeit or fraudulent licences. Who was right here, the law enforcement agencies or the minister?

Thank you.

MR. COUTTS: Mr. Speaker, that particular document has made its way from the *Edmonton Journal* into the hands of the hon. member opposite. That particular document is the very first draft of some consultations that we have had with the stakeholders that we have responsibility to work with in registries and in the Department of Government Services. That is a first draft, and we will continue to work with our stakeholders to get their input into upgrading our present equipment.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Government Services: given that this year's Government Services annual report states that capital initiatives were deferred to fund operational costs, how does the minister plan to fund the \$5 cost per driver's licence to provide all Alberta drivers with a new, safe, tamperproof, fraudulent-proof licence? Where's the \$5 going to come from?

MR. COUTTS: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a first draft of a document that was going to be used for our business planning process that we were going through this fall and this winter. Make no mistake; I will constantly be working with this government and with our department to make sure that we have the dollars available when needed.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Industrial Disturbance in Forests

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today a report was released by four respected environmental organizations. The report concluded that the biggest threat to Alberta's forests is surprisingly not from the forest industry but from the province's oil and gas industry. The report says that the oil and gas industry cuts down almost as many trees in Alberta each year as the forest industry does. More than 57,000 kilometres of seismic lines are cut through Alberta's forests every year, greater than the circumference of the entire globe. To the Minister of Energy: how can the minister justify

not addressing a situation where the oil and gas industry is responsible for cutting and destroying almost as much Alberta forest each year as the entire forest industry?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it's a real delight to be able to rise in this House and bring the member out of the dark ages, out of the years of 50 to 100 years ago, and talk about some of the dramatic new impacts that are happening in the oil and gas industry today. Those events of zero impact seismic were through the use of global positioning systems. You can go in, take a seismic shot, cut down one tree. Today industry works with the forest industry to have a minimal industrial disturbance footprint in these areas. This industry, through the use of horizontal drilling techniques, where you put a pad and you drill sideways in many different directions, allows again a minimal disturbance, a minimal imprint. There are many technologies that Alberta service companies have taken the lead in and, in fact, are world-best practitioners at.

I can remember being in a meeting with the hon. Member for West Yellowhead. It was in the Dominion Forest cabin, a cabin secluded in the wilds. It was built by a robust forestry department in the early '30s, and there, Mr. Speaker, the oil patch came together with the logging industry and said: "How do we find better solutions? How do we minimize the industrial impact? How do we maximize the benefit of this resource for all Albertans?" The oil patch is doing it today. They're doing it competently, and they'll continue to do it competently in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why has the government failed to put measures in place requiring the energy industry to do a proper job of reforesting the tens of thousands of hectares that are clear-cut each year, including on an ongoing basis, despite what the minister has to say to us, for seismic lines, well sites, pipelines, and access roads?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues and the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development are waiting to leap to their feet to talk about the work that has been done with the government and the private sector, the ability to have the Energy and Utilities Board work diligently in the broad public interest for us to be able to continue to develop this important, important resource for all Albertans and, at the same time, recognizing we have an extremely valuable forestry resource as well. It's the ability of Albertans to work in partnership with government, the private sector, and different industrial sectors in order to develop this resource and to employ people and in fact to employ unionized people in the forestry industry. I don't know if he wants to damage the job opportunities that unions have in Alberta, but if he does, he's doing a good job of it.

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker, aside from the charming story about the meeting in the quaint log cabin, can the minister demonstrate with documentation actual agreements between the forestry industry and the oil and gas industry that protect Alberta's forests?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the member is asking for access to private commercial agreements that exist in industry today. In fact, I know that through his union connections he can probably go to any party that he wishes to talk to and say: show me these agreements; show me these industrial private-sector agreements. I'm sure the private sector would be pleased to respond to his request.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Personal Identification

MR. LUKASZUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question of the same genre as that of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar – which stands on the testament that sometimes, but only sometimes, they can identify questions of relevance – is to the hon. Minister of Government Services. Following the tragic events of September 11 there have been some discussions relevant to the adequacy of the security of Alberta drivers' licences and perhaps the need for universal ID. Is this government at this time considering a universal ID?

MR. COUTTS: Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, and this House that there is no plan for mandatory identification of any type. There is no proposal on the table for mandatory identification. What we are looking at doing is upgrading our present driver's licence as well as our voluntary identification card so that it is secure for Albertans. With rapidly advancing technology today it's important that as Minister of Government Services in charge of registries we do take a look at the possibilities of how we can make our cards more secure. It has always been our job to make sure that we investigate and look at all the options that are available. It's very prevalent at this particular time, given the recent tragedies in the United States, that we do remind ourselves of the need to be vigilant in terms of making sure that we do upgrade our identification cards.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.
2:40

MR. LUKASZUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the department currently investigating such options as DNA security or perhaps even face recognition?

MR. COUTTS: We're not looking at DNA. The reason we're not looking at DNA is because DNA is at the very high end of the technological scale, and there's a broad spectrum of possibilities out there between what DNA is and what we presently have in place. So DNA may be the best technology to use, but it may not be the right thing for Albertans today. What we need is an answer that is not only secure and affordable for Albertans but, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, an answer that is acceptable also to the privacy needs of Albertans.

MR. LUKASZUK: My last supplemental, Mr. Speaker: when does the minister expect to have recommendations tabled, and when can Albertans expect some of those new innovations to take place?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're very early in the process of dealing with the security task force that is being led by the Hon. Halvar Jonson, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Affairs. What I've been asked to do is to simply take a look, to assist with an overall strategy regarding the security of Alberta's drivers' licences to ensure that when Albertans go and cross that border or when they get on an airline, the identification that they are using and that they produce is viewed as being trustworthy and authentic. I strongly believe, not to mention our neighbours, that Albertans deserve no less.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Library Funding

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. October 14 to 20 was Library Week here in Alberta, and the minister talked about funding to reflect population growth, despite the fact that the per capita grant continues to be based on 1997 population figures. If the Minister of Community Development is going to talk about access, new technologies, and services available at libraries for all Albertans, could the minister please share with Albertans the funding plan he has in place to provide these services in a sustainable manner?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the question from the hon. member, because libraries are, indeed, a very important and a very integral aspect of all of our communities where they exist right across this province. It is true that this year, in the budget released in April, we did increase overall library funding, which I'm sure the member is aware of. As I recall, that increase was over \$700,000, which took us up over the \$14 million mark, somewhere close to \$15 million. We also indicated that we would be spending just under \$2 million hooking up with the APLEN project. So those are a couple of the positive things.

I do acknowledge, however, that the per capita rate that was reduced several years ago does need some serious review, and as soon as those budget dollars come available, I have indicated I will take a look at that as well.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. To the same minister: could the minister please tell us, then, how many libraries in Alberta have the funding base to take the APLEN wiring from the outside of their buildings inside and provide the hardware and trained personnel to use it? How many?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I don't have a figure just off the top of my head, but I'd be happy to have a look and see how those accommodations are going along.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that as we have the APLEN project traveling down this highway and we have the Supernet traveling down that highway, at some point we're going to need to try and merge the two, and there will be an expense that many of the libraries will be hard pressed to meet. So we're going to have to work out a strategy when the dollars come available to help those libraries become better equipped in order to facilitate that process, which I think is ultimately where the member may be going with her question.

In short, if there is a number out there that accommodates her specific question, I'll be happy to try and find it for her.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks. Given that the minister is going ahead with these two different streams around libraries yet doesn't have the government funding to back it up, what does he have in mind so that libraries can provide these services to Albertans, given that there's an absence of additional government support, without the libraries raising fees? Is this magic money?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. We have probably the most wired province anywhere in all of Canada. We've invested a great deal of money in that infrastructure; we will continue to invest. What we have in the library community is one type of need. What we have in the business community may well be a different type of need and so on in the medical areas and in our public buildings and so on. At some point we would like to have those mergers occur, but first we have to make sure that we've got our own particular projects well in hand, and that's what we're attempting to do with the APLEN hookup. It's gone over very well, as the member knows. When I had the great pleasure of attending the librarians' meeting in Jasper, we spent a lot of time discussing this issue, and I expect we'll discuss it more.

As soon as the dollars become available, Mr. Speaker, we will take a look at how we can help improve services to our libraries so that they have the necessary funds to make those particular mergers more affordable to them.

head: **Recognitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Wilfred and Ann Vandermeer

MR. VANDERMEER: Thank you. Today, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of publicly recognizing two very special people: my parents, Wilfred and Ann Vandermeer. They left their native land, Leeuwarden in the Netherlands, in 1952 and settled in a faraway place, Edmonton. They sought a better life, and they found it here. As time went by, the family grew to include six children, of which I am the fourth. A week ago today, on November 7, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, no small feat in these times. To me they are an example of what true love is all about: commitment, respect, affection. They have certainly set an example for my brother, my sisters, and myself to follow. Mom and Dad, congratulations. May God bless you with many more years in health and happiness.

Harry Buddle

MRS. O'NEILL: This evening Mr. Harry Buddle, the CEO of Capital City Savings & Credit Union, will be presented with the University of Alberta-based 2001 Canadian Institute of Retailing and Services Henry Singer award in broad recognition of his leadership, vision, and commitment to the community and in specific recognition of his successful merging of eight struggling credit union outlets into a single organization, that is now the fourth largest credit union in Canada. Harry and his business team tell the amazing story of survival and success behind Capital City Savings. Harry and his family tell the edifying story of involvement and enrichment behind many community initiatives and programs. Congratulations, Mr. Harry Buddle.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Jasper Municipal Council

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to offer congratulations to all Albertans who were elected to local office in the recent municipal elections, and it is with hometown pride that I recognize and congratulate Mayor Richard Ireland and councillors Joe Couture, Mike Day, Gloria Konsrud, Ross Pugh, Andy Walker, and Brenda Zinck, the first council for Alberta's newest municipality, Jasper. I grew up in Jasper and am very familiar with the many years of discussions regarding self-gover-

nance for this great mountain resort. The move from improvement district to specialized municipality recognizes the importance of local autonomy in community decisions. The residents of Jasper worked long and hard to obtain their new status, and I wish the council all the best over the next three years.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

2:50

Canadian Finals Rodeo

MR. KNIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and invite recognition from this Assembly of two constituents from the Grande Prairie-Smoky region, recent successful participants in the Canadian Finals Rodeo. A young gentleman, Rod Warren of Valleyview, won the Canadian saddle bronc title with a score of 155.5. He was also declared repeatedly the all-round champion cowboy in Canada. Another young gentleman, Dusty LaValley of Bezanson, was a winner of the novice bareback championship with 280 points.

I recognize their achievements, Mr. Speaker, and invite the House to do so as well.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Canadian Diabetes Association

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to recognize the Canadian Diabetes Association on World Diabetes Day. The Canadian Diabetes Association is a charitable organization that was established almost 50 years ago, and it's grown to include more than 150 locations across the country. It's the largest nongovernmental supporter of diabetes research, education, service, and advocacy. Together with its sections and councils, its employees and volunteers, the Canadian Diabetes Association plays an invaluable role in the everyday lives of over 2 million Canadians. The Canadian Diabetes Association provides a vital service in terms of education, especially to individuals when they are first diagnosed, when they often require help and support to adjust to the new reality of their lives.

I'd like to commend the employees and volunteers of the Canadian Diabetes Association for the very meaningful and important work that is accomplished on a daily basis to improve the lives of all persons with diabetes.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

Kiwanis Club of Red Deer

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I recognize the Kiwanis Club of Red Deer, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The Kiwanis Club of Red Deer was chartered in 1951 with Mr. Fred Horn as its first president. Mr. Horn along with Dr. Stu Fleming and Dr. Harold Spencer have been members for 50 years and still counsel present-day members in Red Deer.

The Kiwanis Club is an outstanding organization in our community. For the past 50 years they have raised funds and supported such worthwhile programs as Camp Sherbino, a Girl Guides camp; the Golden Circle, a seniors' organization; Safety City; the PARTY program; the elementary school breakfast programs; the Central Alberta Science Fair; and too many more projects to mention.

Congratulations to all members of the Kiwanis Club, their

president, Keith Walker, and their president-elect, Michael Donlevy, for a job well done. Red Deer is truly grateful for all that you have done over the past 50 years and all that you continue to do.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) to move that the written questions appearing on today's Order Paper do stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) to move that motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper do stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading**

Bill 210

Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001

[Debate adjourned November 13: Mr. Cenaiko speaking]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CENAIKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the coming years families and, specifically, taxpayers will have to choose to travel down one of two roads to help decide the future of their loved ones: one leading to in-home care and one toward a provincial group home facility. Families will have to make the decision to either find new living arrangements in a group facility or change their own lifestyles to accommodate taking relatives into their homes.

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

I'm happy to acknowledge that Alberta's housing facilities continue to provide essential services to assist everyday living for their clients. Alberta offers many different programs and services that provide different levels of care for dependent adults. I'm confident that all of the government-funded facilities provide their clients with the highest level of care and safety possible, but sometimes people don't want to move into these facilities. They feel that some of their freedom is taken away, and they're right. Living in a facility often includes living by a common set of rules and guidelines for the whole group. Group facilities tend to not be as individual specific as other alternatives, including in-home care. I also appreciate the fact that some people may have no choice but to move into group facilities. But I wonder: if healthy, independent seniors were given the choice, would they want to live in a group facility, or would they prefer in-home care? I believe that most people wish to be with their family, in their community, under their own roof.

Mr. Speaker, seniors today are much different than they were in the last century. They're living longer and enjoying better physical and mental condition than previous generations. I have noticed that all signs point to the fact that seniors will enjoy a healthier economic situation. Some people will only require basic service, not justifying the cost of living in public facilities or the cost to our health care system. In light of these situations families choose to come together and agree that the best place for dependent adults is at home as part of the family unit. This is a big decision that will be made many more times in the future.

However, there are important advantages and drawbacks. One key advantage includes keeping families together so everyone can share the love and support that cannot be found in a group facility. Staying at home lets people enjoy the highest and safest level of independence possible. The dependent adults can set most of their own living standards, which would go a long way to help people keep their self-respect.

Let's also remember the importance of having more adults at home. Two-income households, for example, could benefit from someone else completing light duties. Most dependent adults would be more than willing and able to help out around the house as this will give them dignity, value, and inclusion with the family. The fact that our population is aging doesn't mean that they cannot be vital members of society, their community, and their family. They can still be role models and can be another caring adult for young people to listen to and to seek advice from.

Another advantage of bringing other members into the home is that it alleviates stress off the health care system. In 1998 there were approximately 7,000 people who utilized the in-home care and dependant tax credits for dependent adults. As our population ages, Alberta will need this number to grow. We need more people to take care of others to prevent the province from being collectively loaded down by this large aging demographic.

One of the major drawbacks of in-home care is burnout related to taking care of another dependant. More and more families are two-income homes, and adding care for another person adds pressure to an already stressful lifestyle, but I think that the combination of medical breakthroughs and better living habits mean that in the future dependent adults will require less care, which will make in-home care more of an option. I predict that as our population ages, the number of families extending their arm to dependent relatives will grow if we encourage them to do so.

By raising the level of the current tax credits, this bill will encourage and reward families for looking after their own. This bill will benefit the health care system by preventing an overload of dependent adults on the existing care facilities. According to Stats Canada, by the year 2016 14 and a half percent of Alberta's population will be over the age of 65. In the next couple of decades this province will experience a sharp spike in age as a large number of Albertans move into the senior demographic. Bill 210 encourages family members to share the responsibility of caring for aging and dependent adults and relatives.

Mr. Speaker, we must remember the number of services needed to take care of someone who can't take care of themselves. Each person will require different levels of care. However, if more families help out, they'll be able to provide more individual-specific care.

3:00

Right now there is an unprecedented level of family caregiving, and I don't believe that our health care system could endure the large number of dependent adults without it. Furthermore, their importance will increase as Alberta's population ages. We will need more

home care providers. The days of sending parents to a retirement home are quickly becoming a thing of the past. Home care is expensive but crucial to the future wealth of Alberta. We need to think of solutions to keep people in their community while providing them with a safe level of independence. This bill is an inexpensive alternative to provincial facilities.

Seniors are not the only group of dependent adults covered by these tax credits. According to the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, a dependent adult is anyone over the age of 18 who "is dependent on the individual because of that . . . person's mental or physical infirmity." This opens the door for people to care for adults with physical afflictions including Down's syndrome and multiple sclerosis. The importance of the tax credit is to help with costs associated with taking care of these people. For example, if the dependent adult must use a wheelchair, then the caregiver may need to complete renovations to their home to make it more wheelchair accessible.

By alleviating pressure on the health care system, the promotion of in-home care will save affordable and subsidized housing for other people who need it. This bill supports families taking the initiative to keep their family together and assist dependent adults as their needs change. I believe that families would not trust strangers to offer the best care possible, but they would seize the opportunity to protect and provide the best level of safety and care for their loved ones. All of these points support the idea of keeping people out of the system and with their families. The risks of living with alternative care are not as dramatic as they used to be.

Mr. Speaker, think for a moment about the numerous costs involved in expanding the number of facilities to prepare for the stress on the health care system. It would cost this province millions just to construct more group care facilities, and then we should look at the additional costs of staffing and maintenance of the expansive system. Think of this bill like balancing a scale. One side of the scale includes the group home facilities, our aging population, and a longer life expectancy for seniors now and in the future. This side of the scale is quickly getting heavier and heavier with issues relating to our large aging population. However, the other side of the scale is the dependent adults who want to maintain a level of independence by living in their community in the home of a loved one. This side of the scale also includes people who currently care for dependent adults. The people on this side need more encouragement to continue their commitment to their family, because, as stated before, I don't think our health care system could survive without them. If we want to balance care for dependent adults in Alberta, then we must shift some of the weight off the health care system and slowly and safely place it on the family's desire to care for dependent adults.

Right now there's an unprecedented number of home care providers. This bill will encourage and reward more people to do the same and balance the scale for caring for dependent Albertans. This bill seeks to increase nonrefundable tax credits and not hand out money in return for caring for dependent adults or relatives. Every year a home care provider will be able to ease their financial burden from expenses associated with caring for another adult.

Some might say that Bill 210 is paying people for something they should be doing in the first place. Why should we entice people to care for loved ones? Why can't they do this on their own? It's important to remember that Bill 210 is not paying people to take care of dependent adults. Just as in-home care alleviates pressures on the health care system, these tax credits offset some of the costs of having to care for someone who cannot fully care for themselves. This tax credit increase will help encourage in-home care and increase the level of independence for vulnerable adults. We are not

paying Albertans for family obligations. Bill 210 simply sweetens the pot rather than shuffling loved ones onto the state.

These tax credits are in place right now and have been utilized by Albertans for years. If we didn't have in-home care or incentives encouraging alternatives to group care, there would be an unbearable stress on Alberta's health care system. However, Bill 210 will continue to help the health care system. Although there are many existing programs and services available to seniors and dependent adults, I believe that this government still needs to plan for an aging population. Let's acknowledge and encourage in-home care and prepare for the future. Boosting the level of the in-home and dependent tax credits proposed in Bill 210 will help us do that.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker, may we briefly revert to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**

(*reversion*)

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice that we have been joined by a good friend of mine, a good friend of our caucus and certainly our party. He and his family are proof that Red Deer and central Alberta is a thriving hotbed of Liberal support, and we appreciate all the good work he does there. I would ask my good friend David Pimm to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading**

Bill 210

**Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and
Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001**

(*continued*)

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001. Before I go any further with my remarks, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo for bringing this bill forward and for his thoughtful remarks. This is, in my view, overdue legislation. There are many, many ways, I think, that this Assembly can provide better care for Alberta's seniors. This may be a pleasant start. There has been much discussion in the past about the whole idea of providing home care for seniors. An incentive such as this amendment to the Personal Income Tax Act is noteworthy. It certainly is a change of direction in this province and, I believe, in this country.

As we progress with the debate in the Assembly regarding this bill, I will be interested to note and keen to listen to see if there are any comparisons made between what is currently being done, as my research indicates, in Italy, where there is a similar program or tax incentives to look after family members who are in the category of being seniors. As far as I know, it is working well. I would be

interested to know from the hon. member if he has had a discussion, Mr. Speaker, with anyone regarding what the Japanese are doing. The nation of Japan has a very high number of seniors, and they're working through that in some innovative ways. I think – and I've said this before – that it would be prudent use of tax dollars in this province if there was to be a committee struck to study how the Japanese and their government are working to care properly for their senior population.

Now, the hon. member spoke and I believe he said, Mr. Speaker, that in the year 2016 14 percent of the population of this province would be over the age of 65, and that is absolutely true. Currently the population in this province that is over 65 is about 10 percent, and we are the youngest province in Canada. It amazes me the alarm that the current government uses whenever they say that the costs of health care are skyrocketing because we have an aging crisis. We do not have an aging crisis in this province.

Currently B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba all have populations of seniors. Those are people over age 65. Their current percentage is 14 percent, and they're managing very, very well. They're not talking about dismantling their public health care system because there are too many seniors: we can't cope; we don't have the dollars. There is no discussion of that. So we have to be very, very careful whenever we use the figure of 14 percent. Other jurisdictions – there was laughter over across the way – also have populations that are greater than 14 percent, and one would be the state of Florida.

3:10

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you have support programs such as this, as the hon. member has suggested, how is this credit to be administered? Obviously the hon. member has put a lot of thought into this. My question – and again, hopefully in the process of this debate my questions will be answered – would be: can I receive some form of home care at the same time as I receive this tax credit if this bill were to become the law? How many dependants or relatives can one household look after? Is there going to be a limit on that? These are questions that need to be answered.

When we look at home care, we need to look not only at tax incentives. With due respect to the hon. Member for Highwood, there has to be more than the persons in care act. In my view that's a good start, but we need stronger legislation. How could Bill 210 provide assurances that seniors who are living with relatives are being looked after? There is the potential here for abuse. Again, the question has to be addressed in this Assembly, and I'm sure the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has a thoughtful response on this, because in the drafting of the legislation I'm sure that's one of the questions that they thought about.

Now, while I personally am supportive of tax credits for people taking care of relatives or other dependants over the age of 18 unable to care for themselves, there are issues, again, surrounding the care of seniors and people with disabilities that need to be addressed beyond just a tax credit for caregivers. There are many, many issues. We're going to amend two sections of the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, which deals with a tax credit for in-home care of a relative. We're also going to deal with a tax credit for caring for someone over age 18 who is unable to care for themselves.

I have some questions – and I believe we'll deal with this at committee, Mr. Speaker – and that's on how this tax credit will affect income support programs. Whether it's the Alberta seniors' benefit or it's a support program that's administered by the federal government, we have to address this issue. But first I think we need to take some time. Certainly there are going to be people who are perhaps eligible for or clients of the AISH program. Now, when we are talking about taking care of people who are unable to take care

of themselves, generally everyone, I believe, would be supportive of greater tax credits for those people. However, there are issues there, again, that need to be addressed.

Now, the question comes to my mind: instead of an increase in the tax credit, what about an increase in the amount of support that dependent people receive from AISH? AISH benefits, as all hon. members know, are for people who are unable to support themselves because they have a physical or mental condition that is permanent and there is no remedial therapy that will change that condition. For those people who are living with relatives or perhaps with parents, then Bill 210 is going to have a significant impact on their lives.

The AISH benefit, depending upon who you talk to, is set at about \$850 per month, and this is by government regulation. Give or take – it depends on who you talk to, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre points out – there are 25,000 Albertans receiving AISH. [interjection] I can see that the hon. Member for St. Albert is very anxious to participate in this debate, and I will welcome her comments.

In the spring of 1999 – and the hon. Member for St. Albert surely remembers this – the disabled community heavily lobbied the government for changes to the AISH regulations. Now, I'm sure that this bill, Bill 210, is not a response to that lobby. There were significant changes as a result proposed in the fall of 1999, October to be exact. However, changes to the level of AISH funding are long overdue. People on AISH have been left behind as inflation has eroded their income over the years. In fact, in the last decade the consumer price index has increased by 20 percent, and certainly there has not been a corresponding increase in AISH benefits in that period of time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm curious, again to the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, if groups such as the Alberta Association for Community Living have had any discussions with that member regarding his legislative proposal. I would also be curious to see if any of the Calgary group home care providers and the regional health authorities had any input into this legislation. Certainly there could be a reduction in costs. Again I think of the CHOICE program, which I'm certain is also being provided by the Calgary regional health authority. It's a successful program in the Capital region for the health authority. This program allows people who are living independently in their own homes to be transported by DATS up to five days a week under physician's care to a location where they receive therapy, they receive a noon meal, their medication is monitored, and they can have a nap in the afternoon. They can do this up to five days a week under physician's care. If one of my constituents was involved in that program and they were living with their son, hypothetically, and daughter-in-law and this bill was law, how would that affect the eligibility of citizens who were being provided with day programs, or in this case the family members, for this tax credit? That is another question that I have in regards to this bill.

Bill 210 overall, when we think of home care and what the author is attempting to do, I think is notable, and I think it is worthy of study and is also worthy of support.

Now, we all know what seniors have done in this province. They built this province, and many of them feel that their government has forgotten them. Our seniors raised families, they worked the land, they built our cities, and they expanded our economy and kept our communities strong. Alberta is strong and independent today because of their work, and we cannot forget them. This initiative, this legislative initiative as proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, I think is a recognition of their hard work and their commitment. It is not a recognition of the need to improve our legislation to ensure that there is a level playing field for all home

care providers in this province, but perhaps that will be the next step because certainly we need to ensure that if a senior enters any form of care, whether it's in the home, whether it's home and then going to a program such as CHOICE, or whether it is in a lodge, there have to be minimum standards. There have to be, and everyone must abide by those standards. It's up to the government to do that, to provide that and to regulate it, not only regulate it but be willing to regulate it, and if there are violations, let the courts deal with it.

This legislation as proposed by this hon. member is a recognition of the respect that our seniors deserve, and it is an alternative that has to be looked at closely. In closing, I would encourage all hon. members to have a good look at this legislation, and I believe that it is worthy of support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:20

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and speak in support of Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, sponsored by my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo. At the outset I think we all need to be mindful of the fact that this is not a government bill. Bill 210 is a private member's public bill, not a government bill. Bill 210 will amend the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act to allow for a greater tax exemption for individuals who are caring for dependent or adult relatives in their home. This bill will ensure that there is equality between the spousal dependent credit and the in-home care of relatives credit. This will allow families to more easily be able to become caregivers, as they are the ones who usually take the responsibility and bear the subsequent financial burden.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, there is a large disparity between two tax credits. The spousal credit is to a maximum of \$12,900, while the in-home care of a relative credit is to a maximum of only \$3,500. By raising the in-home care credit, the possible financial burdens of an adult who doesn't bring substantial resources into the household will thereby be alleviated.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's elderly population grows. An increasing number of elderly people will be looking to family and friends for care. It is traditional in our society that the caregivers for the elderly are primarily their children, but because the average family size has been decreasing since the baby boom years, elderly people will have fewer children on whom they can depend for care. This means that the children will have less choice and support in caregiving. The family size has declined over recent years because it is more common that a family needs two wage earners to make ends meet. This trend toward a dual wage earning family probably will not be reversed and now is about 70 percent.

A single provider can no longer seem to earn a wage sufficient to support the number of financial dependants as generations did before. It is said that seven out of 10 couples raising children today now rely on two wages to make ends meet. This being the case, it raises concerns about the ability of the family to support and care for an elderly dependant. It also raises concerns about the availability of family caregivers both now and in the future.

By raising the in-home care of a relative or dependent adult tax credit, it will alleviate somewhat the financial burden that is met by the informal caregivers, which in turn could alleviate the problem of availability of homes. The elderly we are referring to here today are not being cared for because they are unable to do it themselves. No. We are talking about an elderly parent who moves in with one of their children after the spouse has died or because they are lonely. The elderly relative is still somewhat independent and may choose

to live with a child or near relative for convenience, companionship, and comfort.

Bill 210 reduces the financial burden that a dependent adult might give or place on a caregiver. The current amount of \$3,500 that can be claimed does not seem to be nearly enough. Costs incurred are most likely much more than that in any given year, and the deduction should reflect this. It is natural for certain costs to be incurred, and by raising the maximum that can be claimed, we could allow for more people to bring in a loved one with less financial worry than they would have had under the current tax provisions; for instance, where the dependent adult is terminally ill and strongly desires to stay at home. Therefore, it must be recognized that the economic burden of caregiving is significant. This burden includes direct out-of-pocket expenses and sometimes lost wages when time is taken off work. Bill 210 will give some caregivers the chance to recoup some of these costs and thereby recognize their contribution to the individual and to our society.

Informal caregivers are vital to enable elderly parents or relatives who wish to remain at home to stay at home. The informal caregiver will be the primary person taking care of the elderly person. When it becomes too much of a financial burden for a family to take in an elderly relative, our hospitals, nursing homes, lodges may become overloaded with residents, patients before the seniors actually require acute care. Home care is increasingly needed as the overall population of Alberta ages. Statistics Canada predicts that by the end of 2025 18 percent of the population will be over the age of 65. That's nearly double what it is today. These numbers show that the percentage of elderly in Alberta will continue to rise. Most of the elderly will want to have a choice in whether or not they can have access to home care in their home or in the home of a relative.

The in-home care of a relative tax credit has been around for a number of years. Having the tax credit encourages people to care for an aging relative. As mentioned, caring for a relative can be very difficult. It depends on the status of the dependent adult. If it is too costly to take in family members, seniors will then be trying to get into places like seniors' homes, lodges, and long-term care facilities. This will put an extreme amount of pressure on these institutions, and the demand will be so great that society will have difficulty helping everyone in need.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that cannot be left to the last minute. In the next 10 to 15 years we will have a large increase in the number of elderly people as the baby boomers become seniors and demand that they have access to seniors' homes. We need to make it as attractive as possible for people to take these elderly relatives in. The Impact of Aging Albertans study that was completed in 1999 showed that seniors are in higher percentages in rural communities. As we age, this statistic will no doubt increase. So Camrose, Stettler, Hanna, to name but a few communities, boast senior populations of almost 20 percent, which is twice the provincial average. Calgary and Edmonton have 11 percent and 8.9 percent respectively. With the percentage of seniors rising and becoming more concentrated in the rural communities, home care must be strongly emphasized to the families in these regions. This is because there are not enough seniors' homes for the elderly to go to when the demand increases.

Bill 210 is important not only to the families who are the caregivers but also to the seniors who will want to stay out of places like nursing homes because they can feel personally more comfortable living with their family or a family. Seniors will not necessarily want to move out of their small communities to larger centres because in a sense there's no room at the inn in their community. They live in smaller communities because it's a slower pace for them and it's where they want to be. They want to stay because this

is where the family lives. By passing Bill 210, we give families more incentive to be able to care for a loved one in their own home, keeping them as close as possible to be part of the family. Having seniors remain with family and friends for as long as possible allows the seniors' homes to be left for the elderly who do not have any family or friends to be with or who require a level of care that cannot easily be provided in a home. The tax credit will indirectly allow for pressure to be relieved from these institutions that are built to accommodate seniors. It will then be more affordable for the family to care for a loved one.

3:30

A report such as the Broda report on the impact of aging makes recommendations to do things similar to what this private member's public bill, Bill 210, is proposing. To wit, recommendation 44 of the Broda report advises that there will be support for informal caregivers. Bill 210 is a step in that direction. Increasing the tax credit ensures that the caregiver has the monetary support to accommodate a senior adult. By passing Bill 210, we will be addressing the concerns of the informal caregivers who feel that the expenses are too great to take care of a loved one.

Mr. Speaker, there are countless stories about the nonmonetary benefits that may be gained by caring for a loved one. To start with, an elder being asked and deciding to live with one of their children or a near relative after a spouse has passed away: during this time, the elder can spend more time with the children of the family who, in turn, will learn much from the older family member about other family members, be it a grandparent or a great-grandparent. Bill 210 promotes this arrangement.

By increasing the tax credit, more people will be able to lessen their costs of caring for a loved one and gain advantages from having them live within the family. For the elderly the gain of having a loving family and familiar surroundings with the added benefits of being part of raising young children has untold rewards of the heart. Years ago it was commonplace for the elderly to live with their children when they were not comfortable living by themselves. The family was much closer, and I believe it can be fostered today. This proposed tax credit takes the steps to give families a chance to get back to the closeness that was once very common in our society.

I urge all hon. members to support Bill 210, sponsored by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak to Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001. I think this is quite a reasonable proposal put forward, because as the previous speaker has outlined, we certainly are coming to better understand the needs and respect that are due to an aging population. But more than that, I think that when you are talking about dependants, you can be talking about anyone who is over 18 and is dependent on others for their care. So this is more than just an issue around care for aging parents. This could be, in fact, care for adult children.

My experience has been that those families who can through their circumstances look after family members at home will do so, but the break point for them is not so much resources, as the previous speaker said, but the amount of support that's available to them. That's including things like respite care and housekeeping services and counseling services, et cetera.

We also have to recognize that there are families in this day and age who can't care for dependent adults in their home. For example,

those of us who are in here have been elected by our constituencies to come here every day and do a certain job, and it would be very difficult for us to turn around and say: sorry; can't do this for the next couple of years; I have to take care of a dependent parent or a dependent child. So we have to recognize that we need both kinds of care in the home, both the home care offered by the government through the regional health authorities and the home care that's offered by family members themselves.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I think there certainly need to be more resources available to people if we are going to have family members caring for them. I have one constituent who is almost at their wit's end because they are looking after a dependent adult. A great deal of care and monitoring needs to be paid to this person, and therefore the caregiver, in this case the family member, hasn't been able to hold down a full-time job. This person was willing to do that, was willing to give up their employment to care for their family member, but at this point they're looking to the future and saying: well, I really need to retrain now into a different job market; I can't go back into the one I was in. They're trying to go to university and upgrade their skills and qualifications and are really struggling to get the support to do that.

So here is someone who's sacrificed a great deal, I think, certainly in my terms and I'm sure in many other people's terms, to offer home care to a dependent adult, but then when they reach out and ask for help and say, "Okay; I can't do it by myself anymore; I do need some assistance here," there seems to be a real struggle to get it. So while moving an income tax credit from a \$3,500 range to a \$12,900 range is certainly significant and I'm sure would be very helpful to many people, that doesn't cover the lack of other resources that are not there for people.

I think we need to expand upon the idea that's been put forward by the member sponsoring this bill. We certainly understand from all of the statistics that are available that caring for someone in their home in an aging-in-place scenario is much more cost-effective to society as a whole. It's less disruptive to the individual that's involved because as they feel less well, they're not being constantly moved to a different place.

Certainly I look at what happened to my grandmother. As she got older and frailer, she kept getting moved, upgraded or downgraded, depending on how you look at it, to a different facility. So as she was less able to cope with those changes around her, that's when she got moved more often. I think that in the end does a lot of people in. They just can't cope with the changes. Nothing is where they think it is. The people that they knew are not around them anymore. The staff are different. The hours and the decor and everything is different for them. It's very difficult.

So right now we have a system that is double sided, if you like. We have a system that's offering home care through the Capital health authority, and we have this system that we've been talking about under Bill 210, which is a family member caring for a dependent adult and as a result being eligible to receive an income tax credit.

Perhaps the member can answer a question. Is it automatic that they would receive the full amount of the credit, or is there a possibility that this is on some kind of sliding scale? Is there room for someone to have discretion in how much the credit is? If so, who is the person who has discretion? If those questions could be answered by one of the following speakers under the advisement of the sponsor of the bill, that would be helpful.

I also want to note the changes in institutional care, because I think it affects the care that we're talking about here, which is the

care by a family member in their own home. Right now we have a system which I think is under stress. The deal was that we were going to restructure the health care system but that all of these other community resources would be pumped up to pick up the slack, so to speak. Certainly there was an increase in home care dollars but nowhere near the level that was needed to adequately support these programs given the additional pressure that's been put on them.

3:40

We have a situation – this has been brought to my attention a couple of times in the last few months – where people who are qualifying for government home care or Capital health authority home care are being told that there's an automatic four-week wait, and I've been told that this is now a six-week wait before they will actually receive care. I think to myself: well, how are they supposed to get the care for those intervening four or six weeks? If they were in a position where they needed the home care through the Capital health authority, then I'm venturing to say that there isn't a family member about that's able to help them. That's why they qualified for home care under the government.

I think that this is serious. Is it an attempt to shift more of the onus onto the families by making it that much more difficult to get the institutionalized home care or the government-sponsored home care? Somebody is going to have to be picking up the workload for those people qualifying for that home care but not able to get it for six weeks. That's a long time for somebody that's having difficulty walking or having difficulty dressing or getting confused about taking their medication. Six weeks is an awfully long time, so of course someone has to fill in the gap. If family members are not available – and often they're not – then we've got neighbours and, well, in some cases aged friends or other friends that themselves similarly have other mobility problems, and we're leaning on them to do it.

You know, I spend time in my seniors' residences every fall talking about the legislation that was introduced in the spring and what's going to come forward in the fall, and this was brought up to me by some of the people there. They were having to sub in and help some of the other people that were living in this residence. So I hope I'm not seeing a move from government to push people off the home care available through government funding and into more of this family care, because frankly I don't think we can depend on it. You can't assume that that family member is always available. In pushing them into any family care, I think we run the risk of putting people at risk, and we need to be careful of that.

This has been an interesting proposal brought forward by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo and I think a good one. Certainly it will help those people that already have enough money and enough resources and enough support systems around them to be able to care for a dependent adult in their own home. I don't know how many people that's going to affect. How many people can afford to have someone stay home or maybe have the only working person in fact not work and stay home to care for a dependent adult? I'm wondering if the sponsoring member did any research on that to find out how many people were likely to be using this tax credit.

Interestingly, I'm wondering if there has been any follow-through in establishing a performance measurement. This is forgone revenue. As soon as you say that it's a tax credit, it's forgone revenue. That's money the government doesn't get to collect. In every other instance where we're talking about expenditure of government money, there are to be performance measurements and targets put in place. The government appears to do that, although I'll argue with their performance measurements, but that's another time.

Here's an instance where what's being recommended is an \$8,000 difference in lost revenue that's not going to be coming to the

government. How many people is this going to be affecting? More to the point, what is the expected outcome? What are we expecting to save? What is the target for all of this? By what measurement do we know that this was a successful program? It's one thing to stand here and go: gee, that sounds like a great idea, a warm fuzzy feeling; let's go for it. But this is 2001. Where is the responsible look at how the program actually performs? What kinds of measurements have been put in place to decide that it was a good deal, that the people of Alberta got good value for money by forgoing this revenue? I'm not seeing any indication of that going along with this nor in the comments that I've heard prior to this. So I'm interested in what the government and government members and other private members have to say about the forgone revenue and what they actually expect to achieve by putting this tax credit into place.

You know, we are talking about money. When the bill was introduced, there were comments made about how the Lieutenant Governor had been notified, as is appropriate when you're talking about a money bill. I think people forget that when you're talking about a tax credit or a rebate or a refund, you in fact are talking about revenue the government doesn't take in. [interjection] Well, there's an awfully long list of forgone revenues that this government is involved in, and none of them seem to have any kind of performance measurement.

So here's where you could start out. You could look at this bill and come up with what you expect the performance measurements to be. What kind of output do you expect from this? What do you expect to achieve by putting this program in place? What does that \$8,000 per person get us? I think it's appropriate to say that it gets us a better society. You know, get your performance measurements in place and then measure them. Then you can come back to us and tell us whether this in fact worked. But I think there's too much, "Well, it sounds like a good idea." What do you guys call it? Blue skying. You like to blue sky stuff a lot, and this looks a bit blue sky to me too. So what's behind this? Let's see the financial responsibility that goes along with this. [interjections] Oh, I'm getting members of the backbench here all excited. They're going to leap to their feet and debate this bill right after me. I will be an old woman before that ever happens. [interjections] Yeah. Always nice to see government backbenchers not debating bills.

So those are the comments that I wanted to bring forward around this bill. It is about examining whether we, in putting this in place or using it as an incentive to people, are putting the right program into place to assist those people that are trying to provide in-home care for dependent adults. Is this the right way to do it? We also have to balance that, I think, by looking at the home care provisions that are funded by the government now and whether there's a possibility that it's perhaps a deliberate move by the government – many of their social programs are hidden behind economic agendas, so perhaps that's what's going on here; I don't know – to move people off regional health authority funded home care and into having family members care for dependent adults.

Lastly, a look at what performance measurements are expected. How do we tell that this bill or this idea in fact was successful? What performance measurements are in place to tell us what our \$8,000 got us with this program?

So I'm looking forward to hearing the sponsor of the bill or perhaps some of his colleagues. He can pass his notes and answers on to one of them, and they can stand up and answer the questions that I've brought forward.

I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 210 in second reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It never ceases to amaze me that with a perfectly good idea and a wonderful opportunity to encourage and enhance the quality of care, the opposition takes the opportunity to surround it with cynical negativism.

I want to rise and join the debate and speak today on Bill 210. It's a very important bill to Albertans. It will provide improvements to the quality of life of seniors, dependent adults, and their families. The focus of this particular bill is on the strength and encouragement that it is going to give to those who are middle members of the sandwich generation. By providing nonrefundable tax credits to Albertans for the care of dependent adults, we would be accomplishing two goals. The first is to reduce Alberta's tax burden, but the second is to provide equity to families who take on the responsibility of caring for the elderly or infirm in their family.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has shown its commitment to lifting the tax burden off families, and we have done so in a very fair and equitable manner for all Albertans. The flat tax along with the increase of the basic personal and spousal exemptions have removed more than 200,000 Albertans from the tax rolls altogether. The taxes in Alberta for all income levels are by far the lowest of all Canadian provinces and even undercut those of many of the American states. So taxes are far more than a method for government to collect revenue. Taxes or the absence of taxes provide incentives and, more often, disincentives for any variety of behaviour. It is just as important that we target our tax structure to reflect priorities as our spending decisions. We have to make judgments about which taxes are fair and where there should be tax breaks in our society, and Bill 210 does that specifically.

I believe that providing tax breaks to individuals who take care of our elderly and dependent adults is a good solution to many of the challenges facing Alberta today. I think that the benefits would far outweigh any losses in revenue, and quite frankly I ask the question not rhetorically but specifically: how can you measure the quality of life and the familial setting that individuals would experience should they be able to have their income recognized by a tax break as they care for their elderly?

Providing a nonrefundable tax credit to families that take on the responsibility of caring for the elderly and dependent adults will propel Alberta in a direction of family-oriented and community-oriented housing. Families will be better equipped to pool their resources and face the challenges of providing for their extended family. Additionally, the elderly and dependent adults would have advocates living with them, caring for them, and being attentive to their needs as members of a family. The opportunities to improve the lives of our seniors as well as the families that help them find their necessities for living are substantial. Just as families will help their dependants, so too will seniors give back by contributing the wisdom of their years and their substantial skills.

Granted, this credit targets families that have taken on individuals who may not be as capable as most Albertans, but they can nevertheless contribute meaningfully to family life. Having the presence of seniors in our lives gives family a sense of timelessness and hearkens us all to imagine the times of a distant experience that we cannot fathom. It is truly a great thing to encourage this kind of interaction between seniors and their adult children and, of course, their grandchildren.

Imagine the benefits of being in the financial position to spend every day with grandchildren. This is the kind of opportunity that Bill 210 gives to Alberta seniors. And let us not forget the benefits to our children. They are just as plentiful. Youth will learn from their seniors and hear of their history and know where they come

from. Having the day-to-day mentoring and the guidance of family so rich in experience and understanding can only benefit our youth.

Mr. Speaker, this is a viable alternative to care for seniors and dependent adults that would save some money too, but most of all – and I would like to emphasize this – it is an investment in the quality of intergenerational opportunity for community and familial living that we all so wish and desire.

For the better part of Alberta's history there has been some role played by government funds in the care and housing of the elderly and dependent adults, and that is as it should be. Bill 210 presents the opportunity to involve families in the care of their own elderly relatives and to an even greater degree than so many are already involved. This presents a number of positive economic trade-offs that cannot be ignored. This bill would widen the financial options for families that may be considering taking on the care of a dependent adult in their own home. The bill then can achieve the goal of providing good quality housing to more Albertans while simultaneously alleviating costs on some – and I say some – of the social housing system. This is not meant to replace our responsibility for providing independent housing for those who need care, but it is to enhance and encourage families to provide direct, immediate, and daily care for those whom they know and love within the family.

For providing shelter and services to the elderly and including them as an integral part of their families, wage earners deserve a tax break. I believe this response to be not only fair but also efficient. Bill 210 proposes that families who care for their elderly or disabled dependants be allowed to deduct \$12,900 instead of the current deduction of \$3,500. This shift would have an effect on the decision-making process of many Albertans in a beneficial direction. Providing a tax break for the inclusion of the elderly and dependent adults in the family unit will affect the lifestyle decisions of Albertans in a number of ways.

First, when Alberta families are encouraged to stay together, the nonmonetary but nevertheless valuable contributions of the elderly, such as child supervision, assistance with cooking, or helping around the house, would be realized to a greater degree. Therefore, this tax break will provide a venue for the elderly to maintain a productive role in our communities. Secondly, this tax structure would encourage Albertans to enjoy the company of their elderly and dependent relatives on a daily basis and to realize the intangible contributions these individuals can bring to family life.

All of these effects add up to the larger vision of rewarding Albertans for valuing seniors and their dependants. By providing the tax incentives for families to take good care of their elderly on a daily basis, we would relieve pressure on our somewhat strained in certain circumstances seniors housing market. For every family that decides that it is a good and possible, right and just thing to do to take care of their dependants and in consideration of the substantial contributions of the dependent adult, with the encouragement of a tax break all Alberta will be richer for it.

Mr. Speaker, it's an oddity of human behaviour that we sometimes are willing to spend a dime to save a nickel, especially if we are spending that dime on something we believe in. This phenomenon can be seen when observing tax deductions for charity. There is substantial evidence to suggest that a \$1 tax rebate will cause a greater than \$1 increase in charitable donations. This would apply to families that want to take care of their elderly and dependent relatives as well. It is because of this beautiful aspect of human nature that we can expect that the care for seniors and dependants would be of equal or greater value to the tax dollars the province would forsake.

This is one of the greatest aspects of Bill 210. It not only contributes directly to the well-being of our seniors and dependent

adults, but it also encourages families to respond directly to the challenges of these individuals. Also, this tax credit will give Alberta families the freedom to make more of the decisions about how to care for their elderly in their own homes, and many of these decisions would be guided by the seniors themselves.

With the implementation of this bill, more families would provide a familial kind of care. Families are often best equipped to know, understand, and probably share many of the likes, dislikes, habits, and activities of their own blood. An elderly father or mother would be able to share their experiences of life. Familiar domestic surroundings are often critical to the health of all of us.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, Bill 210 would foster choices among Albertans that encourage the respect and fair treatment of elders and dependent adults. Primary income earners would be assisted for taking on the responsibility of caring for their parents and relatives. These hardworking, responsible breadwinners deserve such a tax break as much as any single group of taxpayers. These are the sons and daughters who have turned around and said to their parents: thank you for being there for me; it's my turn to be there for you. These Albertans are a fine example of everything that is right about our province. We should encourage these types of living arrangements, not exclusively but as a matter of choice, and we should reward those who take the care of the elderly upon their shoulders. Indeed, the inclusion of the elderly in our community, on our streets, and in our homes would promote a lifestyle for all intergenerational concerns more focused on family. It would demonstrate values to our youth. Alberta would demonstrate that we value families, and this would be modeled far more frequently to our youth.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I think that each and every one of us in this Assembly . . . No, I can't. I'm assured that many of you can recount how an elderly family member shaped your development for the better. Some of us did not know our grandparents; some of us did not have our parents live to be elderly, so we don't have this experience. I can only imagine that for most of us this would be, indeed, a rich opportunity. This bill will provide the means to bring seniors close to the youth of this province and closer to the families they helped build.

I would genuinely like to thank the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for bringing forth this bill. It can accomplish so much for Alberta families by fostering a win/win relationship between the elderly and their children and their children's children. I encourage all members of this Assembly to cast aside any negative thoughts about negative implications of the implementation of this bill and instead to embrace it and vote for it, because the member from Calgary who brought this forward is cognizant of the fact that we need to provide choice for so many of our taxpayers and give them a tax break in order to let it happen for an extended, intergenerational family circumstance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to Bill 210, the home care and dependant tax credit act. I am in full agreement with the intent of this bill. I believe that the way in which a government acts towards its elderly and dependent citizens, the most vulnerable members of our society, measures the quality of that government. This bill seeks to improve

the well-being of Alberta's elderly and dependent people by allowing them to live in the comfort of loved ones' homes. Although we hardly need studies to prove it, there has been a tremendous amount of research demonstrating the many benefits of allowing elderly and dependent relatives to stay with families. It is a living arrangement that this government should attempt to encourage and accommodate to the greatest extent possible.

After saying this, Mr. Speaker, as much as I agree with the intent of the bill, I find myself concerned with some of its implied method. There are two major concerns I wish to address this afternoon. First, I am not fully convinced that tax incentive is the most responsible way to provide families who keep their relatives and dependants at home with income relief. For several reasons I believe it could be better to provide this type of relief directly to the family through a grant rather than through the tax system.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I am worried that the bill attempts to address very real needs with somewhat arbitrary remedies. Proposing that nonrefundable tax deductions be set at the same level for family dependants as for spouses certainly promotes some degree of equality, but I am not sure it is necessarily the right monetary figure for dependants. There has to be some relationship to the nondiscretionary costs that the credit is intended to alleviate.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to expand for a minute on why I agree with the fundamental intent of this bill. Over the past few generations in North America and indeed much of the western world there has been a trend towards involving elderly family members less and less within the family. Community care centres and senior citizens' homes, where our aged are somewhat more isolated from their homes and families, have become increasingly common. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Group homes do offer a camaraderie for people of similar age and interests that is not easy to obtain from being at individual homes with younger families, but the benefits for elderly and family dependants of being taken care of at a home with family members are enormous.

Living at home, elderly people can interact on a regular basis with people of the younger generation. They are surrounded by youth and activity. They are encouraged and inspired to fulfill the potential of their minds and bodies, a potential that even the elderly people themselves sometimes considerably underestimate. Just talking with people of a different age, seeing their smile, and feeling their genuine compassion can improve quality of life substantially for the elderly or dependent person. Having elderly or dependent relatives at home can also improve the lives of other members of the home. It relieves the emotional burden of having someone you care for go to institutional care.

It provides an opportunity to learn a considerable amount about life that might otherwise be missed. Our elderly are unmatched fountains of knowledge. They can offer us insight gained from years of experience in developing our set of values and in understanding our history. They give us a better sense of where they came from and who we are. The better we come to know and understand our elderly, the stronger our entire community becomes. By encouraging the elderly to be taken care of at home, we are encouraging more intimate bonds to be developed with parents and grandparents, allowing for this passage of knowledge from generation to generation to flourish.

Encouraging home-based care also makes financial sense, as many of my colleagues have pointed out this afternoon. Certainly, providing a financial incentive for families to keep elderly and dependent family members at home will cost Alberta, but the gains will likely be made back many times over by the savings from reduced volumes of patients at extended care centres. In addition to sometimes offering better health delivery, home-based health care is often significantly less expensive.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a few statistics here this afternoon that suggest that some form of financial support would indeed be necessary to encourage family members to provide home-based care for elderly and dependent family members. A comprehensive study done in the United States by the Bureau of National Affairs found that 77 percent of employed women who provide care for aging parents reported a conflict between caregiving and work demands. This is no wonder, since a report from the same source found that 80 percent of caregiving families provide caregiving between four and six hours a day seven days a week. Surely if this burden were somewhat recognized with some form of financial assistance, families would be more able to provide home care for their elderly relatives and dependants.

4:10

Given these many good reasons for promoting home-based health delivery, it is little wonder, then, that the Long-term Care Review Policy Advisory Committee's final report, referred to by many this afternoon as the Broda report, made as its first recommendation that support for home care services be increased so more people can receive the care they need at home rather than at facilities.

Mr. Speaker, you can see that I am fully in support of the intent of this bill. Alleviating the financial strain of caregiving families who seek to keep elderly and dependent relatives at home provides immense therapeutic benefits to the elderly and allows for the younger caregiving generation to gain a better grasp of tradition and values. Encouraging home-based health delivery might also save the province money in the long run.

But once again I do have to mention that I have some serious reservations about some of the details suggested in Bill 210. First, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this bill seeks to deliver financial assistance to caregiving families in the form of a nonrefundable tax credit. I believe it would be simpler and more fair to provide this assistance directly. Essentially, providing a tax credit is exactly the same as providing direct financial assistance to caregivers in terms of the dollars spent by the Alberta government. Whether the gain to home caregivers shows up as a tax credit or as some form of monthly support, the cost will be the same to the provincial government. By delivering the support as direct cash payments, however, there are many advantages to home caregivers and to the province as a whole. With Alberta's new flat tax system many families that earn below \$27,000 pay no provincial tax at all. Thus caregiving families that earn below this value of income would not be eligible for the nonrefundable tax credit. If, on the other hand, families were provided with cash assistance, this barrier would not prevent families earning less than \$27,000 some form of compensation.

As well, providing a cash incentive is more transparent than a tax credit. This means that spending can be better contained and there would be better discretion and flexibility. The government would have better accountability of how much money it is spending, and recipients of financial assistance would have a better grasp of how much they are receiving. This improves the efficiency of the program for everyone.

My second objection, Mr. Speaker, is that it is unclear that there has been analysis done to arrive at a figure of \$12,900 as an appropriate level of support for caregiving families. It seems that the only reason this figure was chosen is because it matches the level of nonrefundable tax credits currently provided for spouses. The level of support for spouses was decided upon after an evaluation of the financial burden of a non income-earning spouse. It takes into account issues such as food and housing costs. Granted the value of \$12,900 is by no means entirely accurate, as in different areas of the province the cost of living is sure to fluctuate, even though the value

of the tax credit does not. But the value has been researched to be at least proportional to the cost of living, and it fluctuates with this cost. For instance, the value of the spousal tax credit only became \$12,900 on January 1 of this year, 2001, following a decision that the cost of living had substantially increased.

My concern is that the cost of providing care at home for dependent relatives and the elderly may be quite a different level than the spousal credit limit provides for. The elderly and dependants probably require more capital expenditures than middle-aged spouses. Inevitably with age comes increased risk to health concerns. Wheelchairs and the infrastructure to accommodate wheelchairs, products to ease mobility within the home, uncovered health care expenditures like some prescription medicines and special diets are all some very real expenditures that might be expected for the elderly or dependants. This is, of course, in addition to the many hours devoted family members commit to the person through feeding them, clothing them, and giving them appropriate levels of love and affection. These are hours forfeited from income-generating work. As mentioned, these hours can accumulate to become quite a large cost. The support that is given to caregiving families must reflect the cost of providing that care. Without appropriate research to make an accurate estimate, potential caregiving families may be provided with substantially less or potentially more than might be necessary to make home care a realistic option. This would undermine the very worthy intent of this bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that I am strongly in support of the intent of this bill. This province and indeed this country could and should do much more to encourage elderly and related dependants to stay with relatives. The benefits are enormous in terms of building stronger families and communities and in saving health care costs. I am afraid, however, that I believe this bill needs to undergo some revision before it should be passed by this Assembly.

I believe we should investigate the possible alternatives in lieu of tax credit because it would be simpler and more fair. As well, I believe the value of whatever form of compensation is provided should be looked at more closely. Rather than merely imitating the spousal tax credit, it should be researched independently to reflect the true cost of providing home care for elderly and dependent relatives and the impact this credit will have on provincial revenues.

Bill 210 brings forward a quality idea. I believe, however, it would be most appropriate if the concerns that I raised are further investigated, and this could be brought forward with changes in the future, enabling it to fulfill its intent more equitably and more efficiently.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to respond to Bill 210. I came into the Assembly this afternoon thinking that I had conditional support for this bill, but after listening to a number of private members who sit to the right of me speaking on this bill, I've nearly changed my mind. I think that there are . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Everybody sits to the right.

MS CARLSON: No. There are a few on my left side.

Mr. Speaker, it's a start, you know, when they start talking about at least recognizing that there need to be some changes for people who provide care to dependent adults or relatives in their home, but the problem with the private members on my right side is that they always think the answer lies in changing the tax system. Really, that seems to miss a couple of the key issues.

I think the key issue we need to take a look at in a situation like

this is: does this address the outstanding problems with caring for dependent adults in homes? The answer to that clearly is no. What changes to the tax system do is give people money at the end of the year, and it mostly isn't even money that they need. It's support. What they need when dependent adults come into the home, be they close relatives or good friends or whomever, is some help. The term is dependent adults. That means not only do they not have taxable income over a very minimum level, but they're most often dependent in other categories. They need assistance in their daily living.

So the problem for most families is that there isn't enough support in that daily living assistance. Home care we have, but it's very, very minimal in nature. It often doesn't address the key areas of need for the family. There is never enough time given to the families. We have a real problem, particularly in my constituency, of home care providers who cannot speak the language of the person they are caring for, so that creates another level of problems within the system. There isn't adequate respite care and certainly not adequate respite caregivers who speak the language of the person who needs to be cared for.

4:20

Yes, of course we want families to take care of family members. It's the first choice of dependent adults to go and stay with family members. They have a loving environment to be in. They're provided with the same kind of food that they normally would eat. Everybody speaks the same language. Extended families are always nice to have around. But the issues are that families often need help in caring for people immediately, not down the road when they file their tax return but today and tomorrow and tonight and over the weekend, because caring for dependent adults is a 24/7 job. It doesn't stop. There's very little assistance given, and there are no breaks. So does this address those outstanding issues? No. It gives them money at the end of the road.

You could say that, well, they could save that money and then pay for additional help for the family, but most families are not in that kind of a financial situation. Most families live from paycheque to paycheque, and it's a stretch. If you've got to pay up front, you've got to cut back on something else. When you're adding a person to the home who is dependent, that means financially dependent as well, and there are additional costs, not fewer costs, so it creates a great deal of stress and often hardship for the families.

I have often gone to bat for families in my community who wish to keep a loved one at home but who are just absolutely physically and mentally stretched. They'll find the money for extra food, they'll find the money for their medical needs – they can find that – but what they can't cope with is the daily pressures of having to take care of the person without ever getting a break. This bill would have been more properly brought in as assistance for these families for additional home care services. That would have really, really touched the need that's out there, Mr. Speaker.

I believe I'm going to support this bill because it is a recognition by the member who brought it forward and a partial recognition by some of those people who have spoken to the bill this afternoon of the kind of need that's out there. Perhaps this is one of those cases where we get to move two steps forward and only one back. So on that basis I will be supporting the bill, Mr. Speaker, but I would hope that this member, if this bill gets passed or even if it doesn't, will next year bring back another bill that touches on the real issues that are out there for families caring for dependent adults.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to

have the opportunity to rise and speak in support of Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act. I would like to thank the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for bringing forward this bill, which addresses an issue that will impact our province sooner than we realize.

Bill 210 would amend the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act so that those Albertans who are taking on the role of care provider for people in their lives who can no longer care for themselves will be adequately recognized and compensated under Alberta's tax structure. Currently Albertans who make career and lifestyle sacrifices to provide care for their loved ones – and this would be a very important value, I'm sure, to many of us here today – are eligible to receive one of two possible tax credits. Both of these credits are of an equal amount and in conjunction are designed to cover the spectrum of potential home care providers.

The first existing credit that I'll speak about is the in-home care of a relative credit. In the year 2000 this would provide for a tax credit of \$2,386. It was subsequently increased to \$3,500 in January of this year by way of Bill 18, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act. The increase in this credit is evidence that this government does acknowledge the important role of informal caregivers in this province, and it also shows that we as a government are willing to address this issue.

The second tax credit available for home care providers is called the dependent adult credit. As I have already mentioned, it allows for a \$3,500 claim, as the in-home care credit does, and it similarly was increased to its current level by the amendment to the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act in January 2001. The low level of the home care tax credits currently in place just does not seem consistent with the importance of the service these Albertans provide and will be providing to our most valuable citizens. The two credits alleviate the financial burden brought on by reduced capacity to work when individuals provide care for loved ones who can no longer care for themselves. As it stands, the two tax credit programs do not sufficiently compensate the men and women of this province who make personal sacrifices to care for the frail and elderly, and in particular I would refer to a parent or a spouse or a child even.

Bill 210 seeks to better recognize the contribution that these caring Albertans make to our province and to their loved ones. The bill proposes an increase in the tax exemption for individuals who are caring for dependent adults or relatives in their homes from its current level of \$3,500 to \$12,900. This increase in the home care provision tax credit will create a reduced financial burden for those Albertans who undertake the role of care provider when they are called upon by their families and friends. The increase in this credit would make the home care provider credit equal to the spousal tax credit. I think this comparison is something that can be considered as very fair.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, this government has made a great effort to communicate with Albertans about where long-term care in Alberta is at and where it should be going. We have commissioned studies concerning the effects of aging and the implications of the aging population and how as a province we would like to age. I must say that the level of response from our citizens during consultations and beyond has been very impressive. Aging is something that Albertans increasingly share concern over and care deeply about, and why not? It is always in the forefront to some degree in newspapers in Canada and around the world. Albertans are remarkably clear and uniform in their approach to aging, which we have found makes our job of representing Albertans' views much easier. Studies have shown that 90 percent of Canadians want to face the end of their lives in the comfortable surroundings of their own homes. Albertans do not deviate from the rest of Canada with

respect to this matter, I can assure you. We have asked them, and they have responded with this answer that I have just described.

Currently 9.8 percent of the Alberta population is 65 and over. By the year 2016 14.5 percent of our population will be comprised of senior citizens; that's 65 and over. In this year alone 20,000 Albertans will reach retirement age. The trend is plain to see, Mr. Speaker, that as longevity becomes more prominent in this province, our government will have to respond to the needs and demands of an older population. Now – and I would have to stress this again: now – is the time to take proactive measures in this regard. We will do this province a great disservice if we wait until it is too late to implement programs and strategies to deal with the increase of seniors that we are facing in the very near future. The Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act certainly is one such way to approach this pressing matter. It will work to promote home care as an alternative to institutional care, and that is in tune with the directions, as I've said, that Albertans want to take in this province.

The volume of seniors' care that will be demanded is growing and will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. Statistics reveal that Calgary is among the top five cities in the world in terms of average longevity, so not only are there more of us getting older, but we are living longer. Now is the time to begin seriously exploring our options with regards to long-term health care and home care, before it is too late. It will be of great benefit to Albertans if there is a working plan in place when the baby boomers have retired, when they have reached retirement age. I would say that the first baby boomers will be reaching that age as early as 2001. Personally, I believe that if we put off planning for this time in this term, then we only have one short term following and then 2011 will be here.

4:30

We as a government understand that growing old is of keen interest to Albertans, and we have struck committees, as I've said, and drafted reports and strategies in response to the concerns of Albertans. For example, the aging population study which I chaired – actually the vice-chair was the Member for Leduc here today; you know, Mr. Versatile. Also, we have the Broda report. These are only two of the initiatives undertaken to understand and promote aging.

This government's aging-in-place strategy was crafted in response to the desires of Albertans to progress to the end of their lives in their homes and as functioning members of their communities for as long as possible. This plan was warmly embraced by the key stakeholders as well. With a provincial long-term care focus that moves away from institutionalization and to integration into the community, which also means towards home-based care and home-based palliative care, it's imperative that there be meaningful recognition for those who are making personal sacrifices in providing this care. Bill 210 would ensure that the acknowledgment that informal care providers deserve is most definitely afforded to them.

The Broda report, that was chaired by the hon. Member for Redwater, consists of a listing of 50 recommendations that were gathered and compiled by the long-term care review committee. The report's first recommendation states that "additional funding should be provided to address the pressing needs in continuing care," but more specifically it cites its first priority as the need to "increase support for home care services so that more [Albertans] can receive the care they need at home rather than in facilities." Bill 210 proposes a viable approach to address this need. Those who provide home care, the informal caregivers, will be left with a bit more in their pockets if Bill 210 is implemented. This will help to balance the personal sacrifice that they have made in terms of their income in order to care for someone they dearly love. Bill 210 certainly follows the spirit of the Broda report.

Bill 210 falls within the framework of the holistic approach that Albertans have asked for with regards to long-term care. The aging population is a phenomenon that will affect us all in some way, shape, or form, and fortunately as a young province we do have the time to be proactive and implant the values that a healthy, aging Alberta will need to prosper in the years to come.

Albertans have told us that they want to remain in their communities as they grow old. From this it is definitely implied that families have the greatest responsibility for their own health and longevity. The Alberta government understands that it must facilitate a combination of care and housing to create barrier-free environments and enable seniors to remain at home longer. Providing a tax incentive to the caregiver, as Bill 210 does, is one way to achieve this goal.

I stress again that now is the time to discover in concrete terms what programs and strategies will work for Albertans to achieve the goal of healthy living and a workable continuum of care in this province. I'm not saying that it will be simple or easy; there will be hills and valleys to be navigated. However, the only way to learn what works is to plan and then to implement, and what better time to discover what is viable and what is not than right now.

In closing, I would like to urge my colleagues here in the House today to support the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act. The caring people of this province that make sacrifices to provide care for those who cannot care for themselves and to comfort those who are near the end of their lives need to receive recognition for their efforts from this government. If Albertans want home care and we as a government want the people of this province to embrace the benefits of home care, there should be adequate compensation offered to those who provide it.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

MR. OUELLETTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001, as proposed by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. I support the aims of Bill 210 and commend the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for raising an important issue in this Assembly.

All of the recent studies show that Alberta's population is becoming older. Swift action must be taken to develop more options to deal with the pressures that an aging population places on programs and services. We all know that the proper care of the infirm and the elderly is going to be one of the key future challenges of our government. As Alberta's population continues to age, we have to understand that the way health care has been provided in the past is not going to cut it in the future. As more and more seniors are living with their families at older ages, we need to develop policy options to address the revitalization of home care for our aging adults. As many of my colleagues have said here today, it is desirable that we keep our elderly in their own homes for as long as possible before moving them to personal care facilities, should that become inevitable. This not only helps our seniors population retain a greater feeling of independence into their later years but also reduces the cost of caring for the elderly to our health care system.

Many of my colleagues have also noted that Bill 210 provides an incentive for families to keep their older members at home. By raising the nonrefundable tax credit given to those who care for dependent adults and relatives to \$12,900 from \$3,500, we reduce the cost of caring for an elderly member that a family would have to absorb. Also, by implementing this tax credit, we make it easier for

families to live together, especially when the intensive care of dependent members is at stake.

As people age and become more dependent upon the aid of others, it is especially important that they are surrounded by loved ones. I believe that this is a very worthy aim. When families have the opportunity to remain together, the sense of tradition, community, and responsibility shared by that family becomes stronger. The bonds between family members become tighter, and they become more aware of the appreciation they have for one another. It is unfortunate that in today's society the desire to retain a tight family bond often conflicts with the need to earn a certain amount of income in order to care for dependent members. However, this is the reality that many Alberta families do face.

I for one believe that the best way to counter this growing tension is through amending the tax system. If we lessen the burden of taxes on families that care for dependent members, then we make the option of living at home viable for both the person providing care and the person receiving care. In this regard Bill 210 can be seen as an innovative measure for a pressing social problem.

However, Mr. Speaker, I do have some reservations about Bill 210. First, it is unclear what impact this credit will have on the overall revenue of the province. Because a detailed cost-benefit analysis has yet to be done on this proposal, passing Bill 210 at this time could lead us down an uncharted fiscal road, one we may not want to travel. While restating my support for the aims of Bill 210, I would like to see some of these studies conducted so that we may see the actual effects that Bill 210 would have on both the finances of the province and the way that care services are delivered to our aging and dependent population.

Further, I think we should always raise caution flags whenever we see individual amendments to comprehensive legislation. The Alberta Personal Income Tax Act is not a body of statutes that can be changed in little pieces. It is an act in which the various sections and subsections work in harmony to provide the best system of tax relief in the country. Thus when we make changes to the Personal Income Tax Act, we should avoid making small touch-ups. Rather, we should remember where we see problems and look to remedy them in a wholesale revision of the act, which would include public consultation and substantial departmental review. When we change things by looking at the problem inside the scope of the big picture, we can see the effects that the change will have and we can see what other changes may need to be made in order to have the act work harmoniously.

4:40

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that there is another big picture that we ought to consider when debating Bill 210. That big picture is the whole field of home care and the care of dependants. When we do get down to providing comprehensive and wide-ranging policy solutions to the problems posed by the care of the elderly, we have to consider and possibly implement something more substantial than the legislation proposed by Bill 210. There are so many different ways of providing care to dependent Albertans, and we need to remember them all should we amend the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act. In that regard we need to consider in a more in-depth fashion the possible effects that this legislation could have on health care providers in the province. In what ways will keeping more people at home change the jobs of current health care providers? In what ways will providing a tax credit advantage or disadvantage health care workers? How would the overall health care system be different, especially our acute care facilities, if more elderly Albertans remain at home?

There are a lot of questions that I believe need to be answered

before we can give a larger tax credit to those Albertans who care for dependants in their own homes. If we were to pass Bill 210 without studying it further, it would be hard to tell how this legislation could affect the health care system and its employees. However, I am confident that if we took our time with the issue, we would be able to come up with a formula that considers all of the factors listed above. By bringing the whole scope of the care of dependent Albertans under consideration when reviewing the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, we can make more comprehensive and complete legislation that takes every important aspect into consideration. Even more so, by not acting in a piecemeal fashion but rather by changing the act in a more cohesive initiative, this government has the ability to extend its scope beyond issues that solely surround the care of dependants and learn how tax relief for caregivers can directly and indirectly affect revenues for the province, the health care system, and even the quality of care these vulnerable Albertans can expect. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, while I support the aims of the bill, I can't recommend its passage at this time.

Although I've raised these concerns, I strongly urge the ministers of Finance and Revenue to take a serious look at the issues raised by Bill 210 and to consider including its intent in the next review of the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act. I do believe that the bill tackles some serious concerns. If we could incorporate its purpose into legislation that focused on the larger picture, I believe that we could provide real benefits to Albertans caring for their elderly families. I do hope that in a review of the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, the ministers of Finance and Revenue do take into account the very proactive measures proposed by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Once again, in light of the concerns that I have raised in the Assembly today and the understanding that Bill 210 could have rippling impacts far beyond its original intent that require further study so that we can determine possible results on our provincial coffers and our health system and providers, I propose hoisting Bill 210.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 210, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependent Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 210, Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Dependent Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SMITH: Legislative chicanery.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie on the amendment.

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the amendment. I think we heard from the minister that legislative chicanery was happening here.

MR. SMITH: Who said that?

MS CARLSON: That would be you, Minister of Energy, and I happen to agree with that, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that there are few ways to oppose a bill at second reading, but a hoist amendment, or an amendment that is a delaying amendment, is the best known tactic in this particular Assembly.

I would like to ask the question why the private members and the government members don't want to just vote on this particular bill. If it's not supported by a majority, then it will be defeated in its

own right, but they don't have to fall into bold legislative tactics and tricks in order to do that, Mr. Speaker. We're quite happy to vote it down or support it in a majority vote on the floor. As my colleague said, what are they afraid of? The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake made most of my arguments in his debate. So just stand up and vote for it rightly or wrongly in second, and if it's defeated, it doesn't carry on. We don't have to have a hoist. They have no intentions of bringing this bill back six months hence. [interjections] I have an opportunity to speak to the amendment, and I shall do so. If you don't like it, you can respond as well.

There's no reason why we have to see this bill disappear forever. It's never going to come back here at any future time in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker. We all know that. It's simply a tactic to get rid of the bill. I would be greatly offended if it was my own colleagues who did that to me on a bill that I brought forward as a private member.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be opposing this amendment. We will be standing in opposition on this amendment.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This amendment that was brought forward was brought forward in good faith by the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, we're sure. We've listened carefully to the opposition talk about some chicanery that may be taking place, but it seems inappropriate that such aspersions would be cast on any of the members' intent here. To have this amendment move forward and be debated civilly here in the Legislature seems appropriate. We have listened carefully to the member's discussion that he brought forward prior to making this notice of amendment that he has put forward here. In fact, he's just asking that it not now be read a second time. We've had fully 117 minutes of debate on this bill, and he's asking that at this point in time we just set it aside and that six months hence we do review it.

So, Mr. Speaker, in light of the debate and the discussion that we've had up to the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake bringing forward this notice of amendment, some good points have been made. We heard the Member for Calgary-West talking about the seniors' issues and issues that certainly concern her a great deal. We had in fact many other speakers that could have risen and spoken to this bill. However, at this point in time the motion by the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake stands, and he has the privilege to bring that forward. In fact, we will be able to vote on it. In spite of the opposition members' accusations that maybe he has no support on this – and he may not be supported; we won't know until after the vote – we will have that vote, and we will have the opportunity to see whether in fact his notice of amendment is supported among his colleagues in this Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:50 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the Assembly has before it an amendment to Bill 210 which reads:

Bill 210, Alberta Personal Income Tax (In-Home Care and Depend-

ant Tax Credit) Amendment Act, 2001, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

This is often referred to as a hoist amendment. All members should realize that if this is carried, then this is the end of the matter and the bill disappears from the Order Paper. If the question is defeated, then the question is immediately put in the motion for second reading.

For the motion:

Ady	Graydon	Lund
Amery	Haley	Magnus
Calahasen	Hancock	Maskell
Coutts	Hlady	Melchin
Danyluk	Hutton	Nelson
DeLong	Jablonski	Oberg
Ducharme	Jacobs	Ouellette
Dunford	Klapstein	Rathgeber
Fischer	Knight	Smith
Forsyth	Kryczka	Strang
Gordon	Lougheed	Vandermeer
Goudreau	Lukaszuk	Yankowsky
Graham		

Against the motion:

Blakeman	Cenaiko	Mason
Broda	Doerksen	O'Neill
Cao	Fritz	Pham
Carlson	MacDonald	Snelgrove

Totals:	For – 37	Against – 12
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[Motion on amendment carried]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Government Services, you wanted to do an introduction?

MR. COUTTS: Yes. I'm wondering if I could have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Guests.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**

(*reversion*)

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three members of the Livingstone-Macleod constituency. They hail from the wonderful town of Pincher Creek. Mayor Art Bonertz – Art, would you please stand – and Councillor Lou Burnham and Councillor Don Anderberg from Pincher Creek are here for the AUMA conference. Please give them a warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On that note I think it would be an appropriate time to move that we call it 5:30 and that we reconvene at 8 this evening in committee.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:06 p.m.]