

Government Bills and Orders
Third Reading

Bill 21
Hotel Room Tax (Tourism Levy)
Amendment Act, 2005

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Speaker, Bill 21 demonstrates that from now on the hotel tax will be referred to as the tourism levy. The rate is going down from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, and guests of Alberta accommodations will save approximately \$11 million annually.

When we discussed this bill in second reading and Committee of the Whole, it was made clear that the charge that is collected as a result of these changes will determine the funding that will be allocated to tourism marketing and development for our province within Alberta, within Canada, and beyond to the international community. Based on estimates of hotel tax the government anticipates it will collect in 2004-2005, it is forecast that funding for tourism will increase by approximately 75 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize that this is a significant increase, and it will be well used to promote our great province.

I believe that all the hon. members who have spoken to this bill have commented on the beauty of Alberta, have drawn reference to the notion that we truly have a great deal to enjoy here, and are aware that we have a bounty to share with others who come to visit. It is easy to see how fortunate we are to live in a province with so many diverse and beautiful natural wonders as well as so many man-made attractions.

At this point I would like to note that consultation with key industry stakeholders over the past number of years has been pivotal to the development of the changes inherent to this act. Travel Alberta and the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association have been particularly helpful. Numerous industry groups have worked with government on this bill to make sure it will benefit the needs of industry and government, and they worked with government to make sure that individuals who own accommodations in the province will be able to implement all changes as simply, quickly, and easily as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a good bill. The changes that come from it will help bring us into Alberta's next century and will keep tourism a strong, continued source of pride and economic growth for all Albertans.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 21. Thank you.