



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 19, 2015

Day 20

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

First Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	McKitrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)	McLean, Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND), Deputy Government Whip
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND)	Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
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Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
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Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)	Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier
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Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
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Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND), Deputy Government House Leader
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (Ind)	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
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Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)	Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)	Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader	Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
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Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Kleinstuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)	
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)	
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)	

Party standings:

New Democrat: 53 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1 Independent: 1

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Kazim	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 19, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Let us reflect. As tomorrow is Universal Children's Day, let us all recognize the importance of teaching young people that their voices matter, and let us encourage them to speak and to be heard. Let us be reminded that these children are our future and that the work we do here today will set out the stepping stones for our future generations. Our reflections may make us all even more mindful of our responsibilities, especially for the children, not just for the children of Alberta but indeed for the children of the world. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I am very happy to introduce to you and through you grade 6 students from Boyle school, which is in not only in my riding; it's actually in my home community. In fact, the school is right across the street from me, and my son goes there, so I know lots of these students and their instructors. They are accompanied today by teachers Michelle Splinter and Jody Ergang, parent supervisor Jody Montague, and bus driver David Hague. If the students of grade 6, teachers, and supervisors could please rise and accept the customary warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured today to rise on your behalf and introduce through you Ms Jody Magill, who is a constituent of Medicine Hat. Jody has been the manager of government and public affairs at Methanex Corporation since 2012. Methanex produces methanol at its plant in the community of Medicine Hat and employs approximately 125 employees. I would invite Jody to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two very special guests. Jan Lukas Buterman is the founding member and current president of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta. The society's mission is to be a voice for matters concerning trans Albertans. Since its inception in 2009 TESA has engaged in advocacy and education in areas of government outreach and community development.

I'd also like to introduce Superintendent Brad Doucette. He's a senior member of the Edmonton Police Service currently serving as a superintendent of the west division. He's also EPS's representative on the Sexual Minorities Liaison Committee in the community of Edmonton.

I would ask them both to rise now and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly four guests from Eastglen high school, which is an important institution in my constituency: Christina Hamer, a teacher at Eastglen high school; Leann Thompson, the librarian and the GSA lead; Anna Lafleur, a student; and Vanessa Shultz, also a student. I would like to congratulate both Anna and Vanessa for their hard work beyond their school work on Eastglen's gay-straight alliance and for the support of Ms Thompson and Ms Hamer. I think you're clearly living up to your school's mission to work within our community and offer students the opportunity to succeed within a supportive environment. I'd like you all, please, to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted and proud to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Nancy Miller and Pam Krause, two remarkable Albertans. Nancy spent over four decades advocating for social justice, human rights, and reproductive choice. She has co-ordinated public education and lobbying campaigns to secure protection under Alberta's human rights legislation. A proud feminist, Nancy has served on various boards, most notably on the Calgary and the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee.

Joining her is her spouse, Pam Krause, president and CEO of the Calgary Sexual Health Centre. An active feminist, her work in the LGBTQ community spans a period of 25 years, becoming one of Calgary's strongest voices on issues related to sexual health in the LGBTQ community.

Mr. Speaker, I and at least two other members here owe a debt of gratitude to the work that these two women have done, that has made it possible for us to be here. I would invite them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Cortes-Vargas: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two very special women. In this Assembly in 2008 Marni Panas was the first person to represent the drag community in full regalia here in the Legislature, and she was introduced by our hon. Premier, the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona. It is my honour to be here today because of the anniversary that it signifies. To this day it remains history that has not been repeated. Marni is also a transgendered woman who has been very transparent and public throughout her journey in the hopes of fostering acceptance through education and respectful dialogue. She has been acclaimed with many awards for her commitment to creating a community where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated, a community that is safe for others to be their authentic selves, something I'm very honoured to continuously talk with her about. I would ask her to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

I got a little bit ahead of myself. I need to introduce another person. Stephanie Shostak is here. She is a born, raised, and educated Albertan, a parent to two wonderful children and a proud transgendered woman. She is also a Volleyball Canada nationally certified referee and is currently serving as the president of the Volleyball Alberta officials. Stephanie is also a current board member with the Trans Equality Society of Alberta in her job to transition people into new management positions. I'd ask Stephanie to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Mr. Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two very dedicated and committed social justice activists in this province and friends of mine. Angela Reid is a board member of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta, or TESA, and advocates on a number of issues affecting transgendered and gender-diverse people. She's an electronics technologist by trade, coaches junior roller derby in Airdrie, and is co-captain of the Calgary All Stars derby team, which I know that the Minister of Environment is very happy to talk about.

Aria Burrell is a transgender rights activist and also a board member of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta. Aria spearheaded the first-ever raising of the transgender pride flag at Calgary city hall this year, encouraged the Voting while Trans website to support transgendered voters across Canada during the 2015 federal election.

Their combined hard work in the transgender community has gone a long way towards raising awareness and ensuring an inclusive Alberta where we can all feel welcome and proud. I would ask them to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Anna Burn. Anna is a teacher at Lillian Osborne high school, which is in the beautiful constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud. She also serves all Albertans as a diversity consultant for sexual orientation and gender identity for the Edmonton public school board. I'd kindly ask Anna to stand and receive the usual warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's a pleasure and an honour to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly four students from Jasper Place high school in the wonderful constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark. They are Zoya Plaizier, Grace Villeneuve, Julianna Bourbonnais, and Cassidy Harper. Accompanying the students is Kerry Maguire, who is a teacher and diversity consultant for sexual orientation and gender identity with the Edmonton public school board. They are here today in support of the proposed amendments to the human rights legislation, which will be read later today. I would like to thank them for being here today and invite them to rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Seniors.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. First, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. Richard Harpe. Just last week, at a ceremony in London, England, Richard was presented with a golden award for the best affordable over-50s housing project. This award was given in recognition of the Lakeview project in Clairmont, Alberta. This innovative project contains 150 units, including 78 independent living apartments for both individuals and couples as well as 72 lodge units, which also scale up to supportive living. This is the first not-for-profit project to receive this international recognition. As chair of the Grande Spirit Foundation and as county representative for over 20 years Richard has been part of this team and working on this project since 2008. Now the building is under way – concrete is being poured this

Saturday – and Lakeview is scheduled to open in late 2016. I'd now ask that Mr. Harpe please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain . . .

Ms Hoffman: I do have a second introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I'm sorry.

Ms Hoffman: No. My apologies. This introduction to you and through you to all members of the Assembly is for the Canadian Diabetes Association. November, as we know, is Diabetes Awareness Month, which focuses attention on advocacy for those living with diabetes, on prevention, and on research for a cure. Our guests today are members of the Canadian Diabetes Association advocacy committee, who are accompanied by several staff from the CDA Edmonton office. This group is led by Emily Johnson, the volunteer chair of the advocacy committee. Over 200,000 people are living with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes in Alberta, and that number is growing. Diabetes advocates are a strong voice for helping to influence positive change in access to care, research, and treatment in Canada. Without the support of committed volunteers like these in the gallery today life would be much more difficult for people with diabetes and those who love them. I'd ask that our honoured guests please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a constituent of mine from Rocky Mountain House who is in the gallery today. Ms Laura Button is the editor of the *Mountaineer*, Rocky Mountain House's community weekly newspaper, that has been proudly serving our community since 1923. Ms Button, in addition to her work at the paper, is an active member of the Rocky Mountain House community both, of course, as the editor of the paper but also working to enhance our community through several things. Recently I ran into her working on physician recruitment. I would ask that Ms Button rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure and privilege to rise today to introduce to you and through you some friends of mine from southern Alberta. I have Gerald and Kathy Reimer. Gerald is a county councillor for Forty Mile county. He is a mixed farmer who farms both dry and irrigation land. Kathy is a nurse who works with mentally and physically handicapped Albertans.

We also have Steve and Sonja Wikkerink. Steve is a councillor with Forty Mile county as well. Steve and Sonja have four children and one grandchild. Steve and Sonja together operate an irrigation farm, growing sugar beets, wheat, durum, and beans. Sonja also finds time to be a teacher's aide with Prairie Rose school division.

Craig and Cathryn Widmer are here as well. Craig is a councillor for the county of Forty Mile and is also the chairman for our ag service board. Craig farms with Cathryn. He has a dryland mixed farm, growing wheat, canola, peas, and cattle.

They are partly here today, too, to raise awareness of our situation with HALO, our medical air ambulance. We are one of only two areas in the province that STARS can't reach, and we fund this

service entirely ourselves to the tune of about a million dollars a year. The economy has changed a bit, and we hope that this message of fairness will reach our new government. Can I please ask my friends to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I know that I share with the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat that we have people from all three parties from Medicine Hat, and it's always very important.

Are there any other guests or visitors?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you representatives from Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, including president and managing director Brad Klak; chief operating officer Merle Jacobson; human resources senior manager Karla Kochan; human resources supervisor Heather Leier-Murray; area manager for central Alberta Barclay Smith; product specialist Michelle Rigney; and area co-ordinator for on-farm, inspector Tom Penner. AFSC was just rewarded as one of Canada's top 100 employers, and they have been an important resource for producers affected by dry conditions this summer. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Point of Order Anticipation

The Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule on the point of order raised yesterday by the Government House Leader in response to the Leader of the Official Opposition's second set of questions concerning the subject matter of Bill 6, the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act. The Government House Leader cited Standing Order 23(e), which states that a member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion, that member "(e) anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day."

1:50

Members may recall that I gave a ruling on anticipation on June 17, 2015, which can be found on page 50 of the *Alberta Hansard* for that day, as referred to by the Government House Leader yesterday. As I did in June, I find that there is no point of order here, as noted by the opposition House leaders. As stated in my earlier ruling, the rule is that a part of the proceeding should not be on the same subject as something that is scheduled for later that day. As members know, yesterday the House adjourned immediately following the Routine, so there were no items scheduled for debate. Accordingly, the questions regarding Bill 6 were in fact in order.

I also would point out that the questions posed were not dealing with the specific clauses of the bill, and the practice in this Assembly is that the rule against anticipation is not violated by a question about government policy in relation to a bill that is up for consideration that day.

I would refer members to Speaker Kowalski's ruling on March 3, 1998, at page 649 of *Hansard*, which was reaffirmed in Speaker Zwodzesky's ruling of May 8, 2013, at page 2194 of *Hansard*, and in my ruling of June 17, 2015.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: I recognize Her Majesty's Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to finally win one in this House.

Job Creation and Retention

Mr. Jean: Group layoff notices are rising across the province. Enbridge: 250 jobs gone. Enmax: 60 jobs gone. TransCanada is laying off people right now. The bleeding of jobs continues all across Alberta. The head of Calgary's Beaver Drilling knows the damage the NDP is doing in an already bad situation. The NDP is, and I quote, talking about changing the rules and increasing costs. They haven't instilled investor confidence. End quote. We're talking about the lives of working men and women across the province, trying to put food on their table. Premier, why . . .

The Speaker: Hon. leader.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that when layoffs are announced, we're not talking about a number; we are talking about real Alberta families who are suffering. That is why our government has taken a very careful and thoughtful approach to a number of different strategies for economic stimulation and job creation and also to ensure that we cushion the blow that is going to inevitably happen as a result of this dramatic and historic drop in the price of oil. What Albertans looked at and voted for in spring was a government that would take a stable hand forward and ensure that we could work together to come through this.

Mr. Jean: The jobs ministry received 10 group layoff notices in October. That's 1,400 Albertans without a job just in those 10 layoff notices. Oil well drillers are saying that it's as bad as or worse than the 1980s. Albertans are looking at the NDP government and wondering why the NDP is doing everything they can to hurt Alberta's economy. A new job subsidy program coming into effect in 18 months won't do anything at all if NDP policies are causing investors to flee the province right now. How many group layoff notices has the government received so far this month: 30, 60, 100? Tell us.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, our government is focused on trying to soften the blow of the drop in the price of oil. So what we have done is we've had a job-creation incentive program that we hope will create 27,000 jobs per year. To be clear, that will start next year, a month and a half from now. In addition, we've reinstated the STEP program, we've opened up over \$2 billion of financing for innovators, and we're going to create 8,000 to 10,000 jobs through our increased investment in capital infrastructure.

Mr. Jean: New numbers are in. The number of Albertans collecting unemployment benefits has doubled over the last year. Last month alone saw a 9 per cent increase. There are over a hundred thousand unemployed in Alberta, and raising royalties won't help them, a new carbon tax won't help them, and scaring investors away won't help them. The fact is that every policy the NDP has introduced has made things worse for Albertans. To the Premier: will you recognize the problems you're creating, or do you just not care?

Ms Notley: I would suggest that the biggest threat to investor confidence is the fearmongering that we're getting from over there. That opposition thinks that the way to address corporate layoffs in

the energy sector is to lay off thousands of doctors and nurses. They would privatize health care to fix hospitals, and they would deny climate change to open up markets for our energy industry. None of those sanctions will work, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Madam Premier, could I have your last 10 words that you indicated, please? Ten seconds.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not a single one of the Official Opposition's ideas will work at all for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: I hope I can get another 10 seconds on top to throw something else in.

Energy Industry Environmental Issues

Mr. Jean: It's absolutely shocking that at a time of massive job losses, all the NDP can do is talk about a new carbon tax like it's going to do something. Unemployment claims are up, companies are leaving Alberta, investment is significantly down, and jobs are disappearing at a record rate. That's not fearmongering; that's fact. The consequences are showing. TransUnion reports that consumer debt is on the rise in Alberta. By raising the price of everything from groceries to power bills, this carbon tax will only make things much worse for Albertans. Why does the Premier insist on hurting Albertans when they're down?

Ms Notley: You know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition just doesn't get it. Their plan to fire teachers and nurses will not increase the international price of oil, and Alberta's energy products won't see new markets if we continue to follow their denial, dinosaur approach on climate change. Alberta needs a balanced plan to protect services and build support for new market access so that we can actually increase the price of oil received by our manufacturers and producers here in Alberta.

Mr. Jean: Yesterday the new Liberal environment minister came into town. What I heard should make every Albertan very worried. She said that a new national climate change plan will be established 90 days after Paris and, I quote, we'll have a national target and each province is going to contribute its part. End quote. All reports indicate that this new carbon tax will hit Alberta the hardest by far of any province, but the NDP doesn't seem to care or be interested. To the Premier: why should Ottawa be allowed to interfere in how we run our industries?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it turns out, there is a federal government, and they have certain rights under the Constitution. But one of the things that has made our government so focused on dealing with climate change is because we want a made-in-Alberta solution because under the regime of the federal government, if we do our homework, they'll stay out of it. So that's why we are doing that. We are doing our homework after those folks over there stuck their head in the ground and tried to pretend there was no problem.

Mr. Jean: A Trudeau government interfering with Alberta's oil patch: now, where have I heard that story before?

Here's the irony. At the same time that Albertans are being lectured by this NDP government and by Ottawa, the federal government is bailing out Quebec industry and rubber-stamping 8 billion litres of raw sewage being dumped into our waterways. Albertans are tired of hypocrisy, and they know that we are actually world leaders when it comes to the environment. Why does the

Premier continue to stand by and let Alberta be pushed around by Ottawa?

Ms Notley: What our government is going to do is we are going to make plans that make Alberta a world leader on the environment, and then we will open up new markets, Mr. Speaker, and then we will grow our economy, and we will increase the price of oil because we will take responsibility for something that has been ignored for far, far too long.

2:00 Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, this government is politicizing farm safety for ideological reasons. Bill 6, which is not up for debate today, treats small family farms and ranches like factories. Some of the aims of this bill are laudable, but it has major flaws. The government would know that if they had actually, you know, consulted with farmers and ranchers, but of course they didn't. However, the Alberta Federation of Labour was ready to voice its support the moment the bill was introduced. Why did the government consult with labour unions on this particular bill but not ranchers and not farmers?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, (a) our government consulted with stakeholders across the board, and (b) the reason some stakeholders were able to respond on the issue when we finally took action is because Albertans have been waiting for 98 years for these workers to be treated fairly.

Mr. Jean: I found out about the bill two days ago.

Like I said yesterday, farming and ranching aren't jobs; they are ways of life. Farmers and ranchers don't punch a time clock and go home from work. They live there. If anyone on the government side made a living from farming or ranching, they would probably know that, but they don't. They would understand that getting these rules right is complicated and can best be done by listening to the opinions of those it affects, ranchers and farmers. Will the Premier stop the ideological haste on this bill and send it to committee so that the government can get the advice of the farmers and ranchers that it affects?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all, the details around the application and the specific rules around employment standards, around health and safety will in fact be developed in consultation with people in the industry. But on the flip side, when a worker goes to work and they are told by their boss to do something that is unsafe, only farm workers in Alberta, just in Alberta, have no right to walk away from that. That is wrong, and we are changing that.

Mr. Jean: You're right, Madam Premier. It is complicated, so you should consult. The Premier and her cabinet know that you should consult on complicated topics. We know that they will release a new MGA Act next year and then spend months consulting before passing it. This is the right thing to do for cities and for towns in Alberta. Our farmers and ranchers in Alberta deserve nothing less. Instead, the government is content on passing this bill and putting it into effect by January 1, with absolutely no consultation with farmers whatsoever. Albertans have to wonder: is the haste related to union organizing efforts that the Premier's friends and backers are planning?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Only in the land of the Wildrose is a 98-year delay hasty. Only there. Only there. It is absolutely ridiculous. Moreover, I was first elected in 2008, and since 2008 there have been at least three or four consultations with industry by the previous government as they came up with excuse after excuse after excuse to remain the only province in the country that does not protect farm workers. Well, that is over. We are going to do the right thing.

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

Resource Industry Environmental Issues

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, this morning at AAMD and C the environment minister said, and I quote: access to water is the backbone of the economy. Previously she said that we can grow our economy on the backbone of the energy economy. This morning the Premier said at the same conference that public services are the backbone of communities. So far we're all agreeing. What I haven't seen yet is the backbone to stand up for Alberta jobs at the climate conference. My question to either one: will you have the backbone to stand up for Alberta jobs at the climate conference?

Ms Notley: You know, Mr. Speaker, here's the thing about backbone. When you've got a major climate problem that is impacting the ability of your producers to find a market, running away and hiding from the problem and failing to do the right thing is an absence of backbone. Moving forward on something that is long overdue, that is leadership.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, this morning the environment minister also said at AAMD and C that President Obama called Alberta oil dirty, and then she said that the Premier didn't say that. Later on the Premier said, and I quote: Obama called our oil dirty. And she continued with: that is not true. Music to my ears. The question to the Premier or the minister: what has changed for your government to finally see the light?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, what we know is that in order to get our product to market, we need to do a better job of improving our reputation, and that was our point. Whether fair or not fair – and it's a mixture of both – the fact of the matter is that our reputation has impinged on our ability to get pipelines built to tidewater. So what we are going to do is that we are going to work in consultation with industry leaders to develop a responsible plan that will earn us a good reputation and, hopefully, access to new markets.

Mr. McIver: Our environment minister again at AAMD and C said this morning that she met beef producers and learned about their sustainable plan to produce beef. She said that it was a good plan, and then she went on to say that we can do more, but did not say what that meant. If the industry has a good plan, can she tell the House what she needs from them, because government regulates them, so that they can protect their industry, keep their jobs, and go ahead? What more are you going to require of the beef industry, after they have a good plan?

The Speaker: The minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the question. I'm pleased to update the House that, of course, our government is committed to sustainability for our grazing leaseholders on our public lands and on our private lands. We are working very closely with a number of industry groups. I was very pleased to hear about the Alberta Beef Producers sustainable beef program. I'm pleased

to work with them in the future on that and with all grazing leaseholders and other stock growers.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Medical Laboratory Services

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The medical laboratory is the heart of our medical system, and it's out of sight and appears to have been out of mind with Alberta Health Services in Edmonton for a decade. Quality results on time are essential for diagnosing everything from cancer to infectious disease. The Edmonton lab is now sitting in limbo after a second contract extension with DynaLife until early 2017. Even if construction started tomorrow, a modern lab would not be built before 2019. To the minister: Albertans and lab professionals need to know whether we will be hearing about a third extension of lab services to DynaLife in 2017.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the hon. member for the question. He's absolutely right that Albertans deserve access to high-quality lab services, and that's one of the reasons why very quickly after forming government we were considering what was happening and being proposed by the last government. We felt that their decision to move forward with expanding private delivery was not evidence-based and did not have proper consultation with front-line workers and with health care providers to ensure that we could be confident with the plan. So we stopped that RFP process, and we've taken the time to do a review. I look forward to updating this House, hopefully before the end of the year, and if not, very early in the new year, about what we'll be doing moving forward.

Dr. Swann: Given that the Health Quality Council is doing a review of the laboratory services here and will play an essential role in health care delivery in Alberta for decades, will the minister, in the interests of transparency and accountability, be tabling their final report when it's available to the public, before making decisions on the next laboratory plan?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. The format of the report hasn't yet been finalized. We've got them doing the consultation and doing the groundwork and pulling information together. Certainly, it would be my desire to share information publicly about what I've gleaned, and I'd be happy to do that in a way – I don't want to commit to tabling it prior to announcements, just based on the timelines. But I'd be happy to share information about rationale and next steps before I do make the announcement with members of this House, including the hon. member who just asked the question.

Thank you.

2:10

Dr. Swann: Moving from a private lab to a public lab, which I support, would add very significant new planning, complexity, and time for transitioning from Alberta Health Services and DynaLife to the new entity. Albertans deserve some clarity and an early decision. To the minister: will this be a publicly funded and operated lab? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. These are the types of questions that I've been wanting to make sure I have evidence on to be able to drive the outcomes moving forward. When decisions were made previously, without considering even whether or not a public lab expansion would be possible, decisions were being made about moving forward under a direction to move forward with privatization. I want to make sure that we've got evidence, that I'm grounding decisions on a significant investment for taxpayers as well as trusting in the confidence of their health care lab results. I'm certainly taking the information that's gleaned by the Health Quality Council into consideration before I do make a decision moving forward.

Seniors' Care

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, many seniors in Edmonton-Gold Bar are telling me that they're concerned about being able to afford the appropriate care that they need in their later years. Many of these seniors have worked their entire lives and are now worried that they may not be able to afford the proper care that they deserve. What is my hon. friend the Minister of Health and of Seniors doing to ensure that our seniors can afford the care that they deserve in their later years?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: That's the first time I've been referred to as hon. friend.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to my hon. colleague and friend as well. We believe in looking after our seniors and making sure that they can live healthy lives with dignity and self-respect. Of course, we are proud to invest in the programs and services that matter to Albertans. That's why we've committed to building 2,000 long-term care spaces throughout Alberta, to make sure that seniors can have the care that they need, living as close to home and community as possible. We're proud to be investing as well in the Alberta seniors' benefit, which helps Alberta's low-income seniors to be able to have a little bit of spending money at the end of the month and make ends meet.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many Alberta seniors are faced with the choice of paying exorbitant and unfair prices at private care facilities or being forced to wait ridiculously long times to access public spaces, what is my hon. friend doing to ensure that we are creating more public spaces and beds so that our seniors have access to the care that they deserve?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. We're investing and renewing and renovating seniors' housing throughout Alberta, and these projects will help seniors have safe, stable housing and improved quality of life. Our investments will add nearly 800 newly renovated units of affordable housing throughout the province as well as the commitment of around 2,000 long-term care spaces. The member is right that we have inherited over a billion dollars in deferred maintenance from the previous government. This problem won't be solved overnight. However, we will continue to invest in infrastructure and make sure that we make it as affordable as possible for Albertans throughout the province.

Thank you.

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, given the desire of many Alberta seniors to age in place and to remain in their homes throughout their later years and given that there are currently numerous barriers that are preventing them from doing so, what is my hon. friend doing to support Alberta seniors when it comes to home care?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that home care is a serious concern for constituents in my riding and, I imagine, other people's in this House, so I'm glad that the question is being asked. Seniors helped build this province. We want to ensure that they can live with the right care, getting the right supports, and that means that it also happens at the right place. Home care is certainly one of the pieces that was a pillar in our platform. Our budget shows an increased contribution that we'll be making to home care through the Ministry of Health. We'll be investing \$30 million in the 2016-17 budget as well as an additional \$60 million in '17-18 to phase in a new and expanded model for public home care, which, of course, is fundamental to the success and well-being of . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Minister.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Farm and Ranch Safety

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every rural Albertan knows that farms and ranches are sometimes dangerous places and that safety is paramount. Farms and ranches aren't factory floors or office buildings. Farmers don't leave the workplace at the end of the day; they live in the workplace, and the workplace is their lives. Other provinces recognize the uniqueness of family farms and ranches. They have exemptions or special rules for them. Why doesn't this government recognize the importance of Alberta's 45,000 family farms?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Family farms are an essential part of Alberta. At the same time, every employee deserves safe and fair treatment, and we're working with employers to make sure that that's the case. We know that farmers, ranchers, and their workers want to work and come home safe at night. That's why we're meeting with them and discussing the specifics and working collaboratively.

Thank you.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, B.C. and Saskatchewan differentiate family farms from large, corporate farms. Given that the issue of farm safety legislation has been examined with real farm groups many times in the past and given that in all those cases the experts, who are the farmers and ranchers, always said that education was much preferred to legislation because of the uniqueness of farms and ranches as workplaces, why is the government insisting on pushing through a bill in this Legislature without consulting Alberta farmers and ranchers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Discussions have been going on for some time with farmers and ranchers, and we're having specific consultations in the next few weeks. We're very much working with industry, moving forward prudently. We know that calving season isn't a nine-to-five job. We know that harvest doesn't happen, you

know, when we want it to; it happens when the season is. We're working with them to plan specifics, to make sure industry is considered.

Thank you.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, farmers deserve more than 45 days on this issue. Every farmer and rancher that I talk to tells me that self-regulation . . .

The Speaker: Could you ask your question again, please? I could not hear you.

Mr. Hunter: It would be my pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, every farmer and rancher that I talk to tells me that self-regulation has been successful. None of them tell me that forcing bureaucratic approaches onto farms and ranches will work. Given that the government has no actual farmers or ranchers amongst their 54 MLAs, why is it that this government thinks that they know better or care more about farm safety than the moms and dads, farmers and ranchers on Alberta's 45,000 farms and ranches?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I just want to really emphasize that this is about safety. Twenty-five people died on farms last year, and we are working with the farm industry, the ranchers, the groups, and we're doing education plus legislation. We're working ahead prudently on them. Farmers themselves say that it's going to make safety part of the conversation. That farmer in Gibbons welcomed our movement forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Energy Policies

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Energy. This government has contributed to greater job losses, decreased drilling activity, and decimation of servicing activity in Alberta through their ideological approach to taxes and carbon levies. Many have told me that they feel kicked while they are down, and confidence is at an all-time low, with rig count actually lower than during the NEP in 1983. Given that any increase in royalty rates would result in an additional financial burden at the worst possible time, further decimating the real backbone of our economy, have you instructed the royalty review panel to consider the financial load which has already been placed on the energy industry when determining . . .

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, absolutely, when we struck out talking to industry, we asked questions like: what are the challenges you face, what advice do you have for us for the royalty review, and how can we work best with industry to make that happen? We've been listening to industry. We have been asking them to tell us their costs, and we are considering all those costs.

The Speaker: The hon. member. First supplemental.

2:20

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also to the Minister of Energy: given that the energy industry feels abandoned and given that a March 2015 business plan performance measure noting that

Alberta's combined royalty and tax rate will remain in the top quartile of investment opportunities has been removed from your business plan, by omitting this commitment upholding what we used to know as the Alberta advantage, do you seriously believe you're instilling confidence within the energy industry or the investment community?

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, when we talk to industry, we ask about the costs. We ask about the challenges. We are consulting and collaborating with them all along the way. We've promised no surprises, and we are in constant communication with them.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Energy: given that the oil field service industry is telling us that they are ready, willing, and able to assist with economic diversification through research and by exporting technology and best practices abroad and given that this would help an ailing industry while simultaneously diversifying the economy, seemingly a win-win, what are you specifically doing, apart from spending some time in China, to assist the industry locally and abroad in advancing such critical initiatives?

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, certainly, China was part of that activity. We took industry with us as part of it. We met with government, and we met with industry, and we talked about the technologies we can share because we are the best in the world in our technological knowledge. Alberta can be a leader in that as we move forward.

Urgent Health Care Services in Airdrie

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, I rose in this House two weeks ago to highlight the urgent need within my constituency for a 24-hour health care facility. I learned from my exchange with the Health minister why it's called question period, not answer period. Simply put, the Health minister's explanation was insufficient both to me and to the thousands of residents of Airdrie who have since viewed the exchange on social media. I'd like to try asking the minister again: what is the Health minister doing to ensure that Airdrie receives the 24-hour health care facility it clearly needs?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I have been in consultation with a number of health professionals, including those in Airdrie, as well as the mayor of Airdrie and with the hon. member herself. I understand that there is a desire to have an urgent care facility in her specific community, as there is a desire to have urgent care in many parts throughout Alberta. We certainly have to make sure that we weigh the pros and cons of every situation. I'm not saying that Airdrie doesn't deserve one; we all deserve to ensure that we have quality care in all parts of the province. We need to make sure that we make decisions while at the same time ensuring that we are balancing our resources with the demands in our communities.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, this week one of the strongest advocates for a 24-hour health care facility and a pillar of our community, Dr. Julian Kyne, was informed that his contract with the Airdrie urgent care centre will not be renewed. Given that this surprise announcement shows at least correlation if not causation stemming from my exchange with the minister on the 24-hour health care facility, will

the minister put an end to playing politics with a respected doctor's career and rise above petty politics to ensure that the people of Airdrie's health care needs are being met?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there is concern about this matter, but it is an HR matter. I would expect that all hon. members would treat HR contracts and HR negotiations and individuals' professions on both sides of the situation with the utmost respect and confidence. There is certainly a way to handle this in this House; asking specifics about an individual's reputation is not one of them.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, you must admit that that sounds incredibly fishy, though, right?

As Dr. Kyne was being let go by AHS, he was also being recognized by his peers for outstanding work. Given that Dr. Kyne received the annual physician advocacy award by a Calgary medical organization just this week and given that the bureaucrats who work under this minister appear to be trying to silence any opposition to their vision, will the minister commit to re-evaluating the termination of one of the strongest advocates for a 24-hour health care facility and the expansion of services to my constituents?

Ms Hoffman: I have to say that I am very concerned with the tone that's being taken in this House and assumptions that are being made about the way HR is being managed. I have to say that this is not respectful of any of the parties involved. I have been having conversations with individuals to make sure that due process is being considered. Alberta Health Services has a reputation, as well as does the individual that is being referred to, and they deserve to be treated with respect as the employer and the employee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Rural Health Care

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to success stories in rural health care, the innovative nurse practitioner clinic in Okotoks is a prime example, but in January this vitally important service will be cut, leaving their 1,900 regular patients without access to primary care. The NDP government is allowing cuts to front-line services when there are many nurse practitioners ready and willing to work in rural Alberta. Will the Health minister commit to putting a funding model in place to ensure they can practise where they're needed?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Nurse practitioners are a valuable component within our health care system. There have been many attempts throughout the years to expand their scope of practice, and I understand that there have been a number of barriers. Very recently I was at the nurse practitioner conference. We've been in conversations with CARNA and others because, of course, we want to make sure that they have a way of being supported in the long term. I know the outcomes of the Okotoks clinic, and this was the first I heard about there being terminations there, so I'd be happy to follow up with the clinic itself to see what the root causes are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, though this is far from the only challenge facing rural health care, given that we've also seen emergency response services reduced or cut in many smaller communities and given the recent life-threatening instances of code reds, where no ambulance is available to serve an area, I'd like to ask the Health minister: will you commit to providing meaningful performance measures so that we can get accountability for the billions of dollars that you and your bureaucracy spend?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We very recently had a very thorough conversation around our budget. I enjoyed it very much, and we had an opportunity to dig deeper into the Alberta Health components of the budget, which is over \$19 billion this year all-in, so it's an important investment for Albertans by Albertans.

In terms of the Alberta Health Services budget and the specific line items, they will be discussing that very soon. The new board will resume its role I believe it's next week, and they will be having their meetings in public as well.

Mr. Barnes: Now, the minister may excuse her department's lack of improvement by saying, "Change is hard," but Albertans deserve better. Given all the talk we've heard about stabilizing health care, we're still seeing lack of access to rural health professionals, no improvement in quality of service, and the same old cost overruns in hospital construction. Why? Why must rural Albertans be subject to declining services while Alberta Health Services continues to swell with more bureaucratic bloat?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely working diligently to make sure that front-line services are maintained and improved, and that's why we actually invested more money in health care as opposed to cutting billions of dollars, as is being proposed by members opposite. They want to cut \$9 billion from infrastructure investment. They want to lay off staff that would, of course, impact health care. Instead, what we're doing is working collaboratively with communities and with leaders to ensure that we are continuing to invest in rural health care and urban health care.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

2:30 Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation Consultation

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to see that this government has finally started to pay attention to Alberta's farms and ranches, but I am concerned about the method they are using to pass new legislation. As someone who has had a long-standing relationship with the farming community, I support farm safety legislation. However, I am concerned that this government is not adequately consulting with industry on how this may affect them and how quickly. My question is to the minister of labour: can you explain how you consulted with industry to create. . .

The Speaker: Madam Minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We've been having discussions with farmers and ranchers and industry representatives for some time. The ministry staff have been working on this file for a long time, and the time is now that we actually move on farm and ranch safety. We're having specific consultations coming forward in the

next few weeks, and we're very looking forward to hearing more details about what will work in the farming and ranch sector.

Thanks.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this legislation is due to come into effect in 42 days and that Alberta's farms and ranches will have to make some major changes and spend a lot of money to comply, can the minister explain why they are rushing to implement this so quickly without vetting it through all the stakeholder groups it applies to?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We have been working for a long time with the farming and ranching sector, and we've had discussions with them all along. We're going to talk about specifics. We're going to move ahead prudently and take into consideration the very unique aspects of farming and ranching. As I've said, calving season doesn't happen from nine to five. So we're absolutely working with farmers and moving forward prudently and slowly.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this legislation was introduced in the House on November 17 and that public consultations that are scheduled will occur around the same time as the bill is debated in the Assembly or even after the legislation is passed, will the minister admit that it doesn't really matter what the stakeholders say and that this government is going to pass the bill anyway? Is that what you call consultation?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We are moving ahead prudently on this, and we're making sure that we hear from industry and know the specifics. The specific occupational health and safety code actually doesn't come into effect until 2017. We're very much working collaboratively with them so that we can have the right fit for this industry. We care very much about family farms, and we're working with them now.

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

Film and Television Industry

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no secret that there are some strong ties between Alberta and Hollywood. In recent years we've seen some major film and television projects that have chosen our province as a backdrop, and in the last few months I've personally had the opportunity to talk with many of the companies and individuals that are involved in that work, tour some of their sets, and hear their interest in lot of the new streaming technologies that are demanding content, which we're providing. To the Minister of Culture and Tourism: what steps are you taking to draw new productions to and develop productions from Alberta?

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for that question. Certainly, our government recognizes that our television and film industry is in a period of rapid growth, and to further stimulate that growth, we have put almost \$37 million in this budget into our media fund, which is an increase of almost a third. As I travel around the province, I see lots and lots of growth interest in the television and film industry. It's a great investment for us, and it provides jobs and diversification that we really need at this juncture in our history.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that our government is also committed to working to diversify Alberta's economy, to the minister: could you tell us what the return on investment is that we actually see from these screen-based productions?

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last five years we've seen approximately \$400 million worth of investment from the television and film industry, and Treasury Board and other sources have calculated that a dollar of investment in film and television brings out a result of \$5 or \$6 into the general economy, so by any measure that's a very, very good investment. As I travel around the province, I'm seeing lots of new investment. With where our dollar is right now and where our reputation is right now, we have a chance to grow exponentially our film and television industry.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that these productions that take place here in Alberta sometimes vary in size – certainly, the Hollywood ones can be quite large; some of the local ones are smaller – could you give us a sense, then, of what that return on investment looks like in terms of actual job numbers?

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's interesting. We're almost at capacity in terms of our professionals, technical professionals and so forth working at capacity at more than 3,000 full-time jobs. If you add in the part-time jobs and extras, we have more than 30,000 people employed in the industry right now. So it's a great time to see growth, as I said before, for the reasons I described. Quite frankly, this is a great way by which we can create jobs, diversify our economy, and shine a spotlight on the province of Alberta. There are lots of tourism opportunities that come from people who see movies that are shot in Alberta and then actually come to visit. I was at *Heartland* the other day and . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Rocky Mountain House Hospital

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the 2009 evaluation of the Rocky Mountain House hospital made it clear that the facility was at capacity, at the end of its life, and that it needed to be replaced by 2014. The hospital was built when the community had a population of 3,000. Today there are over 32,000 people living in the town and surrounding area. This hospital is over capacity serving all the residents in the area, let alone the million-plus tourists that visit the region every year. What is the minister's plan to get Rocky Mountain House a proper hospital?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'll tell you the first step of our plan. We're going to invest in infrastructure, not cut \$9 billion. We've increased investment in infrastructure in our budget, over 15 per cent of what was planned by the previous government. We're doing a lot of that in the front end because we want to make sure that we have time to invest in a variety of projects, including health care facilities throughout Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nixon: Given that the Rocky Mountain House hospital faces serious infrastructure issues and given that the 2009 evaluation

states that by 2013 components of the hospital's core infrastructure would either be at the end of their life or suffering significant deficiencies and that since the evaluation was published, there has been zero activity towards getting this community a new hospital, what is the minister's plan for Rocky Mountain House and ensuring this community has the health care they deserve?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Certainly, making sure that Albertans have access to the right care in the right place at the right time by the right health professional is a priority, of course, as well as making sure that we have the right investment for Alberta taxpayers. I thank the member for the question. We're certainly working through our infrastructure priority list in terms of the \$4.4 billion that's still in the capital plan and for pointing out the fact that the third party, when they were in government, ignored their own recommendations for six years.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, given that this government campaigned on the promise to restore transparency and public trust to the prioritization of new schools and hospitals by introducing the infrastructure sunshine list, a Wildrose idea, by the way, and given that it's been over six months since they were elected and we still have not seen this sunshine list, the only thing that has become clear is that this government doesn't keep its promises. When will the sunshine list come to light so that Albertans can know where severely overdue projects like the Rocky Mountain House hospital fall on the priority list?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, our government is taking the time to do thorough consultation, a thorough review of what our health care needs are. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. member, the tone and the volume of that last outburst exceeded even my expectations of your capacity. I would appreciate it if, when you're making remarks, you might not make it as loud and dysfunctional to the House.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is taking time to make sure that we've got the right priorities and the right plans moving forward, which means that we base decisions on evidence. While members opposite might draft policy on the back of a napkin and pass motions to privatize health care at their last convention last weekend, we're investing in public health care.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Minimum Wage Increase

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government made an ideological campaign promise to raise Alberta's minimum wage to \$15 per hour, and I believe this was a well-intended initiative; however, it has unintentional consequences. For instance, businesses are saying that your decision to hike the minimum wage is creating upward pressure on all other wages. To the jobs minister: given that union negotiators have told me that they will use the minimum wage scale to further increase pay for other workers, what consideration have you given to the consequence of your minimum wage increase?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. This government made a promise during the election to make work fair for everyone, and that meant supporting an increase to minimum wage so that low-wage workers could be able to go home each day and be able to provide for their families. We've done that, and we're proud to that, and we know that this is still an amazing place for businesses to operate, here in Alberta.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the standard answer.

Given that upward adjustments in wages throughout Alberta will have an accompanying inflationary aspect that will force up prices for goods and services for all consumers and given that Albertans on fixed incomes will especially suffer because their earnings do not increase proportionately to inflation, have you given consideration to how these vulnerable Albertans will be negatively impacted by this ill-advised plan?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Unfortunately, Alberta had one of the lowest minimum wages in the country and the highest cost of living. I know that I'm happy to pay a little bit more to support people with low wages. This will help students be able to pay for university, to pay for their tuitions, and be able to care for their families. This is actually helping vulnerable Albertans, and I'm very proud that we're doing this as a government.

Mr. Ellis: After taxes the second highest in Canada.

To the same minister: given that business organizations have been telling you that their members expect to cut jobs in order to pay for all employees' higher wages and given that failing resource prices have already caused Alberta to shed 65,000 jobs in the first eight months of this year and given that introducing a measure that unnecessarily reduces jobs instead of creates them is the opposite of what Alberta needs right now, how many more jobs must disappear before your government at the very least slows down your plan?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the hon. member for his question. I would like to remind the hon. member that there was only one party in this House that had a plan to create jobs and help stimulate the economy, and that is this party, this government. [interjections] Already we have moved to create the job creation incentive program, which will create up to 27,000 jobs. We've also reinstated the STEP program, increased it by \$3 million, and opened it up to small businesses, which is going to give them access to STEP students. [interjections] As well, we've increased ATB's capacity to lend . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: I cannot hear what the speaker is saying.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've also increased ATB's capacity to lend so that small to medium-sized enterprises have the access to capital they need to create jobs and to grow our economy. We're also looking at increasing market access.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, November 20, is the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance. It is a day for the transgender community to raise awareness about the almost constant threat of violence faced by gender-variant people. If you do not know much about transgender individuals, today would be a good day to start. I invite you all to learn something about these wonderful Albertans because, by doing so, you will soon arrive at a very simple conclusion. Transgender people are just that: people. And people are more alike than they are different. Transgender individuals are everyday people. They are your co-workers and your friends, and either by choice or by blood they are also your family. They are government employees, health care workers, teachers, pilots, flight attendants, firefighters, and I hope one day even MLAs.

There is one thing that transgender people are not. Transgender individuals are not sick. Neither are they weak. They are strengthened by the courage to be who they are in a world that tells them who they cannot be. Like everyone else, they want to be loved and accepted for who they are. Sadly, around the world many still face bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence because of their gender identity or gender expression, and this is wrong. But to be clear, their deaths are not always at the hands of violence. Driven to despair by hatred, cruelty, intolerance, and rejection, the greatest number of deaths are of those who take their own lives.

So as we mark Transgender Day of Remembrance and reflect upon the lives that have been lost to violence and injustice, I invite all members of this House and indeed every Albertan to recommit ourselves to ensuring dignity, equality, and justice for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Energy Policies

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since day one of forming government, the NDP has taken as many steps as possible to damage our energy sector: higher taxes, crippling regulations, and royalty and climate reviews. Now the environment minister is getting ready to take direction on carbon taxes from her friends in Ottawa, who generously told us yesterday that they would help Alberta to come up with a credible plan to add a carbon tax on top of existing provincial carbon pricing. The plan is to impose a national target, with every province having to do its part. Every Albertan's dream: a Trudeau Liberal government telling us how to run our economy.

Now, this would be funny if it weren't so scary. This Liberal federal government has almost no Alberta representation and is now pulling the strings of a provincial minister who has co-authored books on how to protest our oil sands.

While Alberta is becoming a target for Ottawa, things have never been easier for their friends in Quebec: 8 billion litres of raw sewage being dumped into pristine waterways and a federal government entertaining massive bailouts for Quebec's industry.

The NDP like to talk about their admiration for Premier Lougheed. At least he understood when to stand up to Ottawa. Albertans want Alberta-driven environmental solutions that do not compromise prosperity. Instead, the NDP's tenure so far has been like a fairy tale for radical anti-energy activists: 65,000 jobs lost and counting, energy investment fleeing the province, pipeline projects rejected. As one oil and gas organization put it yesterday, there is a big question mark on the attractiveness of operating in Alberta now. This plan imposed by Ottawa will only make things worse. The

NDP needs to refuse this plan and stand up for Albertans' interests. This plan will only deepen the recession and further drain investment from our energy sector. This is dangerous and irresponsible.

Albertans want leadership that will stand up and fight for them, not against them. The Wildrose will be there and with them every step of the way.

The Speaker: Hon. member, thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Not-for-profit Organizations

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our communities are made stronger by the many not-for-profit agencies that provide services to Albertans every single day. They are the glue that holds our system together and a big part of what makes Alberta such a tremendous place to live. It is an essential Alberta value that we look out for our neighbours, and nowhere is that more obvious than in our not-for-profit service providers. These organizations know what it means to do more with less because they have to. Their funding comes from the generosity of compassionate Albertans and often, although not always, from government. They are run by dedicated staff and thousands upon thousands of volunteers. They quietly go about their work solving problems, filling gaps, and helping vulnerable people. They don't expect praise or publicity; they do it to help their fellow Albertans.

2:50

Organizations like the Doorway, that helps teens find a way off the street and into a better life; E4C, working to end poverty in Edmonton; brown bagging it for Calgary's kids and I Can for Kids, helping to feed hungry children in school and throughout the summer; and the Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society, helping women and their children escape domestic violence are only a few of the more than 23,000 not-for-profit agencies helping Albertans every single day.

As the government sets out to address some of the big challenges facing our province, I implore you to look at what we already have in Alberta. Look first to partner with the agencies that are making a difference. Don't think that government always knows best. Don't build expensive and unnecessary bureaucracy, and don't build your own programs where so many communities have programs that already work. Alberta's not-for-profit agencies are a source of tremendous pride for our province. Let's acknowledge their contributions and help keep them strong.

Thank you.

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

National Child Day

Mr. Hinkley: Mr. Speaker, thank you for today's reflection. Yes, tomorrow, Friday, November 20, is National Child Day. This year's theme is It's Our Right to Learn. National Child Day is celebrated in Canada in recognition of the United Nations declaration of the rights of the child. We can celebrate this day by learning more about empowering young people to use their voice and to raise awareness. Key messages of National Child Day include that all children have the right to an adequate standard of living, health care, and opportunity to play and that the views of the child are genuinely considered in all economic, social, and political decisions that impact them.

I am proud of our government's commitment to inclusive education and to ensuring that communities, families, and children in Alberta have the necessary resources to be successful. In

particular, I want to recognize and congratulate the Boys & Girls Club of Wetaskiwin, in my own constituency. I know there are many other organizations in Alberta; however, here are just some of the services the Boys & Girls Club of Wetaskiwin provides for children: summer day camps, out of school care, an early learning and child care centre, leadership development programs, native friendship clubs, social skills development and educational supports, personalized counselling, family support programs, and in-school mentoring.

On National Child Day and every day let's ensure that our children have the right to learn, play, grow, and thrive. Thank you.

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

Grey Cup Western Final

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the Calgary Stampeders on their victory in the western semifinal against the B.C. Lions on Sunday. Because of this victory, they now take on the Edmonton Eskimos in the western final. The winners of the western final, of course, will go on to play in the Grey Cup in Winnipeg against the eastern final winner, either the Ottawa Redblacks or the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. But right now this means one thing: the battle of Alberta.

This is a historically fun rivalry in our province and within this Legislature. I'm here today to announce a friendly little wager I have with the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. Both of us have a park in our respective riding that is either in the process of being built or in development. In my riding of Edmonton-Decore I have the Schonsee park and playground group, who have been working very hard to fund raise and build a park in Schonsee. Calgary-Fort has the Forest Lawn playground, which was opened in October but still has much more work to be done before that project is completed. With that, our wager is that if the Calgary Stampeders win, I will donate \$100 to the Forest Lawn park; if the Edmonton Eskimos win, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort will donate \$100 to the Schonsee park and playground. You may even see a picture of the defeated MLA in the opposing winner's jersey.

One thing is for certain, Mr. Speaker. One team from Alberta will be going to the Grey Cup this year, and that is something, regardless of whom you cheer for, that this province can be proud of. May the best team win. Go, Esks, go.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Bullying Awareness and Prevention

Ms Luff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned already in this House, the week of November 15 to 21 is Bullying Awareness Week. It was started right here in Alberta by parent and educator Bill Belsey and is now in its 13th year.

Online bullying is increasingly a problem. Research shows that teens who are subjected to cyberbullying are twice as likely to attempt suicide. However, there are many working to combat bullying, and often they are young people. I think of the students in the Forest Lawn high school GSA, who worked so hard last spring to raise awareness and influence legislators and to provide a safe place at their school for their peers. I think of all the children in my riding who are participating in the roots of empathy program in Marlborough school and Penbrooke Meadows school.

Sadly, adults are not always the best role models. I have heard from constituents who are victims of workplace bullying, and I myself have been subjected to online bullying. The things adults say to each other on the Internet can be appalling, and it bothers me

mostly because I think that as Albertans and humans we can do better.

I ask you to talk to people this week: friends, children, peers. Let them know that it's never okay to be hateful, profane, sexually explicit, or threatening in person, on the Internet, or in a letter, not for any reason. No one should be subjected to bullying because of their race, religion, sexuality, or gender. No one should be subjected to bullying because of ideas they have or opinions they hold. We should not have to grow thicker skin. The solution is not to feel less deeply.

This week with the recent attacks in Paris, Beirut, and elsewhere we have seen how the bullying of terrorism can be very destructive. The solution, I think, as it is so often, is education, empathy education. If everyone took a minute to think about where someone else is coming from, to ask a question, to understand a position, I think we'd be much further ahead. We are all far more similar than we are different, and by making this point clear to children early on through empathy education programs such as roots of empathy, we can build a kinder, more loving society. This Bullying Awareness Week is an excellent time to start.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 7(7) to extend Orders of the Day past 3 o'clock.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there's been a motion for a continuance.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Bills

Bill 7

Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2015

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce first reading of Bill 7, the Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2015.

Bill 7 proposes an amendment to the Alberta Human Rights Act which would add gender identity and gender expression as expressly prohibited grounds of discrimination. Mr. Speaker, this government supports the rights of all Albertans, which include members of the LGBTQ community. We recognize that trans and gender-variant community members continue to be a highly marginalized group within society. This amendment will ensure that the rights of trans and gender-variant community members are specifically reflected in the legislation and that this reflects the views of all Albertans.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a first time]

3:00 Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I alluded to this earlier this week, a letter to the Minister of Health from Shauna McHarg, with the appropriate number of copies.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader. You have a report?

Mr. Cooper: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table a long-awaited document that I referred to a couple of days ago and that was the subject matter of a point of order yesterday. I just wanted to make sure that I made good on my commitment to table

the survey that I sent to businesses in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

The Speaker: Minister of economic development, did you have an introduction that you wish to make?

Mr. Bilous: Not myself, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. Minister of Justice.

The Speaker: Unanimous consent to revert to introductions?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (continued)

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to all members of this Assembly. It was my oversight earlier today, apparently in the excitement of the announcement we were about to make. We have here today in the gallery with us the hon. Bob Philp, who is the chief of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and tribunals. The commission and tribunals have the mandate not only to enforce rights but also to bring education to people in the community, so I thank him very much for his service. I would ask that he rise and receive the welcome of this House.

Orders of the Day Government Motions Provincial Fiscal Policies

13. Mr. Ceci moved:
Be it resolved that the Assembly approve in general the business plans and fiscal policies of the government.

[Debate adjourned November 5: Mr. McIver speaking]

The Speaker: The leader of the Progressive Conservatives.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue on. I think I've got five minutes left to talk about the budget. I've talked to Albertans. They're starting to understand what's in this budget. I've talked to constituents, talked to family members and friends, businesspeople, neighbours. People who are strangers are stopping me in the grocery store, and they're very concerned about this NDP government budget. They are concerned that there seems to be a complete disconnect in the government between how Albertans make their living, how Albertans live their lives, and the way the government is not but ought to be supporting all of that. Since the budget was actually tabled in this House, there have been more layoffs, well documented, thousands and thousands. No one blames the government for the low price of oil, but almost everybody blames the government for making it worse.

Mr. Speaker, the confidence that the investment community needs to have in Alberta is eroded. We need investment all across Alberta. For example, today at the AAMD and C the Premier was talking about needing to make the economy more diversified, and she gave but one example. It was a good example. She said that she wanted more value-added food production, something that is already here, but it could be expanded dramatically. But I don't see a lot in this budget to support that.

I see the new minister – Mr. Speaker, I'm going to give the government credit. So far they have created one job, and the owner of that job is sitting in the minister's chair across from me. Congratulations. You are the only thing the government can actually point to for job creation, so congratulations. You're as

good as it gets. I mean, I know that the new minister will carry out his duties to the best of his ability as he is sworn to do. I have no doubt about that.

This government's budget will actually get in the way of Albertans being able to hang onto the jobs they've got now and get new ones in the future. Mr. Speaker, Alberta is unique in a lot of ways. The biggest industry that we have is the energy industry, and some of the projects that we need to get investment for are in the order of \$5 billion, \$10 billion, and more. Not everybody walks around with that in their hip pocket. Sometimes that money has to come from outside of Alberta, sometimes from people that love Alberta less than we in the PC caucus do. Sometimes they actually need a reason like profit in order to invest here so that those projects will go ahead.

Now, through the budget and things said, including the Finance minister – I don't think I can quote him exactly, but he said something to the effect of: when profits get better, we'll take that. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you were in New York or Los Angeles or Switzerland or Paris as one of those individuals walking this earth that has billions of dollars that they can invest in things, which I will never be, would you invest it in a place where the Finance minister said, "When profit gets better, we'll take that"? I don't think so. This budget is a symptom of that problem. If you add on to that all the uncertainty that this government has heaped upon business with the royalty review and the rail tax, which will make it harder for energy products to move – today, actually, the Premier said that Alberta's oil isn't dirty, and I thank the Premier for saying that. It just happens to be a lot different than what the Premier has been saying up till now. Nonetheless, being on the positive, let's thank her for doing that today.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the government has done little of anything to get pipelines. The Premier herself said that we need to get pipelines to the east. She forgot about the north, the south, and the west. The shortest route is the west. In other words, if you're going to move energy products out of here, it's going to go by rail. Okay. Even with that, what has the government done? They've added a rail fuel tax. They've actually made that more expensive. They've actually made it more expensive to move our energy industry's products to market. They've made it more expensive to move lumber. They've made every consumer product more expensive.

Mr. Speaker, there's so much more to say, but I know you're cutting me off at my time.

The Speaker: I am. I am. I am.

Are there any questions under 29(2)(a) to the hon. member from Calgary?

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the hon. leader of the third party was just in the midst of what was no doubt a compelling argument against the budget, I would certainly appreciate hearing the conclusion of that in the next four minutes and 45 seconds or so.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster for his interest. As I was saying, the rail fuel tax will make it more expensive and harder to get the main things that Alberta produces to market: energy, lumber, agricultural products. In fact, to make it worse, the government is going to now introduce a bill that – while keeping farmers and ranchers safe is a tremendous thing, they haven't actually laid out for the House how much more expensive they're going to make it to do business, and that needs to be considered.

Mr. Speaker, the other things that people care about are: how they make a living. Today again the minister of the Crown, the environment minister, actually, after hearing from the beef industry that they have a sustainable beef production plan, on one hand said: that's a good plan. Then, by the sounds of it, from what she said herself this morning at AAMD and C, she hardly took a breath and said: but they can do more. Maybe if government wanted to encourage industry to be more sustainable, more environmentally friendly, they might actually let industry take a breath while they're patted on the back. Maybe before the second pat, if they didn't say, "That's not good enough," that might indicate that the government actually wants that industry to grow and succeed.

3:10

The beef industry is one that's very important to Alberta. It's part of our heritage. It's part of our culture. It's part of what's on our breakfast, lunch, and dinner plates all the time. They've had more than their share of problems, Mr. Speaker, getting labour. In fact, getting labour into the plants in both High River and in Brooks – I know from my time being jobs minister that they cannot get the people they need. Most times each plant was short a hundred people. What gets cut short when you are short a hundred people? All the value-added beef products.

Well, I did spend 25 years in the meat business, and I know a little bit about this. I'm not quoting my knowledge on this; I'm quoting the people that run the plants because that's what they told me. They said: all you do is knock down the beef into primal or subprimal cuts, put it in a box, vacuum-pack it, and ship it out the door. You don't further process it down to where you could have cuts that you can cook, for example. That's when you make money. That's actual further value-added processing.

This budget is not going to help to get the people into Alberta to do those things. In fact, the confidence will be eroded. My big fear – it hasn't happened yet – is that people will stop coming. Alberta has always been the land of opportunity. It certainly was in 1981, when I moved here from southern Ontario, and in almost every year since then it's been the land of opportunity. Mr. Speaker, my fear and the fear of my constituents is that that is no longer going to be the case. We hear that people are getting laid off. The price of homes, people's biggest investment, is being eroded. Again, that's about confidence.

This government is not responsible. I'm not going to blame them for the low oil price – nobody does – but they are very responsible for further eroding the confidence that Albertans and people outside of Alberta have in this economy and in this time. I would hope that after today, when they all go back to their constituents, they will rethink what they are doing to Albertans and actually listen to what they're telling them in the aisles of the grocery store when they are shopping with their families or by themselves and actually look into the eyes of people that are losing their jobs. You know that there are thousands of them. You know that you're going to run into people like that. Ask them how they feel about the budget that your government has put on the table. I don't think you're going to like what they have to say. I don't think they're going to like what you have to say.

An Hon. Member: They're happy about the teachers, though.

Mr. McIver: Somebody chirped in from the other side about teachers, and, Mr. Speaker, it just reminded me that they're unhappy. The sunshine list legislation the government has put forward: I'm not sure that teachers are happy with that legislation. I'm not sure doctors are happy with that legislation. That's what they're telling me.

But we'll come back to the budget [Mr. McIver's speaking time expired] . . . next time I get a chance.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I would not in any way think at this point that I understand the procedures of the House nearly as well as the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster; however, my understanding is that 29(2)(a) is in fact a clarification or response to a question, and my sense is that the five minutes you used may not have actually achieved that. I would remind the House that in the future we all try to measure for that objective.

We are finished on 29(2)(a). The time has lapsed on that.

Would anyone else like to speak to Motion 13? The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do sincerely appreciate the opportunity to respond to the budget released only a few weeks ago here in this House. I want to take my time here to express both my desire for the success of our province and my concern about the future based on what we see in this budget. Now, don't get me wrong. While I do certainly have some criticisms of this budget, there are a number of points where I agree with the government because I believe that they're in the best interest of Albertans, and I believe in finding solutions that are in the best interest of everyone in this province no matter what ideology they represent. One thing I want to be very clear about is that I will never cheer against Alberta. I want this government to succeed. I genuinely do. Unfortunately, much of this budget, I believe, misses the mark.

Now, I believe in a strong economy based on prudent fiscal management, and I believe in being proud of and supporting all Alberta industries both in good times and in challenging times. I believe in doing more with less, inspiring innovation, and serving the people of Alberta. This is why I agree with the government's plans to increase infrastructure spending. For far too long our schools, hospitals, and roads have not received the attention they deserve. Our province has grown quickly, putting increased pressure on the public services that we all rely upon. The former PC government saw this growth and chose a path which has left Alberta vulnerable to volatile commodity prices instead of investing in and planning for the future.

I support the government's plan to improve access to capital. Alberta is defined by our entrepreneurial spirit and our determination to succeed. By giving enterprising and risk-taking Albertans the resources they need, government can enable the innovation required for Alberta to remain a leader in many different areas.

However, access to capital is only one of the many things needed to create a culture of innovation. This is why I'm glad to see stability return to Alberta's education system. Whether it's primary, secondary, postsecondary, or trades education, learning is crucial to the future of this province. Alberta's ability to leverage our education into innovation, commercialization, and the encouragement of new ideas must be the pillar on which we base our global competitiveness. Now is the time to invest in Albertans and provide them with that opportunity to succeed.

I am fiercely proud to be an Albertan, and I strive every day to make this province even better. This is why, while I agree with the government's priority to invest in infrastructure while rates are low, I worry that their plans threaten future generations because of a lack of discipline and a lack of balance. Their ideological approach is based on a best-case assumption instead of being pragmatic and basing energy price assumptions on reality. This is a challenging time for our province as the price of commodities has dropped substantially and, unfortunately, continues to do so.

One of our most important industries, oil and gas, is an industry that Alberta relies upon, and we know that people in that industry are suffering. In times such as these the government needs to support, protect, and stand up for that key sector, the key employer for so many Albertans and a key supporter of their families. However, we haven't seen enough support. Instead, we've seen corporate taxes going up. We've seen uncertainty introduced through the royalty review. The Premier has not unapologetically promoted Alberta's products and Alberta's industries to the world. The impact of these actions is felt by every firm that's receiving less investment, every person who's lost their job, and every Albertan who has to dig a little deeper to get by.

I've heard it said repeatedly in this House that the NDs didn't cause the price of oil to go down. That's absolutely true. But what's also true is that the ND government has introduced uncertainty on top of already difficult market conditions. There's no question that the ND tax increases and royalty and climate panels have made the situation worse. That is a simple statement of fact.

Now the ND government is relying on overly optimistic projections for the future. Their plan of spending their way to surplus is risky at best. The budget relies on a 26 per cent increase in revenues by 2019 in order just to balance. This is simply not realistic given the plan proposed by the government. We know that people invest their money in the best possible option available at the time. The government's plan is increased costs and reduced return on investment. These actions have caused investors that normally have contributed so much to our economy to re-evaluate their priorities and choose different investments elsewhere, as any rational, reasonable person would.

In addition to this, the government is relying on a significant rebound in oil prices, with the budget predicting a price per barrel of oil that is 28 per cent higher than the market estimate in the 2017 fiscal year. That's barely 14 months from now. What does this assumption mean for the people of Alberta? Well, it means the government's revenue estimate could be off by more than \$2.5 billion. It means that every single person in Alberta may need to cover almost \$600 either in taxes or debt by the 2017 fiscal year alone if the government is wrong in its assumptions. That means all of us are at risk.

Now, the future price of oil is unpredictable. What is predictable, though, is the borrowing plans from this government. The 2015 budget outlines a borrowing plan which will see Alberta have a total liability of \$36.6 billion by the 2017 fiscal year and \$47.4 billion by the 2019 fiscal year. The amount of debt represents approximately 10 per cent of Alberta's GDP in 2017 and will only continue to grow from that point forward.

3:20

What's worse is that for the first time in decades this province is borrowing money for operational spending. Starting next year, the government is planning on borrowing over \$700 million for operations, and the year after that the figure jumps to a staggering \$3.1 billion for operations alone. That is simply not a responsible way to govern the province.

This discussion is not just a difference of opinion between political parties; this approach to governing is being noticed outside of our province as well. Recently Moody's placed Alberta on alert, saying that we are now credit negative. As well, the Dominion Bond Rating Service says that Alberta does not currently meet the triple-A threshold on three of their five quantitative factors used to assess a province's credit rating, with the other two factors at risk of being negative in the near future. Now, if our credit rating is downgraded, the increased amount of debt the ND government plans on

assuming will cost even more, raising our debt-servicing cost and leaving less to serve the people of Alberta.

What's the prudent thing to do in the face of uncertainty? Now, I look to the people of Alberta for this answer. Albertans everywhere are being forced to do more with less while the government seems willingly to want to do less with more. While Albertans are losing their jobs, taking pay decreases, and getting by with less, the NDs want to increase expenses systematically year over year without giving a thought to how they can find cost savings or enable the talented and skilled people within our public service to improve processes and increase efficiency in the government. Now, I agree that Alberta's public service needs to be respected and compensated appropriately, and the solution to the problem is certainly not more job cuts and wage rollbacks. However, spending more without a plan to improve capacity and productivity will only lead to wage inflation and cost Albertans more.

Now, the NDs tell us that these spending increases will stimulate the economy. This strategy is not always necessarily based on sound rationale. The Fraser Institute suggests that "efforts to eliminate large deficits by hiking taxes without material spending restraint rarely succeed." They go on to give an example of a government who was faced with an even worse fiscal mess than Alberta faces today. This government increased some taxes, but they also reined in spending immediately upon taking office. The spending discipline eliminated the deficit and placed the government on a stable fiscal footing, creating conditions that soon allowed for substantial tax relief.

Now, obviously, the government in this example followed sound fiscal policy and did the right thing in the face of an uncertain future. It observed the economic reality that it was facing and adapted to make the situation better. Now, this government might suggest they were elected with a mandate from the people to uphold their ideology of increasing taxes and increasing spending. That government may have said that they were given that mandate. Now, the government that I talked about was the 1990 Saskatchewan NDP government, led by Roy Romanow. It was the Romanow NDP that restrained spending and led their province back to prosperity. Now, that's an example this ND government should think about following, focusing on real solutions to our problems instead of dogmatically following ideology and risking our future.

We need to focus on practical solutions that will actually help Albertans. Presenting voters with an alternative plan is one of the primary responsibilities of any opposition party, and I intend to do just that. Our alternative budget would balance by fiscal 2018-19 without borrowing money for operational spending and without cutting badly needed capital spending. We would accomplish this feat through sound fiscal management policies as well as by focusing on capital projects which we know can be effectively deployed. The Alberta Party would constrain operational spending by conducting rolling zero-based audits of all departments to ensure that programs deliver value to Albertans. This will ensure that our public service does more with less, just like Alberta households and Alberta businesses. With this in place we could also mandate that operational spending only increase by no more than population growth plus inflation. This cap should slow the ever-increasing costs of running Alberta's public service.

Constraining Alberta's expenses, while important, is only half the picture. The other side deals with revenues and their effect on Albertans. Current ND tax policy has been a substantial increase to the burden placed on businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators. To make matters worse, these tax increases had the opposite effect of what they originally intended. Instead of taking a larger piece of corporate profits, the ND policy has forced businesses to re-examine their value chain to deliver better returns to their

stakeholders and shareholders. It is a simple calculation for business to make, and it is simply revenue minus cost.

The government's increased taxes have increased costs for business to the point where there is no longer a strong incentive for those firms to be in this province, which is why the Alberta Party would immediately lower corporate taxes by 1 per cent on large and small business and simplify our personal tax regime to make sure that individuals with the capacity to reinvest in Alberta are not penalized for doing so. To further strengthen the incentive for innovators to make this province better, the Alberta Party would introduce an investor tax credit. This tax credit would replace the ineffective ND job creation grant, which has the potential for misuse, double-dipping, and creates new and expensive government bureaucracy.

In challenging economic times businesses need all the help they can get. Some businesses need help improving their capacities; some require land or a building or even another business. Others want to upgrade their technology. Some want to hire more staff. All of these things help a business grow, and growing businesses create economic activity, which creates jobs. Government does not know exactly what each individual business needs; businesses themselves know.

It's very important to note that the Alberta Party budget balances in 2018-19 while still using a more conservative energy price forecast than this government's forecast. While the future price of energy is absolutely unpredictable, as we all know, Alberta relies on these revenues for a significant portion of our government revenue. By estimating future prices using the most conservative projections, Albertans can feel confident that the risks their government is taking are well thought out and not going to jeopardize the future. Should the actual royalties received by the government exceed expectations, the overage would be used to pay off debt sooner and then provide extra funding to the heritage fund.

The funding of capital investment in our collective future is of great importance not only to me but to the rest of the province. Making sure that the government can effectively deploy the funds promised for capital spending is at the heart of this issue. Too many times in the past the people of Alberta have been promised facilities which are vital for the success of their communities just to have those promises broken, delayed, or altered.

Now, this is not the way to build sustainable communities. Instead, the Alberta Party would ensure that the only money being spent on capital projects goes towards those projects which can be deployed effectively and that bring the greatest value to those communities. These projects will bring a great deal of value to the province, so it's important to protect and maintain Alberta's strength. This means having policies which will not jeopardize the purchasing power of Albertans and also do not create artificially high costs by creating too much demand for trades.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the ND government has gotten some things right in this budget but an awful lot wrong. Alberta is not better off with this budget today and in the future, and I'm afraid I cannot support it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any questions under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the debate on this very important budget issue, I'm just curious: does the Member for Calgary-Elbow feel that Albertans are being fairly represented by members opposite who refuse to stand up in this House and speak, whether they're for it or against it? They refuse to stand up and speak and tell us that they have consulted with their constituents

regarding this very important budget for Albertans present and future.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. Look, what I can say is that our job in this House is to represent the people who have sent us to this place to do the work on their behalf, and I think that it's incumbent on each and every one of us, in particular the private members on the government side, to stand up and say what their constituents have told them. Now, it's important that we're in our communities. We spent a week last week, constituency week, and I talked to literally hundreds of my constituents. This speech I've just given here, I think, is a fair representation of what I heard from my constituents.

I think it's important for me to state that not every single thing in this budget is terrible. Not every single thing this government has done is terrible, but there's a lot of fear. There's a lot of concern. There's a lot of worry. A lot of people in this province either have lost their jobs or know someone who's lost their job, and they're worried. They are genuinely worried about the future. I will say that I think many are willing to give the government a chance, and I think I want to fairly reflect what I'm hearing in my constituency, but many, many are very worried and not just those in the energy sector.

So I agree. I'd like to hear from government private members. What are you hearing from your constituents? I'd like to hear what your perspective is. That's your job. Your number one job is to represent the views of your constituents. We don't know what those are if you don't stand and tell the House.

Thank you for the question.

The Speaker: Any other questions under 29(2)(a)?

Are there other members who would like to speak to Government Motion 13? Calgary-Mountain View.

3:30

Dr. Swann: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. An honour to reply to the government's first budget. These are difficult times for Albertans, and in these dire economic circumstances, after taking several months to prepare, it was this government's responsibility to bring forward a budget that would not only stimulate new growth in our economy but would also tackle the root of the problem and get us off our perpetual ride on the resource revenue roller coaster. But Albertans didn't vote for ideology. They voted for a thoughtful, evidence-based set of decisions around an uncertain future.

While there is some good and much that I support in this budget, including the infrastructure stimulus, this budget simply does not do enough to stimulate and diversify our economy, especially for small and medium businesses. After decades of PC mismanagement, with \$11.6 billion, more than any other province, given back to the richest corporations and individuals just last year, our economy and our budget have become so reliant on a single commodity that is ongoing with low oil price environments and constitutes a full economic crisis.

We've seen more than 40,000 job losses from the energy sector alone. The lack of vision and discipline and a fair tax regime by the PC government has left us in this mess we are seeing first-hand as residents of this province. I dare say that each of us has a friend, family member, or neighbour who has been seeing their job affected in the ongoing crisis. I know I've been hearing a great deal of concern, especially from small business. These job losses are not mere statistics. Each represents families trying to put food on the table, employment opportunities for young people trying to get started and paying off student loans, and these prospects appear to

be fading. This is the context in which this new government has brought forward this first budget and asked for the approval of the House.

[Mr. Feehan in the chair]

As a physician, Mr. Speaker, I know the difference between treating symptoms and treating the cause, treatment that cures a disease. I'm afraid that in looking at this budget through this lens, it simply manages our overreliance on oil revenues. It does not cure it. That is crystal clear in this government's plan to get back to surplus. It's based on hope and prayers that the oil prices will rebound. So we shouldn't be surprised that the government has had to change its balanced budget prediction twice. Their prediction depends entirely on their ability to successfully predict the future of the price of oil. I dare say, with the greatest respect to the Finance minister, that his crystal ball is no clearer than mine or our colleagues' in the opposition parties here or our predecessors'. Nor, by the way, is it any clearer for any of the opposition parties. Unless we fix the overreliance on oil, we are just shooting at moving targets in the dark.

To stimulate and diversify our economy, the Liberals called on the government to take action in four key areas: one, a responsible increase in infrastructure spending; two, real help for small business; three, incentives for the private sector to create new green technologies; and four, avoid borrowing for operating costs through a rigorous review of the public sector and all public spending and ensure that we're getting value for money, including collaborating with nonprofit organizations, nongovernment organizations, planning and budgeting with that sector to improve our effectiveness in public services. This government has not properly addressed these key areas while increasing taxes and fees in a way that will add to the burden of our middle class and our lower class.

Our children also deserve the stability of a growing heritage fund rather than the ongoing pilfering, which we have criticized the PCs for over the years, leaving the heritage fund worth even less than it was in 1982, when Peter Lougheed left office.

With respect to infrastructure stimulus and diversification there's absolutely no question that now is the time to build. Interest rates are low. After decades of neglect and years of rapid population growth the need has never been greater. By any estimate, Alberta has tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure needs, including roads, schools, hospitals, housing, and public transit. We need a new hospital in west Edmonton and a new, modern medical laboratory desperately.

We need hundreds of new schools throughout the province and upgrading in many. We are a decade past needing a cancer centre in Calgary. It looks like we'll have to wait another decade for that. Our major cities are waiting to see if the province will pay its share on badly needed public transit projects like the green line in Calgary and the west leg of the valley line here in Edmonton so that we can avoid gridlock.

We also require thousands of new, affordable seniors' housing units, that will offer seniors and those with disabilities a dignified way of life and take pressure off our health care system. As many of you know, I've been hearing from the mental health and addicted caregivers in our society and those suffering from mental health and addictions. Housing is the number one issue that keeps people on the street. There's no question that this has to become a higher priority at all three levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. We must start planning and budgeting together at these three levels if we're going to deal with this ongoing sore in our society that is costing us billions of dollars by not addressing it effectively.

In addition, our existing infrastructure continues to crumble and requires an ongoing maintenance budget. These are huge challenges for a new government that has been given no budget to work with. This is why I was prepared to support the government's debt financing with new infrastructure projects to get Alberta companies and Albertans back to work building the projects we know we need. Sadly, the government has presented a plan that's too vague to be considered responsible, and there is no clear debt repayment plan to outline how and when the government would repay the necessary debt we're taking on. In fact, the government rejects such a plan until they hit their ever-moving, resource-reliant balanced budget target. We can't support that, Mr. Speaker. It can make good financial sense to refinance your mortgage to do renovations but not without a plan for repayment.

The government is also refusing to release an infrastructure priority list to demonstrate that spending is really based on need and not on political interest or timing. We look forward to that public sunshine list of priorities. My friend the Minister of Infrastructure has been in this place a long time, I think since the beginning of the Legislature. [interjections] I was just checking to see if anybody was listening. He knows full well that the public interest is not served by political timing and politically prioritized infrastructure projects. That's why he promised an infrastructure priority list.

Right in the middle of the session this government is making new infrastructure announcements every other day. Why no open list of infrastructure? Clearly, the government has prioritized these projects for announcement, so let's see it. Without these additional details, I can't support, in all confidence, an infrastructure spending plan.

With respect to small-business support the government is simply not doing enough to help. With respect, grants of \$5,000 per new employee are a business subsidy. They are not sustainable, and they do not create new jobs. A tax break, on the other hand, would be a sustainable stimulus for small businesses and help get a long-term commitment to innovation and jobs and economic growth.

To their credit, this new government has taken some positive steps, directing ATB to provide more loans and providing funds for start-up investments where the risk is low in terms of the public interest. This makes sense, but these steps won't do enough to help small businesses that are struggling today. Over 85 per cent of businesses in Alberta are defined as small, having less than \$500,000 profit in a given year. They are the key to diversifying our economy and creating jobs, but they are struggling hard in this economy.

At the same time, the government is pushing their costs up with a higher minimum wage, whose rate of increase surely needs to be tied to our economic reality, not simply dictated on the basis of a number that projects well into the next three years without any basis for assessing the impact of the earlier increases in the minimum wage. We need to take that into consideration.

These businesses also face higher insurance costs. When you're a small entrepreneur whose revenues are going down and whose costs are going up, it's difficult to stay afloat today in Alberta. Fear is a vicious cycle and will add only more burden onto a group that's trying to get a new business off the ground. We have to look at that, listen to that, and make sure ideology doesn't trump evidence. That means monitoring with small businesses what's happening across the province and making decisions annually on the basis of new information.

3:40

Albertans are looking for real leadership from the government to create an environment for job creation. Instead, they're getting a convoluted tax credit scheme that David Dodge, the Calgary

Chamber of commerce, the Economic Development Corporation of Edmonton, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business all are doubtful can work. Surveys by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, in fact, indicate that as many as 1 in 5 small businesses will be forced to lay off staff this year.

The report also noted that tax and regulatory costs are a major area of concern for small-business owners. That could be alleviated without significant harm to our budget. This is why we've asked, argued, and begged to either lower or even eliminate the tax burden on small businesses. Let them do what they do best, create jobs and diversify our economy.

With respect to incentives for new clean, green technology the oil sands sector is among the most innovative, research-oriented, and technologically advanced sectors on the planet. These are companies that have shown time and again that the impossible can be done. We have supported a carbon levy if revenue neutral, and extra money goes to clean technology, with extras going to a predictable base for infrastructure funding across the province. Companies and residents will benefit financially in the longer term from directing funds to new clean technology, energy conservation, and will strengthen Alberta's energy sector for decades to come.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis the budget has much potential to address the needs of Albertans and cure our over-reliance on volatile resource revenues. What's missing is a serious commitment to a debt repayment plan and to a review of existing spending for real opportunities for efficiency. As someone who has worked in the health care system, it's clear to me that in the planning for health care – shifting to early intervention, primary care in the community, home care in the community – there are millions of dollars to be saved by getting people out of the hospital and investing more in community and primary care. Sadly, the opportunity has been missed, and we'll remain on the resource revenue roller coaster for years to come.

I cannot support the budget as it is today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Would anybody like to respond under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the hon. member for his words. I absolutely agree with what he was saying at the end of his speech, and it's what I'm hearing from my constituents in Cypress-Medicine Hat. They're absolutely amazed. They absolutely feel it's unfair that the government hasn't been looking for efficiencies and cost/spending reductions at a time when so many of them or their neighbours are laid off, taking 30 per cent pay reductions. So I agree with that point.

You mentioned that your other concern was orderly debt reduction. I'd like you to comment for a second on the fact that my constituents are very, very concerned about the accumulation of up to \$47 billion in debt over the next three years. That's concerning my constituents a lot more than the payback. They're concerned about what this will do to their level of services and the cost of the interest over the years.

If the hon. member could take a second, a lot of my rural people are very, very concerned with the almost quadrupling of the tax on diesel for locomotives from 1 and a half cents to 5 and a half cents. It is clearly just going to be passed on to suppliers and then consumers. What are your thoughts on what this is going to do to our seniors population, our lower income population, the removal of choice in what they can afford and what they can afford to buy?

You might have some extra insight as the Liberal leader. I was talking to my chartered accountant the other day, and he says that Albertans' marginal tax will now be 48 per cent – 48 per cent – once

the new Liberal government puts in their change after our New Democrat government put in their change.

Hon. member, if you could talk about how you think those four things will affect your constituents and Albertans, I would appreciate it.

Dr. Swann: Thank you to the member for the questions. Let me preface my remarks by saying that there are many different kinds of debt. The PCs have left us with a huge social debt, a huge infrastructure debt, a huge environmental debt, and now an economic debt, so I think it's important to say where the debt belongs. After 44 years of government I think we expected better in terms of vision and planning and investment in our future, a longer term investment that would provide some buffering from what we have known for decades is a roller coaster on oil and gas revenues. Yes, this government has inherited this. Let's be clear on who's responsible for getting us into this mess.

With respect to the long-term debt repayment I think your understanding of debt repayment is the same as mine. You have to find the money from somewhere. We have to find it from either increased taxes, increased fines and levies and fees, or we have to find it from new investments that come out of our existing funds. We also have to find it from new resource developments, new technologies that we can market and sell across the world. We have to invest in postsecondary education and ensure that we have the brightest minds coming here and developing the newer technologies that will get us both off the old resource revenue racket and into a more prosperous, independent economy that would leave all of us, including our children, in a more stable situation.

I don't know of any other way to face the future except to acknowledge that we are all in this together. If we don't start working more constructively together across this Legislature, I don't think we're going to get where we want to go. I find it difficult – the partisan shots, the bitterness from this side of the House, and in some cases the retaliation on the other side – when we realize what's at stake here: our children's future, our environment, our social stability, an economy that actually works for everybody. I think it's going to take the best from all of us if we're going to find a better way forward because if this was easy to do, it would have been done by the PCs. They couldn't do it. They wouldn't do it. We have to find a way to work together more constructively. I find it very difficult to hear the bitter, noisy reactions, just like schoolchildren, and I think schoolchildren who come in here are pretty upset with us when they see what's happened. I think we can do better, folks, and I want to see that from all of us.

There's too much at stake, and I'm hearing it in spades from people on the streets who aren't getting the care they need. Their addictions are not being addressed. First Nations are not in a helpful way managing to heal themselves and to build community. The symptoms are all there. If we're not prepared to give everything we've got to this project of working together, then we're not going to get to where we want to go for us and for our children.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Would anyone else like to speak? The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: I rise, Mr. Speaker, as the Deputy Government House Leader, and I rise to adjourn debate on Government Motion 13.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mr. Connolly moved, seconded by Ms Kazim, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate June 23: Mr. Jean]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition is not here, so we'll be going back and forth, then, in response to the Speech from the Throne.

We'll begin with the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly an honour to rise in this Legislature as the representative of Grande Prairie-Smoky. The effectiveness of democracy like ours lies in the ability to bring representation from all areas of the province and come together. Sometimes we come together with competing voices. Yes, sometimes we come as opponents, but most importantly, Alberta representatives gather in this House as solution seekers, people coming together to find answers to the concerns that Albertans have.

3:50

Again, I am honoured and humbled by the opportunity to represent the constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky. Quite simply, I cannot imagine calling any other place my home. I need to thank the constituents in my riding for lending me their trust to be their voice in this Assembly. An election is a one-shot deal, but continuing to earn that trust and respect of the people I represent is a job that does not end. I have to admit that I'm a bit nervous about the job ahead of me because earning that trust is such an important task. I'm also a bit nervous because everything I say now is on the record. That means my wife can track all my mistakes and have written proof of everything I say.

I do hope my background and roots in the area help me qualify enough to speak for the area. As a small child I moved to Grande Prairie with my family in 1967. In 1971 my father fulfilled his dream of homesteading in the Peace Country, and we moved to a homestead in the Valleyview area. At the time of this move we lived in a tent but soon graduated to the luxury of a 12 foot by 12 foot granary. I would say that housing has improved considerably since then, but my parents, Paul and Verna, still reside on that homestead. Upon graduation from Hillside high school in Valleyview I joined the workforce and five years later started my own small business and bought a farm, both of which I operate to this day. But, like almost everyone else in the Peace Country, what's most important to me is family. My wife, Teena, and I have five children and now twin grandchildren. You wouldn't know the true meaning of a hard day's work until you spend a day with the pair of them.

But I don't want to spend any more time talking about me. After all, electing MLAs to this Assembly shouldn't mean electing people or personalities. Instead, it's about representation of principles and values that particular regions hold and making sure that those voices are brought to the provincial table.

I want to take a few moments to talk about what's important in Grande Prairie-Smoky: the people, their families, and the communities that they have built. Grande Prairie-Smoky is a diverse constituency of small hamlets, urban centres, and vast rural

tracts that provide jobs in everything from forestry and farming to tourism and oil and gas. There are over 56,000 people across almost 20,000 square kilometres in this constituency. There is a long history of this area that goes back to the trappers referring to the area as the grand prairie as early as 1854. The Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post here in 1881.

Grande Prairie is the hub of the Peace Country. It's one of the largest cities in the north and one of the fastest growing in all of Canada. It is a centre of industry, which has also translated into it being one of the youngest cities in our country, where workers and young families have gathered in droves. To the immediate north of Grande Prairie are the small communities of Clairmont and Sexsmith. Clairmont has almost doubled in size in the last decade and is an excellent place to raise children because of its community projects, recreational facilities, and housing affordability. Meanwhile, Sexsmith, once known as the grain capital of the British Empire, reached town status in 1979. It was named after David Sexsmith, one of the first trappers of the area, and today it still boasts a population made up of outdoorsy, rural people, which has produced a tough high school football team that is regularly among the best in northern Alberta.

Some of the smaller communities in the riding include Teepee Creek, Crooked Creek, DeBolt, Ridgevalley, Little Smoky, and Sunset House. Teepee Creek is best known for the Teepee Creek Stampede, which began in 1916 and now draws several thousand visitors each time. Not bad for a population of about 20 people. Crooked Creek is an unincorporated community that has a post office, a gas station, and a general store that many say has the best donuts in Alberta. Near that are Ridgevalley and DeBolt, the latter of which has been around since 1919, when the DeBolt family from the state of Washington settled in the area and set up a stopping place for weary travellers. Ridgevalley has Mennonite roots and is one of those unique Alberta hamlets that doesn't appear to have many people but draws all sorts of farming families and students to its facilities and school. Sunset House, Sweathouse, and Little Smoky are small, down-to-earth agriculture communities where the residents are industrious and community minded.

Finally, on the east side of the constituency along highway 43 lie the communities of Calais, Valleyview, and Fox Creek. Calais is home to the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. It is a vibrant, community-focused population with about 1,500 people living on the band's land and another 1,500 or so living off site. This summer I was able to attend a powwow there, a great opportunity to experience the culture and heritage of these people.

Valleyview, my wonderful home for essentially my whole life, has usually been known as that fork in the road for highways 43 and 49. Now it's still known as that fork in the road but with a Tim Hortons and a Subway and, of course, many other dynamic businesses. Hillside high school also has a strong football team that the past two years has won the Athabasca Bowl. I have to mention that because my oldest son is a teacher and coaches the football team, and my youngest son played on that winning team in his final year.

Finally, Fox Creek sits on the south edge of the constituency. It is another community largely driven forward by the oil and gas industry and is growing in leaps and bounds because of its attractive job prospects and viability as a permanent home for young families.

All these cities, towns, and hamlets, all with different histories and different makeups, are bound together in the values that underpin them. At the heart of the Peace Country communities is a focus on family, faith, and quality of life. Community halls and recreational centres are found everywhere. Churches and charities are numerous and held in great respect by the communities they are a part of. People work hard for their money and take deep pride in

the jobs they hold. After all, industriousness and work ethic are values engrained in every Peace Country man and woman.

We do have issues that need to be addressed. We have a severe lack of doctors. Waiting times in the emergency are extreme. We lack seniors' facilities. Our highways and roads are dilapidated, and we have large volumes of commercial traffic travelling on an insufficient road system. It will be my priority to work towards solutions for these problems and others as I represent my constituents.

Again I want to return to the idea that I hope to be a mere servant and messenger for the Grande Prairie-Smoky constituents, and after listening to the throne speech and budget, I am certain that my constituents aren't comfortable with much of what's on the agenda of this government. Peace Country families balance their books and live within their means, so why is it so unreasonable to ask our government to do the same? Already spending has rocketed even higher than the previous government's commitments, and there doesn't seem to be any kind of plan to get the provincial books in order. I don't think I speak for just my constituents when I say that there is something inherently wrong about accruing debt and making our kids and grandkids accountable for our generation's mistakes, waste, and unsustainable wants.

It appears that this NDP government is following in the footsteps of the previous government, which is to raise taxes on Albertans with no regard at all for the slumping and fragile economy. Most alarming is a complete lack of desire to reduce waste and inefficiencies in government. That has to be the first step and first discussion in any budget considerations. I understand some government members are still so young that they haven't finished their university degrees, so I would encourage these members to take a few economics courses while they still can and then pass on what they learn to their cabinet ministers, who don't seem to fully grasp the financial consequences of their decisions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this House about the riding I represent and love and bring forward a few of its residents' present concerns. Now, if you had told me even five years ago that today I'd be an MLA speaking to this Assembly, I would have laughed at you, but here I am, proud and humbled to serve, enjoying every minute of it, and looking forward to representing the constituents of Grande Prairie-Smoky. I look forward to coming together with members in this Assembly to be solution seekers for the sake of our province.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a).

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with great interest to what the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky had to say. Not just today but through all of our time here in the Legislature I know that he and his party have really focused on waste, which is really why I found it so surprising that his maiden speech failed to mention that the Valleyview Shell station was nominated for having Canada's best washroom in 2013. I would just like to give the member the opportunity to correct that omission in his maiden speech.

Thank you.

4:00

Mr. Loewen: Thank you to the member for the question. Yes, we have several businesses in our community that are world class, and of course being known as having the best bathroom in Canada is definitely a source of pride for our community. Of course, there are other things, too, that we have in our community that are world

class. Again, I'm proud to represent the members of my constituency.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Any other members who would like to respond under 29(2)(a)?

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky for a very illuminating presentation. I really want to ask him about his comments about economics training, and I wonder what his economics training has been, particularly in, for instance, Keynesian economics, which promotes contracyclical investment and was actually responsible for Franklin Delano Roosevelt slaying the depression of the 1930s. I also wonder what his comments are on the economics of Mr. David Dodge, the ex-governor of the Bank of Canada, who has also strongly recommended the same approach.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the question. Yes, actually, I myself graduated from high school, and of course I worked in the workforce for five years and then started my business, just like I mentioned in here. I've had the chance to operate a business and gain some life experiences about balancing books and living within my means. In my businesses there have been times when the economy has really taken its toll on it because it depends a lot on the U.S. economy and the U.S. dollar, and, yes, I've been able to keep that business going. It's supported my family since that time. I think there's a lot to be said about having real-life experiences and balancing books and keeping the economy in my home in order and my business, too. I thank the member for the question and look forward to more if they so please.

The Acting Speaker: Any other responses under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Nixon: Just wondering if the hon. member could expand a little bit about the role debt played in his business or did not. As well, if he was returning home today – I think he is going home today – if his wife informed him that she was borrowing to keep the lights on, would he be concerned?

Mr. Loewen: Thank you for the question, Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. Yeah, of course I would be alarmed if I was to arrive home and find out that we were actually having to borrow money for the day-to-day operations in our home. That would be alarming. During my lifetime, of course, I have borrowed money, but I've paid the money back, and I carry on with my business and my life appropriately. I've always been able to do it within the means that I have. Of course, like I said, with my business there have been ups and downs, and sometimes the cheques are smaller than in other years. Of course, it's only proper and it only makes sense that you live within your means and that you develop a budget that's reasonable, that will get you to the place you need to be.

Of course, I think most Albertans would love to see a government that lives within its means and has a plan for the future that involves balancing the budget and paying off debt and actually being able to save money. Of course, this Alberta government, even at a \$100 barrel of oil, has never been able to balance its budget in the last seven or eight years, and that's actually quite alarming. With a \$100 dollar barrel of oil, the highest incomes ever for the province, it's still not balancing a budget. Of course, the new government has taken over and hasn't done any better.

The Acting Speaker: Would anyone else like to address the Speech from the Throne? The Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured and it's with great humility that I respond to the Speech from the Throne. To be honest, the first time I was ever in this Chamber, I sat up there, and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood sat over there, so times have kind of changed a little bit.

Like the Member for Calgary-South East, I too grew up in Marlborough Park, which is a community rich in culture and hard-working individuals. I want to open by thanking the Member for Calgary-East for the great description of her constituency. It is a neighbourhood where we take care of one another, and I am proud to have a person so bright and hard working representing my mother and father's riding.

Seven years ago my wife and I decided to buy a house. We almost ended up settling in the north end of Calgary. However, we fell in love with a house in the south Calgary community of Millrise, in Calgary-Shaw, and I'm glad we did. Calgary-Shaw is a vibrant, strong community with a huge sense of pride, who are willing to stand up for what they believe in. I saw this during the election. Students at Centennial high school took an activist role by leading a save-our-schools campaign. They fought for better funding and reduced classroom sizes. They protested in the right fashion. They asked critical questions without taking a partisan approach. They held us elected officials accountable and will continue to do so. They even protested at city hall during a Flames playoff game. Now, I have to say that that's commitment.

My community encompasses more than a dozen public and private schools, including two high schools, many of which are over capacity and some of which have been overlooked for modular classrooms during the 2014 by-elections in Calgary. At the doorsteps I heard from people in my riding who were tired of MLAs who wouldn't listen to Albertans, whether it was floor crossing or Albertans wanting to get a better tax system that's more fair for all Albertans. However, my constituents were heard loud and clear on May 5, and that is why I stand here with you all today.

My constituency encompasses the communities of Millrise, Shawnessy, Shawnee Slopes, Somerset, Sundance, and the historical community of Midnapore, which was one of Calgary's earliest settlements and was incorporated into the city of Calgary in the 1970s. In the north boundary of my constituency is Fish Creek provincial park, which encompasses a huge amount of reclaimed green space. It is preserved by the hard-working members of the Friends of Fish Creek, who have worked hard to educate people about wilderness in my beautiful community. This park is a prized gem of the people of Calgary-Shaw. The people appreciate it so much that if a shovel even touches the ground, I get a dozen phone calls to my constituency office.

I see an active community in my constituency, whether it's the people in Somerset who upkeep the town square's water park or the people who meet at and maintain the Shawnessy Barn or the volunteers that manage the Zamboni at the community rink in Millrise or those in Midnapore and Sundance who have worked hard for a community centre upgrade, which services people of all of south Calgary.

The people of Calgary-Shaw work hard to take care of one another. I saw this during a devastating condo fire in Millrise in 2010, where many volunteers went to the Southview Alliance church to give their support and donate whatever they could to help out their fellow neighbours. During the 2013 flood the Fish Creek recreational centre became a relief centre for those impacted by the flood and an area where many residents in my constituency sent their support.

I see a sense of community when I visit St. Mary's University, one of the fastest growing postsecondary institutions in Alberta. Its humanities 101 program brings in vulnerable and homeless

Calgarians, provides them with free tuition, meals, and even child care while they attend studies. This program is supported in part by fundraising from students and faculty at the university. Under the previous government they were going to lose 16 per cent of their funding next term; however, our government has reversed those cuts. I am proud to work with the faculty, under the leadership of Gerry Turcotte. They are building bridges with the First Nations community to allow them to create an inclusive space in this university, and they have been doing this for years, Mr. Speaker.

Myself, I was born and raised in Calgary and am a second-generation Calgarian, which is a rare breed, if you will. My grandfather was born in Slovakia and immigrated to Alberta when he was a child to work on a farm. When my father was a child, my grandfather refused to teach him Slovakian because he was discriminated against as a child. Now, Mr. Speaker, I stand here with a caucus of an almost 50-50 ratio of men and women, people from many ethnicities, languages, and sexual orientations, and I'm happy to see us having passed the first reading of Bill 7 as well. I can say to my grandfather that we are even closer than we have ever been to living in an inclusive society in Alberta although there is still some work to be done.

When attending school, I had troubles learning to read and write. The turning point in my challenges, however, was a caring teacher named Mrs. Coxon. She gave me support, taught me confidence, and never gave up on me, even when I felt like giving up on myself. I lost touch with her after I finished school until I was sworn in, when she e-mailed me to congratulate me. I often worry about my children and if they will face the same challenges that I did. I often wonder if they will receive the same level of support. It relieves me to no end, Mr. Speaker, to know that our government is committed to protecting and improving public education.

4:10

I stand here a proud former restaurant manager. The people whom I worked with dealt with many issues, including inadequate access to health care, issues with social services, high tuition increases with cuts to programs, and I am happy to see that our government is working hard to improve these issues. The people I work with were full of passion and generosity. In the 2013 flood they mobilized only days after and helped raise close to \$10,000 with help from the Calgary Stampeders. I have to say that I'm rooting for the Stampeders this go-around as well.

I have to thank my associates for believing in me even when it seemed like very few people did. They had quite a bit of confidence in me, and I'm grateful for that. As a business operator, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it perfectly clear: if I thought the NDP was bad for business, I would not have run as an MLA for the NDP. In the restaurant industry I've seen increases in costs of wines due to drought, increased food costs by 50 per cent, heavy taxation increases in liquor, increased service charges due to high prices of oil and gas, and heavy increases due to rent due to supply and demand. Any time things like this happen, we adapt our business to make it work, and the same will apply for the increase in minimum wage.

As I stand here, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members who represented my riding before myself, from Jim Dinning, who, I want to recognize, is receiving the Order of Canada this year, to Jon Havelock to Jeff Wilson to Cindy Ady. They have all made sacrifices to represent their constituents, and I am grateful for their service. After spending over an hour chatting with Cindy Ady after my election, she spoke to me about not losing sight of my family and my constituents in my riding. She wanted to remind me of the importance of balancing one's family life and their work within the constituency.

As I stand here, I want to represent those family members who held political office before myself: my mother, Debbie Dean, who sat on the University of Calgary senate with, actually, the Speaker of the House, not yourself but the other Speaker; my cousin Tracy Douglas-Blowers, who sat on city council for the city of Lloydminster; my mother-in-law, Carol Bazinet, who served as a public trustee in Calgary for over 10 years; my great-great-uncle Thomas John Bentley, who served as a Member of Parliament and served in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly as minister of public health under Tommy Douglas's CCF government in 1950.

In his maiden speech, while addressing the opposition, my great-great-uncle said:

I would like to congratulate all those who have spoken before me; however, that would be presumptuous on my part. They all did well. They expressed the opinions they felt. Some expressed opinions that I am going to heartily disagree with before I sit down, but, nevertheless, they were opinions they had a right to express and they were properly done so in this House. The rest of us had a right to hear them to know what the various opinions are.

I think this truly reflects the open dialogue that we are hoping to achieve with our opposition over the next four years, and I look forward to working alongside our counterparts on the other side of the floor. Though we may disagree on something, I hope to maintain the respect with my friends across the floor. May they continue to challenge us properly to ensure that this province is the best one possible.

I think my great-great-uncle would be proud of what our government has committed to in regard to restoring public health care here. He dreamed for all Canadians to have access to public health care, and we as a government must ensure we do what we can to repair and maintain it here in Alberta.

During the election I received a heartfelt endorsement from my Aunt Rae and Uncle Paul Douglas. In a letter they sent me during the campaign they both said: Graham, you will do very well because you have a heart that will guide you through all of your challenges. Sadly, my uncle passed away two weeks before the election after a long battle with cancer. I was told he was watching this campaign with a lot of interest and excitement. My uncle shared a lot with me and my sister. I think the greatest thing that he shared with me was to give back to your family and your community. Funnily enough, the first thing my aunt did when seeing me at my uncle's funeral was to introduce me to the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster. It was important for her that I learn to respect your fellow counterparts regardless of our differences.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my mother and father, Don and Debbie, and my sister Melanie for always supporting my dreams. Words cannot convey how you have positively contributed to my life. To my wife, Monique, and my children – Alex, Ben, and Lily – I want to apologize for the burden that this job is going to have on you. I want you to understand that my colleagues and I are here to work to make Alberta a better place, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the sacrifices you're making for Alberta.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Would anybody like to respond under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw talked of his love for the Stampeders. As another Calgary MLA I am definitely rooting for them as well.

Now, the hon. member spoke of a dedicated teacher helping him when he needed some assistance with his learning while in school,

and I know the hon. member also has kids in the current school system. I was wondering if he would be able to, you know, elaborate on the impact that that teacher had on him and sort of contrast it with his children's current experience and how he as an MLA would be supporting that in the House.

Mr. Sucha: Well, thank you, hon. Member for Calgary-Currie. You know, at the time when I went to school it was in the early '90s, and we had a lot of support that was going into the public education system. So my teacher had the time, because the classroom sizes were smaller, to really support me in these efforts. The challenge that my children have had going to school in south Calgary is just the capacity issue.

You know, it's great to see that our government is committed to working towards building new schools in the south end of Calgary. I personally will not see any in my riding, but that's a good thing. All of the students coming in are from out of my riding, and they need a place to go to school. A lot of them are going in there, and it will really help alleviate a lot of the pressures that we see. I think that as we move forward with open transparency, when it comes to building and moving forward with things like modular classrooms, the fair choices will be made for the people of Calgary and for the people of Alberta as well.

The Acting Speaker: Any other comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, would anyone else like to respond to the Speech from the Throne? I will invite the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise today. While certainly not for the first time in this Assembly, it's most definitely the first opportunity that I've had to respond to the throne speech. I am both humbled and privileged to represent my constituents in this Chamber. I am humbled and privileged by the opportunity that my constituents have given me to serve on behalf of the good people of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

To begin, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family. My wife, Tiffany, is the love of my life, as I mentioned to you when I was introducing her earlier this week in this Chamber. We started dating when I was about 16 years old, and we've now been married happily for 15 years. She is my moral compass, and every day I strive to be the man that she thinks I am. I also want to thank our son Markus, who is 19 years old this year, and our eight-year-old twins, Austin and Chyanne. The lessons I've learned in life are dwarfed by the lessons I have learned in fatherhood. I love being a dad. To me it is my most important job, and it will always be my favourite job. I know that for my family the time I spend working away from them is hard. I thank them for their steadfast support. I want them to know that I am working hard to leave this province a better place for them, and I want them to be proud of me.

I firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, that families build strong communities and that strong communities support families. These are the values that I was raised with. Almost 40 years ago my father, Pat Nixon, arrived in Alberta, a homeless teenager. At the time my father was so deep in the prison of addiction that he would not even have dreamed about seeking the same opportunities that have drawn so many to this province.

However, he did find his opportunity, absolute and life changing, in serving others. In launching what would become the Mustard Seed, one of Canada's most respected not-for-profit homeless organizations, my father not only reaffirmed his faith in the basic goodness of mankind but set about changing lives for the better.

Together with my mom, Lise, they dedicated their lives to living out their faith and helping the homeless population of this province. Along the way they taught me and my five brothers – Jeremy, Daniel, Ryan, Tyler, and Shane; that’s what they’d have to do, say it fast like that to make sure that we were all in the van – the true nature of service, introducing us to a much larger world at a very early age.

4:20

Looking back at my father’s journey, Mr. Speaker, for me it really emphasizes how truly amazing Alberta and Canada are. My father went from being an involuntary guest of the Attorney General at times to eventually being a distinguished guest of the Governor General of Canada and the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, receiving the Order of Canada and the Alberta Order of Excellence.

He and my mother’s unwavering dedication to helping their neighbours has always inspired me. To help those in need in our community is something we all should strive to do each day. My over 30 years of involvement working with the Mustard Seed has had a profound effect on my life, whether serving soup as a boy in the meal line or serving as the executive director as a man. For me, growing up at the Mustard Seed meant learning the difference between helping others and helping others help themselves. Both are vital, Mr. Speaker.

I look forward to applying this principle as a member of the 29th Legislature. I also want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I come to this House fully aware of the primary responsibility to which I have been entrusted: representing the good people of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre to the best of my abilities. I pledge to be a strong advocate for a region which includes over 40,000 of the province’s most honest and hardest working citizens, spread across 25,000 square kilometres of the finest country on God’s green Earth.

Our communities are proud communities, with a long history of electing strong, uncompromising leaders. Premier John E. Brownlee represented this region as did the first woman appointed to Alberta’s cabinet, Irene Parlby. Over time our region also elected long-time Official Opposition leader Bob Clark and my good friend Ty Lund, who served this Assembly for over 20 years. And who can forget, Mr. Speaker, democratic reformer and Member of Parliament, my good friend, Myron Thompson, who continues to serve the people of Sundre as a town councillor to this very day, almost 50 years of community service.

We are also home to a proud First Nations people, including the O’Chiese, the Sunchild, and the Stoney.

However, the fact is that our communities, like many across rural Alberta, have gone ignored by successive governments that have turned their backs on the conservative values that make Alberta strong.

The largest urban municipality in our riding is Rocky Mountain House. It serves a regional district of more than 30,000 Albertans, with over a million Albertans visiting a year. Expanding medical service in this region is long overdue. Rocky Mountain House has been promised a hospital for many years and has been told for many years that they are at the top of the priority list. But, sadly, it still has not happened, Mr. Speaker. It needs to happen. Rocky Mountain House needs a new hospital.

Meanwhile in Sundre local citizens have experienced the devastating effects of flooding on several occasions yet remain at the end of the line every time mitigation projects are considered.

When it comes to basic infrastructure, all municipalities in our constituency and across Alberta would greatly benefit from the

certainty of long-term, predictable funding. Certainly, nowhere would that be more appreciated than Rimbey, where the community continues to depend on wooden pipes. Mr. Speaker, wooden pipes. Politics needs to be removed from infrastructure funding, and it needs to happen now for the long-term success of our communities.

For the first time in 44 years we have a new government here in Edmonton, and I truly had hoped this government would take a different approach. However, if the recent throne speech and the government policies are any indication, it seems I will have my work cut out for me helping this new government to understand rural issues.

Communities like Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, Nordegg, and Sundre are significantly supported by Alberta’s energy industry for employment and economic activities. The government’s promised royalty review, which is taking place now, is already damaging confidence and killing jobs in my communities. I hear from people daily, both employees and employers, about unemployment and the effects of this government’s policy on our industries. Meanwhile Alberta’s second-largest industry, agriculture, remains vital for communities like Bentley, Rimbey, and Eckville, yet this vital industry was completely ignored in this government’s throne speech.

As a representative for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre I consider it my privilege to provide this government with a robust education on rural concerns. In addition, as both the Official Opposition whip and the critic for democracy and accountability I am dedicated to advocating for the long-overdue changes Albertans deserve. For far too long successive governments have diminished the role of the individual Member of this Legislative Assembly. Over the better part of a decade the previous government tied itself in knots to avoid democratic reform, sometimes going to great lengths to prevent the systematic change necessary to ensure true accountability.

In the case of fixed election dates the previous government implemented a faulty half measure, then broke the spirit of the law at the first possible opportunity. In the case of implementing the public right to recall failed MLAs, several previous administrations rejected the notion outright. All the while MLA compensation increased, citizen frustration increased, and voter engagement dwindled. Rather than truly address the democratic deficit, previous administrations chose to further centralize the power in the executive under the misguided belief that it would somehow increase the government’s capability to operate quality services more efficiently. History has proven this line of thinking to be patently false.

Without accountability to the public, those managing our province led us to a place where our province spent 20 per cent more than the Canadian average while providing below-average service. Deficits have increased, debt is increasing, and bureaucratic red tape is increasing. Rather than a new birth of freedom, Albertans were ignored in favour of a government of the cronies, by the cronies, for the cronies.

If I could offer one piece of advice to my fellow members, it is this. Alberta is a business, and all indications are that our company is in trouble. The time for listening to managers is over, Mr. Speaker. The time for listening to our customers has arrived. It’s time to get back to the representative democracy principles that have made Alberta strong. We as MLAs were elected to represent the people and the interests of our constituencies first.

This means giving voters more opportunity to engage in our democracy and ensuring that governments are held accountable not just on election day but every day. It is not enough to simply call

for reform; we need to implement it in a practical sense. We need to show a new generation of Albertans how great debate can be used to bring people together for a common cause. We need to demonstrate for all Canadians that empowering citizens makes our democracy stronger. Like previous generations, we need to verify for the world that democracy and freedom are entwined for all time and that freedom is not a weakness; indeed, it is our greatest strength.

In this regard I commend the government for passing legislation to ban corporate union donations. I was proud to vote for that bill. This is a good first step, but it is only one step. We need to continue to work to preserve our democracy and improve accountability in government. I look forward to working with all members of this House in bringing about change and standing up for all Albertans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent of the House to revert for a notice of motion.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Notices of Motions

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of Bill 9, the Appropriation Act, 2015.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

(continued)

The Acting Speaker: Would anyone like to speak under 29(2)(a) with regard to the last member's address?

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, I am really delighted to have learned more about the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, his work with the Mustard Seed, and his dedication to people in need in his communities and throughout Alberta. I really want to thank him. Sometimes we don't see this side of people in this Assembly. Knowing his background and the background of his family and his dedication to, I know, a very, very difficult and challenging work setting and opportunities and raising funds and so on, I'm really honoured that he has shared his story with us.

Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Well, with the small time we have left, Mr. Speaker, I'll just thank the hon. member for her words. The homeless population in Alberta is something that has been near and dear to my family from the day that I first arrived on this planet. I think that we are judged by how we treat the least fortunate amongst us, and I think that's something that both sides of this aisle can agree on.

The Acting Speaker: Noticing the time, the House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m. to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 1st Session (2015)

Activity to November 19, 2015

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

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

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

1* An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta (Ganley)

First Reading -- 9-10 (Jun. 15, 2015 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 30-38 (Jun. 16, 2015 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 85-94 (Jun. 17, 2015 eve.), 152-157 (Jun. 22, 2015 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading -- 157-159 (Jun. 22, 2015 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 29, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 15, 2015; SA 2015 c15]

2 An Act to Restore Fairness to Public Revenue (Ceci)

First Reading -- 104 (Jun. 18, 2015 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 161-162 (Jun. 22, 2015 eve.), 183-193 (Jun. 23, 2015 aft.), 201-213 (Jun. 23, 2015 eve.), 213-227 (Jun. 23, 2015 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole -- 242-257 (Jun. 24, 2015 aft.), 259 (Jun. 24, 2015 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 259-271 (Jun. 24, 2015 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 29, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force January 1, 2015, with exceptions; SA 2015 c16]

3 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2015 (No. 2) (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading -- 77 (Jun. 17, 2015 eve., passed)

Second Reading -- 107-114 (Jun. 18, 2015 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole -- 145-152 (Jun. 22, 2015 eve.), 159-161 (Jun. 22, 2015 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading -- 182-183 (Jun. 23, 2015 aft.), 213 (Jun. 23, 2015 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 29, 2015 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 29, 2015; SA 2015 c14]

4 An Act to Implement Various Tax Measures and to Enact the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading -- 331-32 (Oct. 27, 2015 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 379-81 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft.), 501-522 (Nov. 17, 2015 aft., passed)

5 Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act (Ganley)

First Reading -- 448 (Nov. 5, 2015 aft., passed)

6 Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act (Sigurdson)

First Reading -- 501 (Nov. 17, 2015 aft., passed)

7 Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2015 (Ganley)

First Reading -- 548 (Nov. 19, 2015 aft., passed)

201 Assuring Alberta's Fiscal Future Act (Fraser)

First Reading -- 104-105 (Jun. 18, 2015 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 128-139 (Jun. 22, 2015 aft.), 302 (Oct. 26, 2015 aft., defeated on division)

202 Alberta Local Food Act (Cortes-Vargas)

First Reading -- 105 (Jun. 18, 2015 aft., passed)

Second Reading -- 303-313 (Oct. 26, 2015 aft.), 401-404 (Nov. 2, 2015 aft., passed on division)

- 203 Election (Restrictions on Government Advertising) Amendment Act, 2015 (Strankman)**
First Reading -- 349 (Oct. 28, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 404-410 (Nov. 2, 2015 aft., adjourned), 474-477 (Nov. 16, 2015 aft., passed), 477 (Nov. 16, 2015 aft., referred to Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee)
- 204 Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015 (Drever)**
First Reading -- 448 (Nov. 5, 2015 aft., passed)
Second Reading -- 477-484 (Nov. 16, 2015 aft., passed)
- 205 Persons with Developmental Disabilities Services (Public Consultation) Amendment Act, 2015 (Renaud)**
First Reading -- (Nov. 18, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr1 The King's University College Amendment Act, 2015 (Schmidt)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr2 Bethesda Bible College Amendment Act, 2015 (Nielsen)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr3 Rosary Hall, Edmonton Repeal Act (Shepherd)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr4 Canadian University College Amendment Act, 2015 (Orr)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr5 Concordia University College of Alberta Amendment Act, 2015 (McLean)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr6 Covenant Bible College Amendment Act, 2015 (Fildebrandt)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)
- Pr7 Living Faith Bible College Amendment Act, 2015 (Nixon)**
First Reading -- 377 (Oct. 29, 2015 aft., passed)

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