

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

**Bill 201
Smoke-free Places Act**

Mr. Rodney: Good afternoon, everyone. It is a pleasure to rise today as I move second reading of Bill 201, the Smoke-free Places Act. As chair of AADAC and as one of the many new faces in this House it's an honour to bring forward Bill 201 as my first piece of legislation and as the first private member's bill of the First Session of the 26th Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we are in Alberta's centennial year and are in the midst of a rejuvenation of Alberta's call for a prosperous and healthy future for all Albertans. Bill 201 reflects this intent, specifically with respect to the commitment that this government has made to an effective and successful tobacco reduction strategy. This strategy was introduced in 2002 and provided AADAC with the mandate to lead and co-ordinate tobacco reduction efforts on behalf of the government of Alberta. AADAC co-ordinates the strategy through partnerships with various government ministries, agents, and community organizations.

Mr. Speaker, studies indicate that tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Canada. Smoking causes cancer, lung disease, heart disease, and many health problems.

On March 3 Statistics Canada released the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, results on smoking rates in Alberta and Canada for the first half of 2004. The good news is that the results indicated that the Alberta tobacco reduction strategy is working. The overall smoking rate in the province declined from 25 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2003. That said, we now have the opportunity to complement the tobacco reduction strategy and address the significant issue of second-hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke is a serious health concern for a number of Albertans. AADAC reports that two-thirds of the smoke from a burning cigarette is not inhaled by the smoker but goes directly into the surrounding environment. Studies indicate that second-hand smoke has twice as much nicotine and tar as the smoke that smokers inhale. It also has five times the carbon monoxide, and 50 of its 4,000 chemicals are known to cause cancer. These chemicals are inhaled and absorbed by nonsmokers when they are exposed to second-hand smoke and can lead to respiratory disease, heart disease, and lung cancer.

Children are particularly vulnerable to second-hand smoke because their lungs are still growing and developing. Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke can develop respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and pneumonia as well as middle-ear disease and asthma. Infants who are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke before birth are at increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I have received over 1,200 letters and e-mails in the past few weeks from Albertans, and over 90 per cent are in support of a province-wide smoking ban in work and public places. Eighty-four of 353 Alberta municipalities have some form of nonsmoking law, but 78 per cent of Albertans are currently exposed to second-hand smoke in public places such as restaurants, bars, shopping malls, arenas, bingo halls, and bowling alleys. Importantly, 80 per cent of Albertans do not smoke.

Bill 201 isn't just about protecting the health of individuals who work in the hospitality industry and may be exposed to substantial amounts of second-hand smoke; it also protects the health of every

Albertan who is involuntarily exposed to second-hand smoke in an enclosed public or workplace, independent of the amount of exposure. According to AADAC approximately 350 nonsmokers die each year from second-hand smoke-related cancer, and approximately 3,500 people die from second-hand smoke-related heart disease. Mr. Speaker, these numbers are alarming, but what I find even more alarming is that these numbers are simply not new. The harmful effects of second-hand smoke have been known for almost 20 years, but the majority of jurisdictions are acting only now.

The majority of economic impact studies indicate that legislation prohibiting second-hand smoke in hospitality venues does not negatively impact sales and employment over the long term. For example, when the city of Ottawa, the state of California, and the country of Ireland introduced smoke-free legislation, business dropped off slightly for about three months in the hospitality industry, but it was quickly back to normal, and in Boston business actually increased.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other dangers in society that individuals are involuntarily exposed to both now and in the past. Some examples include lead in paint and asbestos in construction. These substances were and remain serious hazards to the health of children and adults, but once they were recognized as a danger to the well-being of individuals, they were designated as hazardous substances, their usage was discontinued, or it was carefully regulated.

Second-hand smoke is a hazard to the health of Albertans, and while the minority of the population who smoke are free to put their own health at risk, they should not have the right to put the health of others at risk. Thankfully, we're in a position to set the standards for the next hundred years of this great province, and I believe that recognizing second-hand smoke as a preventable health hazard and limiting its involuntary exposure are small steps towards protecting the health and future of all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude my introductory remarks, I'll address just some of the terms used in Bill 201. When discussing this legislation, the terms "public space" and "workplace" will often be used, and I am sure that the exact definitions of these terms will be examined thoroughly in the Committee of the Whole debate. However, I'd like to provide a few examples of what those terms mean as defined in 201.

As expected, Bill 201 would make any enclosed public space or enclosed workplace a hundred per cent smoke free, and this includes outdoor eating and drinking areas, such as restaurant and bar patios. Bill 201 would also allow municipalities the right to implement more stringent anti-smoking bylaws should they see fit. This legislation would set a minimum standard throughout the province and provide a reasonable level playing field or equal economic footing for all businesses and municipalities.

As I mentioned, the definitions and specifics of Bill 201 will be more thoroughly discussed during the Committee of the Whole debate. I just wanted to highlight a few points that I felt were important.

In conclusion, the ill effects of second-hand smoke were first documented almost 20 years ago, and we can no longer ignore the health risks and costs it presents. The time to act is now, and I encourage all members to carefully contemplate Bill 201. I hope they will agree that this legislation is trying to accomplish the best for our people, and I trust that they will lend their support. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do look forward to this upcoming debate.