



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, May 16, 2016

Day 28

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
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Party standings:

New Democrat: 54 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, May 16, 2016

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect. As we begin our work for the week, let us do so with a positive and hopeful spirit, always focusing on the incredible work Albertans across this province have been doing to support each other during these challenging times.

Thank you.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark. I'd invite all to participate in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: I understand we have some school groups. The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly teachers and students from Home School Christian Fellowship in my riding. They didn't want me to play any favourites, so they only gave me one name, but it's always a great pleasure to see young people come down and see us at work. Once again, I hope we satisfy. All right. If you would like to rise – I know there are three maybe on the other side there – and please receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-Two Hills.

Mr. Hanson: And St. Paul. Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure to stand and introduce to you and through you 52 students, teachers, assistants, and parents from the newly renovated l'école Racette school in St. Paul: teachers Paula Fejzullai and Cheryl Smereka, assistants Connie Bigam and Andrew Harvey, and parents Aline Brousseau and Teresa Pruden. If I could get the students, teachers, assistants, and parents to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: It was particularly important that I didn't leave St. Paul out of that constituency name. I apologize.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly 24 students from the grade 6 class of l'école Greenfield school,

accompanied by their teacher Mr. Sharplin and parent volunteers Brett Kowalchuk, Kim Christopher-Norton, Heather Close, and Christine McVige. Greenfield is a wonderful English and French immersion school in my community, where diversity is respected and celebrated in the work that these dedicated educators do every day. I would now ask you to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other school groups to introduce?

Then I'll call on the hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly Dr. Cindy Blackstock. I have had the great pleasure of getting to know Dr. Blackstock over the past year as we work towards our shared goal of protecting the rights of indigenous children. Cindy Blackstock is a member of Gitksan First Nation, a social worker with 25 years of experience in working to improve the lives of children, and the director of the First Nations children's action research and education service. I was proud to bring greetings this morning to the YESS allies and youth conference in Edmonton at which Dr. Blackstock was the keynote speaker. I'm always moved when I hear about the work she is doing. Dr. Blackstock is a furious and tireless advocate for youth, who sometimes believe our society isn't there for them. As we continue to work through the heartbreaking stories of indigenous youth in crisis, I am so thankful that those often without hope otherwise have Cindy Blackstock on their side.

The recent landmark Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling on the case brought forward by Dr. Blackstock after nine years of fighting and speaking for those who cannot for themselves is just one example of the tremendous difference she is making in the lives of these children across Canada. As this case demonstrates, there is much work to be done both within and across government to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of indigenous children. I look forward to continuing this important work with our colleagues in other orders of government, our indigenous partners, and, of course, with Dr. Blackstock, who is a leader and an inspiration to all those who seek to make a difference in the lives of indigenous children. I ask Dr. Blackstock to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. [Standing ovation]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Merci, Mme la Présidente. C'est avec plaisir que je présente aujourd'hui à vous et à tous les membres de l'Assemblée Mme Julie Fafard du Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly Ms Julie Fafard from the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, the CDÉA. She has been a wonderful partner in promoting tourism opportunities in the French language in Alberta, and I would ask her to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have another guest?

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also have the pleasure of introducing to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two remarkable Albertans, Matt McMillan and Josh Eberley. Matt is a lieutenant with the Canadian armed forces and cadet training instructor with the 22nd Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps, where he mentors the new recruits who have stepped forward to serve our nation. Josh has now written his final exams and later this month

will receive his bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Calgary. Both of these young men work with me in the constituency office, serving the good people of Calgary-Cross. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly my guests and long-time friends Margaret Keown, Claire Keown, Barbara Medioli, and Shawn Keown. Margaret is a four-year-old who can talk your ear right off, and I think she just may be a future politician. Claire is a considerate eight-year-old who loves reading mysteries. Barbara is a geologist with Natural Resources Canada. Shawn is a stay-at-home dad challenged to keep up with both Margaret and Claire and shares a long history with the TUXIS Parliament of Alberta with both myself and with the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster. I ask my friends to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

1:40

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and introduce to you and to the whole Assembly three of my friends: Mr. Liam Sparks-O'Neill, accompanied by Roxanne Hughes and Myles Usher. They are all students at the University of Alberta, and I know that our province is lucky to have minds as bright as those and lucky enough to have universities of the calibre of the University of Alberta to train them. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you several members of the Specialty Vehicle Association of Alberta. Colleagues may have heard from some of their members in their constituencies as they're currently working on a campaign to get a classic car day designated here in Alberta. Would you please rise as I say your name. Joining us in the gallery are James Herbert, president; Dave Scragg, vice-president, north; Earl Clements, director; Del Morrison, director and member of the Vegreville Iron Runners Auto Club in my constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville; and Malcom Fischer, director. I'd please request that my colleagues join me in extending the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three guests of mine that have joined us here today: Laurel McCalla with Ubuntu, Julian Daly with the Boyle Street co-op, and Gary Kearns, who is a manager at the northeast office in Edmonton for child and family services. These three individuals work tirelessly with a variety of populations that are in need of supports, whether it's new Canadians or those settling into our communities, and I just want to recognize the hard work that they do and ask all colleagues to join me in giving them a warm welcome to the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my parents, Deborah Dean and Don Sucha. Both are former alumni and retired faculty of the University of Calgary. My mother, Debbie, served as librarian at the law library while some talented cabinet ministers were studying there. She was also an AUPE negotiator and senator for the university as well. My father worked nearly 30 years at the Nickle arts museum on campus. He was recognized for his service when he became part of the Order of the University of Calgary in 2007. He currently volunteers at the Stampede school and is active in the archives at the Military Museums of Calgary. I would ask that they both please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce three people to the Assembly today. The first two come from the constituency of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. The first is His Worship Rick Pankiw, who has the honour of being the mayor of the town of Rimbey, as well as Shawn Hatala, who is a leader within our community in Rimbey and a good friend to many of us in that town. Along with them today is James Maloney, or, to his friends, Jim, who has ties to us in Rimbey but is actually from Fort McMurray and has come to spend some time with us in Rimbey while waiting to be able to go home. I think I can speak for everybody in the Assembly to say that we wish you a speedy trip home. With that said, I'd like all three to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members of the Council of Edmonton Filipino Associations, which I'll be speaking more about in my member's statement later today. Joining us in the gallery are Mandy Servito, president; Marjorie Newman, vice-president; Rosauro Gilera, business manager; Maria Edna Gilera, executive director, Pinoy City Market; Aurelio Sumalinog, co-ordinator, Edmonton Couples for Christ migrant worker program; and Virginia Sumalinog, president, Vismin association. I'd like all my guests now to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House Rob Laird, a well-known advocate and champion for those who are struggling with addiction, homelessness, and other social issues. Rob is the director of fund development for Recovery Acres, 1835 House, a society in Calgary, and he's here today to hopefully listen to the debate on Bill 205. He is seated in the public gallery. I ask him to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

Ministerial Statements

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

Wildfire Update

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know all members of the House join me in thanking every one of the thousands of men and women who are working around the clock to protect Alberta from wildfires. Today there are 15 wildfires burning in Alberta: three out of control, one being held, eight under control, and three that have been turned over to local authorities. We currently have 1,919 firefighters on the ground supported by 161 helicopters, 377 pieces of heavy equipment, and 29 air tankers. Conditions today will make for another extremely challenging day for our firefighters and emergency responders. Fire risks remain extreme across much of northern Alberta.

Yesterday a mandatory evacuation order and a state of local emergency were declared for the hamlet of Little Smoky in the MD of Greenview. A fire that was approximately five hectares at 1 p.m. yesterday is now approximately 800 hectares. Ten families and their pets were safely evacuated. The Fox Creek fire department is arranging for livestock to be evacuated to the Valleyview agricultural society grounds. That fire is being fought by 38 firefighters, eight helicopters, and 15 air tankers.

Madam Speaker, inside Fort McMurray firefighters continue to work on dozens of hot spots and uncapped gas lines. Outside the city the wildfire is now more than 251,000 hectares and remains out of control. The fire is threatening key energy and transportation infrastructure, and some facilities self-evacuated yesterday. Protecting these assets is our priority. There are 869 firefighters on scene with 46 helicopters, including five heavy units, and 13 air tankers. Smoke and extremely poor air quality are a very significant concern at this time. This is impacting all our operations: fire-fighting, air operations, our re-entry preparation work, including actions to begin restoration of essential businesses. The air conditions underscore the fact that Fort McMurray is not yet safe to return to.

However, work is continuing toward making the city safe. Assessment teams have inspected almost 20,000 buildings, and close to 90 per cent of those are structurally sound. Substantial progress has been made to restore electricity and the gas supply; however, the water supply is not yet safe to drink. At the hospital general cleaning in the emergency room has been completed, and detailed cleaning of equipment and the HVAC system is under way. There are 400 people working around the clock in two shifts to restore the hospital.

We continue to support Albertans who were forced to flee from their homes in the meantime. As of yesterday afternoon the government of Alberta has issued more than 27,000 cheques or debit cards to support more than 58,000 people, totalling \$60,536,900 in emergency financial assistance.

We are working to help owners retrieve abandoned vehicles. This does not apply to all vehicles, but vehicles that were abandoned on highway 63, highway 881, or a major street in Fort McMurray are being towed to secure lots, and owners can make arrangements to retrieve them by calling 310.4455. Air quality conditions are disrupting our effort to retrieve abandoned vehicles, but we will continue this work along with all of our other work as soon as it is safe to do so.

1:50

On Saturday we e-mailed evacuees a link to satellite imagery that provides some information about damage to neighbourhoods. Later this week we will be providing phase 2 images from aerial photography that will include a broader geographic area. These will give residents a clearer picture of the current state of their homes. Madam Speaker, these will be very difficult images for some people

to see, and AHS has increased staffing at the mental health helpline as a result. I want to stress that no one has to go through this alone, and there are mental health therapists available through the helpline, online, or at any of the 16 reception centres across Alberta.

In all our actions, Madam Speaker, our first priority is always the safety of Albertans, and again I extend this government's sincere thanks to every person working in extremely difficult conditions to get Albertans safely back to their homes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Does anyone wish to respond?

Oral Question Period

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Justice System Delays

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When our justice system is broken, it means that victims are actually the ones that end up being punished. We saw this in Airdrie in 2012, when a sexual assault case was thrown out because of a lack of resources from this government. For this victim this was a horror story that should never have happened. Today we are now hearing of cases of sexual assault trials again being delayed because of both a lack of judges and a lack of resources. Premier, what is this government doing to ensure that we have enough resources in our courts so sexual assault victims don't have to live with months and months of uncertainty?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Of course, we're very concerned about this news. It is very troubling. It is directly related to the fact that over the period of the past 20 years Alberta has received one new QB judge position. At the same time our population has grown, and the fact of the matter is that it's putting tremendous pressure on our court system. So our Minister of Justice has met with her colleague and is pushing very hard for additional QB judges to be appointed and new positions to be created here in Alberta so that we can deal with these kinds of delays.

Mr. Jean: Ninety-one per cent of sexual assault crimes are never reported to the police. The anguish, pain, and bravery for a victim to even get to court here in Alberta are immense. Any further delays or any risks of trials being thrown out are just further victimization. Alberta has six vacant positions on the Court of Queen's Bench. Only one of the two new positions announced in 2014 has even been appointed yet. It's been six months since the new federal government was elected. Why hasn't the Premier secured firm timelines from this government to have these positions filled?

Ms Notley: Well, Madam Speaker, in fact, our Minister of Justice has worked very hard with the federal government to move ahead on this. But to be clear, the very government that the member opposite sat in for the last six years stood by and did not fill these positions. So, you know, I think that we all need to take some shared responsibility on this. That being said, we're moving as quickly as we can to get these new judges appointed because we know that these matters need to be heard in a full court situation. They can't be delayed, and they need to move forward.

Mr. Jean: Madam Speaker, blaming lack of leadership on that side for the vacuum that currently exists is not going to help. We need

to move forward, and we know that the province could take steps to help limit delays. A report filed in 2013, after the Airdrie case was thrown out, showed that 98 per cent of all delays are because of the Crown or the system this government manages. This is unacceptable. To date there remain fears that there are too few courtrooms, too few prosecutors, and not enough resources to ensure justice for victims of crime. The report laid out 17 recommendations in 2013 to free up court time for serious cases going to trial. Can the Premier please tell Albertans how many of these recommendations have been fully implemented by this government?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. Before I can commit, I'd want to actually see the report to which the member is referring, but if it's the report to which I believe he is referring, we have been working very hard within all matters in the system. We have implemented a court case management program to ensure that things get to trial in a timely manner. We've been working with the Provincial Court as well as with the Court of Queen's Bench to ensure that things get moved forward in a timely manner. We have seen some reductions in lead times to trial on a number of issues as a result of those actions.

Thank you.

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

Energy Policies

Mr. Jean: A few months back our Premier praised the Ontario Liberals for their emission plan. Now a leaked report shows what this plan means for an already hurting Alberta energy industry. The Ontario Liberals will require all gasoline sold in Ontario to have a lifetime carbon reduction of 5 per cent. To put it plainly, gasoline refined from our oil sands and sold in Ontario will be even less competitive than it will be under this carbon tax from this government. This will further hurt all Albertans who work in the energy industry. Is the Premier still endorsing this plan and this Premier, or will she tell Ontario that they've simply gone far too far?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me begin by saying that we're not going to develop our interprovincial policy on the basis of leaked cabinet documents around decisions that haven't been made yet. That's the first thing.

That being said, we are as a government working with the industry to reduce the emissions associated with the production of oil and gas here in Alberta. We're working with forward-thinking, forward-looking industry partners. I'm very, very proud of that because I know that it's that kind of action that's going to increase market access for our product, not decrease it in the way it would have done under the plan put forward by those folks.

Mr. Jean: That kind of action leads to unemployed Albertans.

This report not only takes a direct shot at oil sands; it takes aim at cheap low-carbon fuels like natural gas, our solution. With Alberta producing 67 per cent of Canada's natural gas, this will be a hit to an Alberta industry that should be part of the solution to reduce global emissions instead of being a target. Here in Alberta the NDP disruptions to our power grid are already putting natural

gas projects at great risk. When will the Premier start defending our natural gas industry instead of making it far worse for all Albertans?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In fact, we're working very closely with the natural gas industry. They will play a critical role in the transition off coal-fired generation, and we're very pleased to have that important, important resource here in Alberta. Just as we work very hard to increase market access for our oil and gas, we will do the same with respect to natural gas. We understand that that's an important industry that we have in this province. It is a cleaner burning fuel and presents tremendous opportunities for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: A new report from FirstEnergy highlights the chaos NDP policies are having on our power grid here in Alberta, and it will be Albertans who ultimately pay the price. The cost to replace coal generation will be \$16 billion without even pricing in any new growth or additional facilities. That means either even higher taxes, massive subsidies, or big price increases on all Albertans' power bills. Right now consumers and businesses cannot afford these changes, and investors are spooked to invest in Alberta. Will the Premier back down from her plans before any more damage is done by these NDP policies?

Ms Notley: Well, Madam Speaker, it doesn't surprise me to hear folks on the other side embrace, with no critical analysis, the absolute first bargaining position of somebody trying to get money from taxpayers. That being said, we are actually going to move forward on a responsible transition off coal-fired power generation because it's good for the health of Albertans, good for our ability to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and ultimately will ensure that we have a more renewable, more sustainable electricity production grid in this province.

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

Wildfire Control and Recovery

Mr. Jean: It's only mid-May, but we continue to hear of more evacuations because of wildfires growing out of control. A mandatory evacuation for residents within the municipal district of Greenview was ordered last night as the fire burned just 10 kilometres north of the community. Evacuees have been forced to leave their homes, are very worried about if there will be enough resources to keep the community safe and if their homes will be all right and when they can return. Can the Premier please assure these residents that everything will be done to keep these communities safe?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you to the member for that question. It's a very good question. Indeed, those are the questions that we ask every morning in our briefings with officials because we share those same sentiments as the member opposite. Absolutely everything is being done that needs to be done to fight these fires. We have over 1,900 firefighters in Alberta right now. We have a growing number of resources. We've established working relationships with other provinces, and we have the number that we need right now, but we are also engaging in additional conversations with international resource

providers, and we will ensure that everything that has to be done will be done to fight these fires.

2:00

Mr. Jean: The most recent update from the Premier has the people of Fort McMurray receiving a timeline within the next 10 days for when they can actually return to their homes. Last week at this time the Premier said that residents would know within two weeks when they could return. We understand the need to get all services back online and, of course, for the community to stay safe, but residents are feeling increasingly anxious. The longer they're out of their homes, the more distressed they become. Can the Premier assure the people of Fort McMurray the 10-day timeline won't be delayed further by this government?

Ms Notley: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and again thank you to the member for that question. I absolutely agree completely with everything that he says, that this issue of not knowing the plan going forward is very stressful and very anxiety provoking. We hear that, and we understand that. So we can absolutely commit that a schedule and a timeline going forward will be communicated to the evacuees of Fort McMurray within the 10 days that remain within the deadline that we set.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Premier reassuring us.

A sense of panic among Fort McMurray business owners seems to be growing, however. Many lost their homes, and now they're worried they'll lose their businesses. They're unable to work in Fort McMurray, obviously, but because their equipment is stranded there, they can't go to work anywhere else in the province either. Meanwhile their bills continue to pile up, and business owners fear they may go under even before work in Fort McMurray is available again. It is concerning. What assurances can the Premier give to business owners in Fort McMurray who've lost their homes and now worry about losing their very livelihood?

Ms Notley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We understand that that is a challenge for everybody in Fort McMurray, and indeed most Fort McMurrrians have experienced income disruption and are struggling with that. We're working as quickly as we can to ensure that we can assist them any way that we can. Just yesterday – maybe it was even Saturday – we started contacting some small-business owners to invite them back up to Fort McMurray to start setting up so that they were ready for when people came back and, unfortunately, had to postpone that because of the air quality concerns that we have today. So safety continues to be the priority in terms of how we get people into the community and have them, you know, either collecting their stuff or staying . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
The hon. leader of the third party.

Carbon Levy and Vulnerable Albertans

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The NDP carbon tax is an attack on Albertans. In 2017 all Albertans will pay more for nearly everything they use, including necessities such as food, electricity, heat, and transportation. Seniors, single parents, income support recipients, and persons with developmental disabilities will all pay more, making life difficult for some of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens. To the environment minister: why are you

financing your government's operations on the backs of Albertans living on a fixed income?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, this government will be investing \$645 million over the next five years into energy efficiency. I just note that in a report, which I'll table later today, by the Canada West Foundation, Alberta was left by the previous government as the only jurisdiction in North America without any kind of energy efficiency strategy. That is an embarrassing record left by the previous government that we are correcting.

Mr. McIver: So the minister is leaving vulnerable Albertans under the bus. Albertans now know the carbon tax rebate will cover less than half of the extra costs of the carbon tax, yet the NDP government has the impudence to state that "putting a price on carbon will reward Alberta families." Given that your rebates will not compensate Albertans' extra costs and it certainly won't reward them, what measures will you take, Premier, for those Albertans who do not have enough money for food and won't be able to pay the increased costs to heat their homes?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. First of all, let me just correct one of the premises of the previous question. Not a cent of the carbon levy is going towards running government operations. That's something that we've been very clear about all along, so I think that needs to be reinforced. In terms of the rebate, there's no question that the rebate – those lower income families that the member talks about will receive a rebate. In fact, it will be more than what they will likely end up having to pay in terms of the carbon tax, so it is not an issue. Moreover, there's additional investment that will go into energy efficiency . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Well, Madam Speaker, low-income Albertans will not get enough to cover what they pay, and the Premier is not giving the straight goods on that. Albertans deserve a government that will respect their hard-earned tax dollars and show leadership by responsibly managing debt. Rather than financing your government's operations on the backs of Albertans, particularly those with low incomes, through your carbon tax, to the Finance minister: why don't you empower Alberta's public servants to reduce public spending without impacting the front lines, as we have suggested?

Mr. Ceci: Madam Speaker, I think the answer was just given by the Premier. None of the monies will make their way into general revenues. We are putting them back into the economy. We are putting them back into people's pockets directly, and we are creating energy efficiencies throughout the province. That's what we're doing with the levy.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Investor Tax Credit

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Now, the investor tax credit, long supported by the Alberta Party, is a good first step in rebuilding Alberta's economy. It will give investors new incentive to remain in and grow their business in Alberta, but the plan is still very vague. This ambiguity has left me and, I'm sure, Alberta's business community with a lot of questions. To the

Minister of Economic Development and Trade: what criteria will you use to determine which industries will be eligible for the new investor tax credit?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll thank the member for the question, a very good question. Part of what we're doing over the summer and into the fall is consulting, and I can let this House know that we've already begun conversations with small-business owners, with associations throughout the province looking at – we want to ensure that we get the right parameters and that the investor tax credit does what it is supposed to do, which is to incent investment in Alberta-based companies. I can assure the member that we will be working with different sectors, different businesses to ensure that when we roll this out, we get it right.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Now, in the past the minister has said that the credit will only support a small subset of industries: IT, clean tech, video games. Now, these industries are certainly important to our provincial economy, but by no means do they encompass all of the possible economic activity in Alberta. In fact, there's a big risk that the narrow focus will mean that bureaucrats will decide which businesses are worthy of investment and which are not. To the same minister: why do you think you know better than the business community when it comes to investment decisions, and will you make the only restriction for investment be that companies are not already receiving government assistance?

Mr. Bilous: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that our government works with business and industry and has from the day that we formed government and especially since this ministry was created. I was very clear at the announcement of the investor tax credit that we are looking at areas of focus. The intention is to stimulate investment in areas that fall outside of our traditional area of strength. However, I did make it clear that if in consultation with business and industry it is determined that this tool can be used by and is critical to our oil and gas sector, we are open to that conversation.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. Now, I remind the minister, Madam Speaker, that B.C. made the mistake of having their tax credit too narrow and have since broadened their program, so let's get specific here. Will the investor tax credit apply to an energy company that develops a carbon reduction technology, a software developer whose current product line is used by the energy industry but could be used by others, or a welding shop that wants to expand from a focus on oil and gas to infrastructure projects? These are just three of countless examples where your government is going to have to decide who's worthy and who's not. Will you do the right thing, Mr. Minister, and broaden the program?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. Once again, this is part of the reason that our government is consulting with business and industry throughout the province throughout summer and fall, to ensure that we get it right. I acknowledge the three examples that the member gave are great examples. Again, we are open to the parameters of this, and I'll reinforce the fact that in British Columbia there was some critique,

and still is, of their investor tax credit on a number of fronts, which is why we are consulting with business and industry to ensure that the tool is the right tool for the job.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Just a reminder to all members that from now on there will be no preambles to supplementals on the next set of questions.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

2:10 Fort McMurray Wildfire Recovery Contracts

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of first responders, 85 per cent of structures in Fort McMurray were saved. Unfortunately, that was not the case for all of the town. But Albertans are resilient, and similar to Slave Lake in 2011 and Calgary in 2013, we will rebuild. Much of the work that needs to be done revolves around cleanup, rebuilding, and long-term recovery. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Have provincial contracts been awarded yet for the cleanup, rebuild, and recovery efforts in Fort McMurray?

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

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our government is absolutely committed to ensuring that the residents of Fort McMurray have every resource they need for recovery. The work on cleanup and rebuilding has not started yet, and no provincial contracts have been awarded for disaster recovery efforts. We are committed to using local contractors, and as we shift our priorities towards Fort McMurray's long-term recovery, we are amassing a database of local contractors with whom to partner.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you to the Minister.

Madam Speaker, given that as of late I have heard that there has been an increase in heavy equipment being shipped towards Fort McMurray through highway 881, could the minister elaborate on what kinds of equipment are travelling up highway 881 and what the purpose is?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our priority right now is ensuring safety and essential service restoration such as electricity and gas by ATCO. The heavy equipment going up highways 63 and 881 is related to these essential services and operations for the oil sands. Oil sands operations play a vital part in our provincial and federal economies, and we are focused on ensuring that our energy industry has the tools it needs to return to full capacity. Much of the heavy equipment going up the highway is related to those efforts along with utility restoration by ATCO to prepare for the re-entry of Fort McMurray residents.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that it would be beneficial to work with local contractors who are familiar with the region, when choosing contractors for the cleanup, rebuild, and recovery, how will you ensure that local contractors will be prioritized when issuing provincial contracts?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to reassure all local contractors in the region that they have not missed out on anything. There will be local contractors working on rebuilding Fort McMurray, but as of today no provincial contracts have been awarded for recovery. To ensure that local businesses have the

opportunity for work in helping with rebuilding the city, an inventory of available local services has been compiled. Those who are interested can still get on that list by calling 310.4455. Since the beginning of this crisis local businesses have been stepping up to offer their help. All of those offers have been compiled for the regional operations centre, and the Provincial Operations Centre has been contacting every vendor who offered support.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Home-schooling

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Many parents in home-school programs are telling me that they're shocked to hear that their home-school has to claw back funds that traditionally have been paid. What were once routine program reimbursements are no longer being approved. To quote one stakeholder: auditors seem to be making de facto policy that seems to be arbitrary and very inconsistent. End quote. Parents want to know: who in the department is responsible for funding changes, and is the minister aware of the inconsistent audits that reimburse some parents for specific expenses while denying others reimbursement for the same expenses?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you Madam Speaker, and thanks to the member for the question. Certainly, it's important to understand from the beginning that in regard to home-schooling, charter schools, private schools, and our public and separate schools we restored funding for all of those areas. We moved it for enrolment as well. That being said, as well, it's very important for us to keep track of public monies as it moves to each of those areas. I know that there have been some difficulties in regard to home-schooling and some of the receipts that they have to present. Certainly, I'm happy to take a look to resolve that issue.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member. First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that a stakeholder has written, "We are deeply, deeply concerned over the NDP government's disregard for choice in education" and since this Albertan says, "Home education is a viable option, and clawing back on the significantly lower amount of funding that is provided per student compared to public school children is affecting that option" and given that this is only one e-mail among many voicing the urgent concerns about the impact of these clawbacks, what will the minister do to fix this inequity?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I just finished saying, we have maintained the funding, in fact, growth for enrolment in all of the different areas of funding for the province. So if someone is choosing to suggest that that's not the case, which is simply not true, if the member opposite is fanning those flames, then he'd better go back and do his job properly and make sure that he doesn't spread disinformation to the public in Alberta.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, given that the current government has already given the opposition cause to speak in this House several times in defence of parental choice in education and since these inconsistent audit processes have left many home education parents and administrators worried that this government's hidden agenda is to shut down home education programs administered by independent

schools, will the minister provide certainty that these threats to parental choice are not something that he, his government, nor his ministry personnel condone?

Mr. Eggen: Well, once again, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to somehow justify those very, very poor-quality statements by even suggesting that there's anything to it. You know, fearmongering is not the way to run a school, and that's what this gentleman is doing here, and quite frankly it's inappropriate. School choice is there, parental choice is there, and anything else is just subterfuge by the Wildrose.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Tourism Strategy

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week in budgetary estimates for Culture and Tourism I pressed the minister for the new plan for Alberta's tourism levy. The levy was introduced to provide sustainable funding for Alberta's \$8 billion tourism industry, and when invested in tourism, every levy dollar returns \$20 to our provincial treasury. Now, the minister told us that the \$30 million generated from the levy would be redirected into general revenue. To the minister. Had that \$30 million been invested in tourism, it would have generated as much as \$600 million in tax revenue. Why is he shortchanging Albertans?

The Deputy Speaker: The minister of culture.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. As I stated during estimates last week, our government is still committed to tourism by investing \$49.5 million to promote this province through marketing initiatives. We're also investing \$11.5 million with the tourism division in support of the tourism industry. We are going to continue doing that as well as protecting the services that Albertans care about such as health care and education.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That \$49 million is a \$5 million cut to Travel Alberta.

Given that last fiscal year this government took 23 per cent of the tourism levy and siphoned it into general revenue and given that this year's budget increased that number from 23 per cent to 33 per cent siphoned into general revenue, to the minister: this is an alarming trend. Is there a limit to this, or is it like the Finance minister's debt ceiling, that has no limit?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thanks to the member for the question. I want to be clear that it was, in fact, the previous Conservative government that started the practice of putting the tourism levy into general revenues. Let's just make that clear to begin with. This government is committed to tourism as a tool to diversify our economy, and my ministry will continue working with everyone in the industry to complete our vision of growing this industry to a \$10 billion industry by the year 2020.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dr. Starke: Madam Speaker, with everybody but the 17 people on the Alberta Strategic Tourism Council.

Given that that council was dissolved by this government because the minister believes that the new Premier's Advisory Committee on the Economy would better integrate tourism into the government's overall strategy and given that the minister did not meet with the council and indicated that their work would be counterproductive and given that the Premier's advisory committee does not have a single tourism expert on it, to the minister: you just fired over 500 collective years of tourism industry experience . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. member?

Dr. Starke: Where is that input going to come from?

2:20

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. Quite frankly, our government and our Premier through the creation of my ministry have signalled to all of our sectors that economic development and recovery is a priority for our government. I can assure members of this House that I work very closely with the ministers of Culture and Tourism, Energy, and Agriculture and Forestry and that the Premier's Advisory Committee on the Economy is a sample of some of our sectors. It is not inclusive of all, and that's because there are many round-tables that exist throughout the various ministries where we are constantly in consultation with our stakeholders, looking for opportunities to build on our strengths.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week the NDP opposition in Nova Scotia introduced a motion to raise Nova Scotia's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. No surprise there. However, unlike the NDP government here, they want to specifically exempt small businesses and family businesses, recognizing that they can't afford increased labour costs. Is it the position of this government that their NDP allies in Nova Scotia are wrong to do this exemption, or is our current government proceeding with wage increases that they recognize will hurt small businesses?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of jobs, skills, and labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to hear that our cohorts in Nova Scotia are looking at raising it to a \$15 per hour minimum wage because, of course, we know that raising that minimum wage is going to support real families, families that are currently having to go to the food bank to support themselves. We are looking forward to consulting with Albertans and with local businesses to hear more about how our phase-in of the \$15 minimum wage can support Alberta families.

Mr. Hunter: I'm sorry. I didn't actually hear the answer about how it was going to help small businesses.

Madam Speaker, given that personal and business insolvencies in Alberta have increased by a devastating 47 per cent over last year and given that an internal assessment had warned that a higher minimum wage could result in significant job losses and given that the current government seems unwilling to accept the advice of their own officials, can the government table definitive evidence showing that their wage increase won't have a negative impact on the most vulnerable Albertans?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We've been keeping well abreast of the research regarding minimum wage and the impact of it. We are also submitting our updated minimum wage profiles, reviewing Stats Canada information, and consulting with Albertans about this crucial issue. We know that raising the minimum wage will increase the spending power of Albertans and will help to stimulate the economy by providing more money for things like clothes, food, school supplies, and these types of things. It's unfortunate that the opposition does not see the value in paying people a decent wage.

Mr. Hunter: Madam Speaker, given that under the current government's watch the percentage and number of Albertans earning the minimum wage has actually increased and given that figures released last week show that in Calgary's job market wages offered for available jobs are declining below the national average and given that this government's alleged job-creation measures tend to get cancelled, is this government actually doing anything to support job creators now, or is it telling Albertans to just go apply for EI?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the first statement: as we increase the minimum wage, more people will be making it because, of course, we are raising that ceiling. This is what's happening with our minimum wage increase. Supporting small business is a top priority for this government. In fact, we have cut small-business taxes from 3 per cent down to 2 per cent, a 33 per cent cut. We will be consulting, we are looking at the numbers, and we are committed to making sure that this phase-in goes well here in Alberta.

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

Energy Policies (continued)

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Under the NDP the going rate for the social licence to get pipelines built is a \$3 billion carbon tax on everyone and everything. This social licence isn't working and is only going to hurt everyday Albertans. This weekend we saw friends of the NDP setting up shop on the B.C. coast to break free from the fossil fuels. Even with the typical Alberta family paying an extra thousand a year, nothing will ever be good enough for the NDP hacktivists. Will the NDP cancel this risky and damaging carbon tax?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, our climate leadership plan does exactly what the Canada West Foundation, for example, encourages western provinces to do, which is to create their own climate plans. If the opposition had their way, they would sit on their hands and have a solution imposed upon us. I commend Canada West Foundation's report to the opposition. It will make for better reading than some of the climate denial that, for example, the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat retweets on Twitter.

Mr. Panda: The ignorance of those protestors is astounding. While they protested oil, they sat in kayaks made from petroleum products.

Given that the deadline for the NDP's final recommendation on Trans Mountain to the federal government is this Friday and given that the shovel-ready pipeline projects are a surefire way to support

our economy, will the NDP commit to voicing strong support for the Trans Mountain expansion and the great benefits it would bring to our province?

Ms Phillips: Madam Speaker, of course, when we released our climate leadership plan along with Suncor, Shell, Cenovus, and CNRL, who are, of course, shippers on Trans Mountain, we enjoyed their support and that of others because of the fact that the climate leadership plan reduces any doubt about Alberta's environmental record. This is, of course, not an approach that either of the conservative parties is interested in. They would rather hold us back. This province's climate leadership plan is moving us forward.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that the NDP ranks are full of experienced hacktivists, usually against the oil sands, and that now is the time for them to rally around the pipelines and given that the best thing the NDP could do would be to follow the Wildrose lead and support the Energy East, Trans Mountain, and Northern Gateway pipelines, will the NDP government direct their hacktivists to help, not hurt, our economy and have them join Albertans in supporting these crucial pipeline projects?

Ms Phillips: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm always very pleased when we take the trip down memory lane with members of the Official Opposition given, of course, that we've got half a dozen folks across the way who ran on a climate denial platform. We don't even have to look too far in the rear-view mirror to find more climate denial. Our approach is opening up markets and refurbishing our reputation. I will remind the members opposite that if it's a trip down memory lane that they would like, it leads to a lake of fire.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Opium Use in Indigenous Communities

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week AHS released the first-quarter number of fentanyl-related deaths of 2016. It's extremely distressing that we have to track this figure in the first place, let alone the alarming fact that fentanyl killed 69 Albertans in the first three months of this year, which puts us on track for the same number of fatalities as in 2015. Sadly, there's been no change in the prevalence of deaths. To the Health minister: how many of the 274 Albertans who died after ingesting fentanyl in 2015 were indigenous Albertans?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. Absolutely, we are saddened by any of the losses of life through fentanyl overdoses, which is why our government has been working very diligently with our partners both in law enforcement as well as with the federal and other provincial governments as well as indigenous communities to ensure that we're able to expand access to the potentially life-saving antidote, naloxone. We are very pleased that we were able to announce last week that as of this past Friday Albertans are able to access naloxone in a pharmacy without a prescription and that loved ones are able to pick up that prescription for families that they're concerned about.

Mr. Rodney: With great respect, Madam Speaker, I believe Albertans deserve an answer to the previous question. Perhaps we'll get it in the next one. No new information, unfortunately.

Given that the number of fentanyl-related fatalities is not decreasing despite the government's self-applauded efforts to alert

Albertans about this deadly opioid and given that the Health ministry just mentioned that they've recently made naloxone available without a prescription in an effort to make it more widely available across the province – but there are a limited number of pharmacies serving Alberta's indigenous people living on-reserve, and this group is particularly at risk – to the Health minister: how are you ensuring all of Alberta's indigenous peoples have access to naloxone?

2:30

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. Currently the system is that pharmacies sign up to be able to distribute the naloxone kit. We have tripled the supply of our province's naloxone kits, from 3,000 to 9,000, and we will make more available as demand increases. We also have a number of the kits available on-reserve for any of the reserves that do not have access to pharmacies, and we are working very closely with our partners in Indigenous Relations to ensure that we are able to get those naloxone kits into the hands of the people who need them.

Mr. Rodney: The question was: how can she assure Albertans that all indigenous peoples have access?

We'll try this question, please. Given that on March 9 the minister indicated that an opioid addictions plan for indigenous peoples was an immediate priority and given that she asked me to check with her in two months about the establishment of the indigenous advisory committee to help her ministry address the opioid addiction problem and that now it's over two months later, to the Health minister: what's the status not only of the advisory committee but also the recommendation of the Mental Health Review Committee to develop an opioid addictions plan?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. We've been working very closely with our partners in Indigenous Relations, and we've also reached out to chiefs across the province to ensure that we're able to get naloxone kits available as well through the health centres on-reserve. Through our mental health and addictions implementation team stemming from the Valuing Mental Health report, we are continuing to work very closely with the communities to ensure that the services that are required are available.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow. Once again, I'll remind you about the preambles, please.

Wildfire-affected Postsecondary Institutions and Students

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the last two weeks Fort McMurray residents have shown tremendous strength and resolve. Now they wait to return to their community. Many people are looking at the costs ahead. This includes people who have had their source of income disrupted paying off student loans. To the Minister of Advanced Education: what is being done to ease the burden on these residents paying their student loans?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'm pleased to say that we announced last week that all student loan payments will be automatically deferred for six months interest free for affected students, which mirrors a similar commitment that the federal government has made, and I ask that all students who have been affected by the

wildfires please reach out to Student Aid Alberta to make sure that they can get their student loan payments deferred. When people have been displaced from their homes and their jobs, the last thing that they should have to do is worry about costs like student loans, and I'm proud that our government is dedicating the necessary resources to meeting the needs of those affected by the wildfires.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In these difficult times we have seen Alberta step up and demonstrate the strength and resolve that gets us through events like this wildfire together. Will the Minister of Advanced Education tell us how postsecondary institutions are playing a part in this?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm proud of the actions that the postsecondary institutions have taken to step up and pull together to support the Keyano College students who have been affected by this. Roughly 2,000 evacuees have been accommodated on postsecondary campuses all across the province, and we've also had all of our institutions reach out to say that they have spaces available if they're needed. They're doing their part, and I'm very proud of the support that these institutions have provided to people in need.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that we now know that both Keyano College campuses in Fort McMurray remain intact, can the minister tell this Assembly what his department is doing to help Keyano students impacted by this fire? [interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I've heard some cries from the opposition that we're shutting universities down. They must be confusing our platform with their platform.

I've had the chance to talk to staff, students, and faculty at Keyano College, and we're working with technical training institutes across the province to support students registered at Keyano to continue their studies. Again, I'll urge any affected apprentices to reach out to Advanced Education as soon as they're able so that we can ensure that they get the training that they need. I want students, staff, the Fort McMurray community, and all Albertans . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Wildfire Prevention and Control

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Another Alberta community has declared a local state of emergency due to wildfire yesterday. This time it's in the riding I serve, Grande Prairie-Smoky, where some residents of the MD of Greenview are currently under a mandatory evacuation order, and the fire season has just barely begun. This government is trying hard to calm Albertans' fears, saying that it will fund wildfire management as necessary despite having budgeted only \$86 million, probably one-third of the average. To the Premier: will you abandon the accounting sleight of hand and actually budget according to the realistic historical figures for managing wildfires?

Ms Hoffman: I have to say that if the opposition is saying that the budget forecast caused these devastating fires, I think that's a contemptible accusation and not befitting of being an MLA, Madam Speaker. This year we budgeted more than \$280 million, which is slightly more than the average expenditures for the last five years, but rest assured, Albertans, that we are investing every dollar necessary to make sure that we move forward and address these fires. To accuse otherwise is simply disrespectful and dishonest.

Mr. Loewen: Well, I guess the minister maybe needs to look at their own paperwork.

Given that the FireSmart program has been helping communities in numerous northern energy projects mitigate the risk of wildfires for decades and that while these practices don't prevent forest fires, they certainly lessen their impact on communities and given that FireSmart has helped reduce forest fire impact throughout the world and that the Flat Top Complex report recommended adopting its practices, to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Your government has chosen to reduce the Flat Top Complex's budget by \$4.25 million. Does this cut affect grants . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. member?
Go ahead, Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Certainly, we have 49 per cent more seasonal fires this year than is typical, 9 per cent more contract firefighters than we had five years ago, and the same number of air tankers we had last year available at the same time. Fearmongering when so many people are living through the worst disaster that we've experienced in many years is irresponsible and disrespects all Albertans who have stepped up to help each other during this very difficult time.

Mr. Cooper: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Point of order noted.

You can proceed with your second supplemental, but I don't want to hear another preamble.

Mr. Loewen: Okay. I'll show you the notes on the preamble, and the minister can look at the notes there, too.

Given that the FireSmart best practices recommended by the Flat Top Complex report help to slow the progression of wildfires in communities and given that while implementing FireSmart principles is costly for communities, it pales in comparison to the cost of rebuilding, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will your ministry look into sharing the cost of implementing these FireSmart practices with municipalities in order to make Alberta communities safer places to live and raise a family for years to come?

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

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not sure why he directed to me a question that clearly resides with Agriculture and Forestry. However, as a member of Slave Lake I certainly am very thankful for the work that FireSmart has done in my community, and we continue to support the rollout of the FireSmart program. It's distributed in the fall and winter. Obviously, it had nothing to do with this fire whatsoever. We'll continue to look at the pacing of the Flat Top recommendations, but we've accepted all of them, are rolling them out, and continue to support the FireSmart program.

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

Electricity Power Purchase Agreements

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As Albertans look with dread at their electricity bills after January 2017, a modest but meaningful credit will disappear seemingly into thin air. As Alberta's Balancing Pool absorbs negative contracts due to cancelled PPAs, what has to date benefited Albertans will disappear and likely become an ongoing cost to electricity consumers. To the Minister of Energy: in being accountable to Albertans as promised, has your government calculated what the total annual cost will be to taxpayers and consumers as the Balancing Pool continues to absorb these contracts?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question. First of all, we need to step back a little bit for context. We need to be clear. These PPAs are not being handed back because of the increase to SGER. These PPAs are already unprofitable, and the issue here is what the power companies believe the previous government agreed to. This is no small issue, so we are being very deliberate about how we proceed.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

2:40

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll answer the question. It will be roughly a billion dollars.

Given that government has continuously deflected blame for the cancellation of PPA contracts and given this government's refusal to acknowledge legally binding principles, which hints at litigation, and given that many of these same companies are, surprisingly, the largest investors in renewables in Alberta, again to the minister: did you not consider the implications of fighting with the very companies that you're asking to make risky investments in your climate leadership plan?

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question again. Again, these companies believe they signed contracts that send profits in their direction and losses to the public. We're being very deliberate – and, again, this is no small issue – about how we proceed. The government has been very clear that we're going to take all necessary steps to protect ratepayers.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's interesting; I see that Enbridge just invested, because of PPAs, over in France.

Given that the accelerated phase-out of coal will give us an excess of thermal coal and given that the environment minister has repeatedly implicated coal as detrimental to the health of both the planet and its people and the Energy minister confirmed in estimates that thermal coal may still be exported to other jurisdictions before and after the phase-out, again to the minister of . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, do you have a question? Please get to the question.

Mr. Gotfried: Of course.

Again to the Minister of Energy: does coal magically conform to your standards and do emissions mysteriously disappear when it is burned on the other side of the world?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question. I want to confirm that you're incorrect on the thermal coal. During my estimates I said that we would export metallurgical coal, not thermal coal.

Members' Statements

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

Red Deer and Area Economic Opportunities

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise and speak today about the tremendous economic opportunities presented by Red Deer and surrounding area. I am honoured to represent Red Deer-North. My pride in Red Deer is always inspired by investing time and thought into the issues that my 50,000-plus constituents engage with on a daily basis.

During our current economic challenges the development and diversification of our local economy are top of mind. I am delighted to speak at any opportunity of the great people and businesses I represent. For example, Red Deer-North is home to one of Olymel's largest and most modern food-processing locations. Employing over 1,300 people, the Red Deer-North location serves several large export markets in addition to supplying the market in western Canada.

Located moments outside my electoral district is NOVA Chemicals. The Joffre mother ship is the largest ethylene and polyethylene plant in North America and amongst the top five largest in the world. It employs over 700 individuals plus contractors. Having just completed the polyethylene expansion phase 1 project, NOVA's legacy community nature trail is both a celebration of this milestone and a demonstration of their commitment to the Red Deer community and the preservation of its wetlands.

With a steady 3 per cent population growth per year my central Alberta gem can be recognized as a viable and optimal location for investment. The recent government investment in Red Deer's infrastructure provides strong opportunities for local businesses to continue supporting Red Deerians, Albertans, Canadians, and global citizens now and in the future.

Madam Speaker, the third-largest city in Alberta is now home to over 100,000 people, and I am dedicated to advocating for and seeking out opportunities that support their momentum.

Thank you.

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

Volunteer Support for Wildfire-affected Albertans

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There are certain things in life that happen that are so meaningful that it's hard to put words to the experience, and I can honestly say that for me having my children, holding my grandmother in my arms as she passed away, and celebrating my 20th wedding anniversary are at the top of my list of moments that I will not only treasure but that keep me grounded every day, especially after having the great privilege of being elected to this Legislature.

My family and I are avid volunteers, and we are always humbled that people give of their time and their busy schedules to help with a cause or to fund raise for local programs. This past weekend in the beautiful and diverse constituency of Chestermere-Rocky View 1,200 people came together to fund raise for their northern neighbours in Fort McMurray and other surrounding areas affected by wildfires. We've all watched the footage and seen the pictures, lived every moment of this fire through the media and through the

eyes of our leader, the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin, and the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. They received a hero's welcome in our little city, and I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt, Fort Mac, that Chestermere-Rocky View has your back.

Here are some of the community members that came together to bring this fundraiser to life in five days: my husband, Malkeet Aheer, who led the charge, gathering 50 volunteers; Alex Halat of the Chestermere-Langdon Oilmen's Association, who contributes to our community through fundraisers like the longest hockey game, where he raises money for the Children's hospital; Jed Snatic, a local entrepreneur and community leader; Patrick Watson of the Knights of Columbus; the Chestermere recreation centre; and Synergy, led by Patricia Sproule, who has said so perfectly that there was an unprecedented response to the call for volunteers.

This is how Albertans get things done. We are resilient, thoughtful, and generous. People who donated on May 13 are having a hard time making ends meet and have lost their jobs, and they are hurting. Yet with a few calls in a few days the city of Chestermere and Langdon and the surrounding communities could not wait to help.

We are proud Albertans, and we are proud because we take care of our neighbours without prompting. I'm so proud to call this province my home and my fellow Albertans my family.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Progressive Conservative Opposition

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's been a full year now since last May 5. Our PC caucus has willingly embraced the job given us by the voters of Alberta. In this House PC caucus attacks policies and not people. PC caucus pushed back on Bill 6, which disrespects farmers and ranchers. We led the charge against the long-term damage that a \$60 billion debt will do not only today but to Alberta's children and grandchildren. We debunked the false premise of the \$15 minimum wage. Albertans now know the carbon tax is really a carbon attack on Alberta, taking away jobs and investment in the short term and causing almost everything Albertans buy to cost more for all time until the policy is corrected. Through our efforts Alberta also knows this carbon attack will do little for the environment.

On the positive side we have convinced government to miraculously convert from pipeline deniers to advocates as the best way to keep jobs here and pay for infrastructure and social programs. We have gotten the government to reduce small-business tax by a third and got the government to commit to maintain parental choice in education, though it took a big battle to make that happen. Not bad for a team new at opposition, with an interim leader and not a lot of money to spend.

Recently in Red Deer a thousand members at their own expense attended our annual general meeting. They left energized by our absolute commitment to serve under Albertans while other parties yearn to rule over this great province. We remain the only party with a solid fiscal policy and a caring social policy. We know there is a long way to go. We need infrastructure to drive quality of life as well as the economy. We know that looking after those who need it is the same as looking after ourselves as we may all need help one day as circumstances arise. We are the only party in this House that fully grasps these realities.

Through Engage and other efforts we need to get this message to all Albertans. Then and only then might Alberta voters consider making a positive choice three years from now by choosing

Progressive Conservatives, not for our sake but, if we do our jobs well, for Alberta's sake.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Filipino Wildfire Evacuees

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to bring attention to the 5,000 evacuees from the Fort McMurray wildfires who come from the Filipino community. They are Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, and temporary foreign workers who call Fort McMurray home. Currently these men and women and children are housed temporarily at the Northlands expo centre and Lister hall at the University of Alberta while some are hosted by Filipino families.

On Saturday evening I was honoured to attend a fundraising event organized through the offices of the Council of Edmonton Filipino Associations to help raise funds to support Filipino evacuees. Community businesses and individuals organized very quickly to supply Filipino comfort foods, including pancit bread, to evacuees who have been longing for their traditional dishes. Numerous local singers, dancers, and musicians performed for the appreciative audience. Spiritual guidance was offered by Alberta area 1 pastor Reverend Leopoldo Narido of the Jesus Is Lord Church while Edmonton Honorary Consul General Esmeralda P. Agbulos, who is known as the Mother General to all Alberta Filipinos, provided her eternal message of strength and perseverance in the face of adversity to the Filipino community.

Madam Speaker, the Filipino community, some 120,000 strong, is a rapidly growing segment of our population and represents the best that Albertans are known to stand for: strength in family and dedication to community, that is demonstrated best in times of need.

I would also like to highlight an upcoming Filipino cultural celebration, the Edmonton Filipino Fiesta and parade, taking place in Churchill Square June 11 and 12. I would encourage everyone to attend this exciting event celebrating the food and artistic traditions of the Philippines.

Madam Speaker, I was honoured to participate with the Filipino community in support of the displaced kababayan, or countrymen, who along with over 80,000 evacuees from Fort McMurray will need our ongoing help and compassion for many months to come.

I know that all Albertans are up to the task. We will be there for the people of Fort McMurray. We will rebuild this vital energy city.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadow-lark.

2:50 Edmontonian Support for Wildfire Evacuees

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to recognize the many people across this province who have opened their arms, their homes, and their pocketbooks in support of wildfire evacuees.

We've seen the footage of the harrowing journey that so many of our fellow Albertans made down highway 63, and we've seen the stress and confusion our neighbours have experienced trying to reconnect with friends, family, and animals that have been displaced. But I've also seen something else, Madam Speaker, something that has made me even more proud of this beautiful province. I've seen the people of Alberta rally together to do everything they can from the very beginning. As thousands of Albertans rushed from their homes with little more than the clothes on their back, it was ordinary people who packed up their vehicles with thousands of litres of gas, food, and water and headed toward the fire to help evacuees stuck on the highway. It was ordinary

people who opened their homes and businesses to do everything in their power to show that evacuees were not in this alone, and it is ordinary people who continue to support those efforts weeks after these devastating events took place.

Madam Speaker, we continue to hear stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and though we are still in the early stages of dealing with the aftermath, I am confident that our neighbours to the north and this province as a whole will grow stronger because of the efforts of regular Albertans. Volunteers in my constituency have been tirelessly gathering and disbursing items for evacuees out of the west Edmonton Days Inn & Suites, who have been kind enough to offer space. Just yesterday a young girl from the town of Millet, after raising nearly \$1,000 from her lemonade stand, bought hundreds of toys and brought them to Edmonton for young evacuees. Newcap Radio in West Edmonton Mall hosted a toy drive and gathered thousands of items to give out to evacuee children as well.

Madam Speaker, I could go on about the incredible initiatives and stories that pour in from around the province, but I would just like to say that despite what you may have heard, the Alberta advantage is still strong and well in this province. To every person who has helped with relief efforts, from the first responders to the evacuee centres and everyone in between: thank you so much for what you've done for this province.

Thank you.

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

Carbon Levy and Health Care Costs

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the past several months it has become abundantly clear that the NDP simply does not understand the full impacts of their punishing and regressive carbon tax. One might think that a government would consider all potential consequences before charging ahead with a policy, but we all know that unawareness of the subject matter has never stopped the NDP in the past.

In the off chance that they're listening, I'd like to offer yet another thing they have failed to properly take into account, the impact of a carbon tax on health and seniors' organizations. Consider how much electricity a hospital requires to power complex medical equipment. Consider how much fuel is required by an ambulance during the course of a shift or an aircraft responding to an emergency in a very remote location. Consider the natural gas usage of a seniors' lodge or supportive living facility as they keep residents comfortable over the winter months.

In response to this, all the government can offer are vague assurances of a pie-in-the-sky efficiency program while telling Albertans that they're just going to have to make do with less and start changing their behaviour. Air ambulance organizations like STARS, HALO, and Phoenix are organizations funded largely by donations and municipal grants. How are they going to change their behaviour? Are they going to be forced to cover less area, or has the NDP brain trust sketched out plans for solar-powered, electric medevac helicopters? How will seniors' facilities absorb the tens of thousands of dollars in increased costs on everything from heat to food to transportation? The proposed rebate won't even begin to cover the added expense for residents or for facility operators, but perhaps they can just follow the NDP's advice and turn the thermostat down a few degrees in January.

For the sake of our health and seniors' services the NDP must back down now from this most regressive and poorly targeted tax.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 16

Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce Bill 16, an act to amend the Traffic Safety Act. We have talked to stakeholders and traffic safety partners, and the changes that we're proposing reflect current and future traffic safety issues. There are four main legislative amendments that we are making in the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016.

Currently the legislation is vague about drivers producing out-of-date proof of insurance, known as pink cards, that some officers have ticketed them for even though they may have a current pink card as well. The first amendment would prevent drivers from receiving a ticket if they can produce a valid pink card.

First-time offenders whose blood-alcohol concentration is less than .16, or double the legal limit, currently can apply for an exemption to the ignition interlock program. An amendment will strengthen impaired driving legislation by removing that application for first-time offenders.

The six general housekeeping amendments aim to clarify intent, to correct errors in drafting instruction, to remove obsolete provisions, and to achieve legislative consistency.

The last amendment, Madam Speaker, will allow the government to regulate transportation network companies such as Uber as outlined by the government on February 29, 2016.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to discussing Bill 16 with all members of the House. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 16 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm rising to table the requisite number of copies of written responses to questions about the Ministry of Energy estimates from committee last week. There were seven questions where a written response was requested, and the Ministry of Energy has provided those responses.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of seniors.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to table the responses to estimates questions that due to time I was unable to answer. Copies are being sent to members who asked the questions and to the leader of each party. I have five copies of these documents for tabling.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of the Canada West climate change report to support what the minister was speaking about in question period. Our climate leadership plan does exactly what the Can West encourages western provinces to do, which is to create their own

climate plans. If the opposition had their way, they would sit on their hands and have a solution imposed on us. The report states . . .

Mr. Cooper: Point of order.

Mr. Dang: . . . that Saskatchewan should consider pricing carbon as British Columbia and Alberta have.

The Deputy Speaker: Proceed with the tabling, hon. member, please. Thank you.

Point of order acknowledged.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm rising on a point of order under 23(h), allegations against another member. It's been a long-standing tradition of this House that during tablings we stick to the business at hand, which is a tabling, not making wild allegations . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, if I could just interrupt you. Given that we're still in part of the Routine, we will defer the discussion on this point of order until afterwards. Thank you.

Do we have any further tablings?

All right. I guess we have no more tablings. We'll now consider points of order.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on the point of order from earlier in question period. I want to make two very distinct references to the standing orders based upon the egregious comments that were made by the Minister of Health, first and foremost, under 23(h), "makes allegations against another Member."

3:00

For the benefit of the House the allegation that was made by the Health minister was that the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky was fearmongering. I'd just like to take about 35 seconds to provide to the House exactly what the member said. The Minister of Health said that the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky had implied, or fearmongered, that the budget cut caused the fire or was part of the reason for the fire. So for clarity's sake:

Another Albertan community has declared a local state of emergency due to wildfire yesterday. This time it's in the riding I serve, Grande Prairie-Smoky, where some residents of the MD of Greenview are currently under mandatory evacuation order, and the fire season has barely begun. This government is trying hard to calm Albertans' fears, saying that it will fund wildfire management as necessary despite having budgeted only \$86 million . . . To the Premier: will you abandon the accounting sleight of hand and actually budget according to the realistic historical figures for wildfire management?

Madam Speaker, at no point in time did the hon. member make any reference to the budget causing fires; in fact, didn't even go close to that. The challenge is that every single time this government has to answer a hard question, whether it be on budgets and wildfire budgets or be it on another topic that they don't like to speak about, the only answer that ever comes is: you are fearmongering. This is an accusation that is totally unacceptable, particularly given recent events.

So let me continue with my point of order to (j), "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." Madam Speaker, unparliamentary language is more about the context in which it is used and less about the word that is used.

I would like to make a case that the word "fearmongering" be considered to be unparliamentary in this Assembly, and let me tell

you why. The last time this government used the word "fearmongering," the Leader of the Opposition's house was burning down, and it is disgusting. It is more than a little disappointing, Madam Speaker, to hear the hon. member ask a question about wildfire management and be accused of fearmongering at a time when we saw some of the most horrific events of two weeks ago. No one at that time or this time made any statement like: you cut the budget, and now the province is burning down. No one made any statements like that. They were legitimate questions.

So, Madam Speaker, I ask certainly in this context, and I believe that the speaker should consider the use of language because I can assure you it is likely to create disorder if the government continues to use it.

I would ask that the member do the right thing and withdraw the comments so that we can all move on.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister to respond.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and respond to this point of order. I think the hon. member and I agree on one thing, if not much else, and that is that words need to be considered in the context in which they are used. In this particular instance, the words were used in the context of questions surrounding wildfire. Now, the member has just read out for the benefit of the House what exactly was said, and it is our view that this is not, in fact, a point of order. It's simply a dispute as to the facts.

The member has asked that the term "fearmongering" not be allowed in the House, and I think that – you know, he's referenced several other uses, which, of course, we don't have in front of us at this moment. We have only this one particular instance, but the words that he read out certainly imply that there should be fear. He asked that people have their fears calmed – so we're trying hard to calm the fears of the individuals – and then implied that those fears arose because of the way wildfire budgeting is done. It has always been the case, Madam Speaker, that a base budget exists to fund the operations throughout the year and that emergency funds are advanced as needed. That has been the case for years, and the opposition well knows it. They nonetheless choose to draw attention to this fact and imply that in some way the response to the disaster was inadequate because we budgeted in the normal course as is done in every other year. I would certainly call that fearmongering.

If they choose to become disorderly when they make statements which make implications to the general public which are prone to incite unnecessary fear or do not represent the state of facts as they actually exist, it is, I think, a responsibility of the government to set the record straight and to ensure that members of the public are aware that those statements are inaccurate. There were multiple statements made today in question period that are inaccurate. That elevated the temperature in the House, certainly, to the point at which we found ourselves, but it's not the case that using the term "fearmongering" to describe those actions would be inaccurate. This is a dispute as to the facts.

You know, the hon. member stood up and referenced another event which apparently used the term "fearmongering." I can't refer to that event because I don't have the Blues in front of me. I have no way to verify whether those facts are in fact accurate. Calling it accounting sleight of hand to budget in the normal course is not appropriate. To imply that somehow the response was inadequate because we budgeted in the normal course is not appropriate. This is a dispute about whether or not that had an impact, and it is our view that it didn't.

You know, Madam Speaker, it's challenging that they would raise this particular point and imply that the term "fearmongering" should never be used again in this House. First, because terms should be read in their context. Secondly, I think to say that spewing out a series of false and faulty premises and then, when someone comes up and calls them on it, the calling them on it is the thing that's likely to create disorder is somewhat absurd.

It's not appropriate in this place, where we know that the public is watching, where we know that people are stressed out and have significant concerns, to make statements that one knows rely on faulty premises. It's not appropriate, and I think as the government we have a responsibility to disseminate the appropriate information to the public and to call what the opposition is doing what it is, which is fearmongering.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster, on the point of order.

Dr. Starke: I didn't hear any of that.

The Deputy Speaker: You don't wish to speak?

Dr. Starke: I would like to speak, if possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Go ahead on the point of order.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I apologize. I didn't hear your remarks when you were standing.

Madam Speaker, I've listened to the discussion on this point of order, and I'd like to just offer a few comments. I guess I'd like to start by saying that I find it absolutely incredible that the hon. minister is defending her colleague's remarks. Unbelievable.

3:10

Madam Speaker, we know that we are dealing right now with a situation where tensions are particularly high. You yourself in your home community had a portion of your community evacuated. We now have another evacuation in the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky's constituency. The inference that somehow the members of the Official Opposition are suggesting that the change in the methodology or the change in the amount for budgeting is somehow responsible for the cause of the fire, that inference, that came from the government side, is so far off base and is, in fact, what caused the outburst in the benches here.

You know, the use of the term "fearmongering," quite frankly, goes on regularly, and I can tell you that it is something that has gone on a long time. That, in fact, is not what triggered that exchange. What triggered the exchange was the budgetary change – let's just call it that – that members of the Official Opposition were suggesting that that was the cause. That's not at all what was being suggested. But that certainly does cause disruption within the Chamber, and this minister knows it and members of the government know it, and they know that they should stop short of choosing those comments to make.

So the simple way to extricate ourselves from this situation would be for the minister to withdraw the remarks and to apologize so that we can move on to substantive debate on other matters.

The Deputy Speaker: Any others wishing to speak to the point of order?

I believe we have a case here where once again there is a difference on how we interpret words. You're quite right that context is everything. I'm hearing that one side of the House interpreted the situation differently than the other side of the House.

I think you have made a very valid point, that right now people are very sensitive, and it's very easy to incite fear, rightly or wrongly, in people just because of the situation. So I think we want to caution all members to be careful in the words that we use, that we aren't making a bad situation more difficult for the people we serve in any of the words that we speak here in this House.

That said, I really hesitate to rule the word "fearmongering" as unparliamentary because, as the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster has noted, it has been used quite regularly on occasions, and there may be times where it's quite appropriate to use it. So I don't think we can rule it a blanket out of order. But I would caution members on both sides to think about the words that you use and be respectful of the people we serve in everything that we say.

I will rule that there is no point of order.

Second point of order.

Point of Order Statements during Tablings

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just wrapping my head around the ruling.

Earlier, during daily Routine, an hon. member rose during tablings and made accusations against the opposition. Traditionally speaking, in this Chamber Standing Order 37 lays out the procedures for tabling documents. It doesn't speak to making accusations about what the opposition would or wouldn't do. More so, the tradition of the Assembly has been to table the document, speak to what the document is but not the politics around the document.

The Deputy Speaker: Did you wish to respond?

Mr. Dang: I'd like to withdraw my comments.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West has withdrawn his comments, and I trust that that's satisfactory.

But I would like to just comment, related to the first point of order as well, that I don't have the benefit of the Blues, so I don't know if what you read from was the main question or supplementary. I think as a general rule that's why preambles are not appropriate, and that's, again, the reason why we don't add them when we're doing tablings. We just have to be cautious of the words because they do incite tempers and they do create more disorder in the House.

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 8 at this time to allow the Assembly to proceed immediately to consideration of Bill 205 in Committee of the Whole.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Orders of the Day Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Good afternoon. I would like to call the committee to order.

Bill 205
Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical
Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered in respect to this bill? The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Madam Chair. Once again it is truly an honour for me to rise and open our deliberations on Bill 205, the Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016, at this stage of the legislative process. You know, I've been extremely humbled and encouraged by the response from all sides of this House, and I believe that we now collectively have the opportunity to make this bill even stronger.

First and foremost, I want to remind the House of the importance of this legislation. I know that nobody needs reminding at this point, but at least we've learned that the total deaths from fentanyl in 2015 were 274. This year we have already lost 69 people because of this dangerous and deadly opioid. We do not know how many people have been killed as a result of the W-18 compound. It is very difficult to trace because of its incredible potency.

I want to take a minute to address a couple of points that were made in second reading. Yes, I agree that this should be in the Criminal Code of Canada, and, yes, I believe that the federal government should show leadership in this fight. Absolutely. However, we don't have time to wait. What we can do is pass this bill now here in Alberta. Frankly, if we save even one life, then it will all have been worth it.

In my consultation with the constitutional lawyer I was directed to section 92(16) of the Constitution Act of 1982. It provides provincial legislators the ability to regulate "Matters of a merely local or private Nature." I'm not suggesting that we are alone in our country with the opioid abuse that we have here, but we certainly have the ability to deal with it in the most aggressive way possible in order to save the lives of vulnerable people. This bill won't stop people from driving to other jurisdictions and purchasing these devices. If they are motivated, which they are, by money, these types of criminals will always find a way. But this bill will mean that if any device is brought back to our province, it is automatically illegal without a licence.

Sections 92(9) and (13) of the Constitution Act, 1982, also create the provincial power of regulation through licences. Hon. members, legislating to suppress conditions that are likely to favour the commission of crime is well within the provincial legislative competence. There will even be a cross-benefit outcome for society.

Madam Chair, at this point I would like to move a series of amendments. I have the requisite number of copies, and I will read them into the record once you and the table, of course, have a copy.

3:20

The Deputy Chair: We'll just pause for a minute while they're dispersed. This amendment will be A1.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 205, the Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016, be amended as follows.

A. Section 2 is amended (a) in the proposed section 18.8 by striking out "or pharmaceutical mixer" and substituting "pharmaceutical mixer or tablet punch or die"; (b) by striking out the proposed section 18.81 and substituting the following:

Pharmaceutical equipment
 18.81(1) No person shall own, operate or possess designated equipment unless that person holds a licence or is a proprietor or is exempt under subsection (2).

(2) The following are exempt from subsection (1):

- (a) an institution pharmacy;
- (b) a person authorized to compound or manufacture drugs under an Act or regulation of Alberta or Canada;
- (c) any other person designated in the regulations as being exempt.

(c) in the proposed section 18.82, (i) in clause (a) by striking out "under" and substituting "for the purposes of"; (ii) by adding the following after clause (a):

- (a.1) defining terms for the purposes of section 18.8;
- (a.2) respecting the granting, cancellation and suspension of permits for any activity under this Part;
- (a.3) respecting the charging of fees for any permit issued under this Part;

(iii) in clause (b) by striking out "that are exempt from section 18.81" and substituting "as being exempt from section 18.81(1)"; and (iv) in clause (c) by striking out "and return" and substituting "return, sale and destruction."

B. Section 3 is amended by striking out "18.81" and substituting "18.81(1)."

C. Section 4 is amended by striking out "18.81" and substituting "18.81(1)."

D. Section 5 is amended in the proposed section 39.1 (a) by renumbering it as section 39.1(1); (b) in subsection (1) by striking out "18.81" and substituting "18.81(1)"; (c) by adding the following after subsection (1):

- (2) A prosecution under this section may be commenced within 2 years after the commission of the alleged offence, but not afterwards.

Madam Chair, as you can see, more lawyers have gotten involved. Hon. members, the majority of these amendments are technical in nature and are here as a result of the goodwill that has been shown by both sides of this House, and I want to personally thank the government members and opposition members for their collaboration and their input. The amendments have been worked on in consultation with the department and the Health minister's office, so I'm sure that the minister will be able to supplement my comments.

These amendments refer to some language that needs to be consistent with the Pharmacy and Drug Act such as incorporating the term "proprietor" into section 18.81. This removes a bureaucratic hurdle for proprietors, individuals who own, manage, or direct the operation of a facility in which a licensed pharmacy is located. While the proprietor may have a degree of control over the management and conduct of the licensed pharmacy, designated equipment will be licensed because of the pharmacy operation, and ownership of designated equipment would not be under the name of the proprietor. Quite simply, for people like me to understand it, this measure just avoids double permitting.

Other changes specifically allude to a permitting process in the proposed section 18.82 and related issues regarding granting, cancellation, and suspension of permits; the fees for permits; and the sale and destruction of designated equipment. If a piece of high-tech equipment can be used legally by a research laboratory, for example, the government will have the ability to cede it to them. If it is a cheaper, cruder piece of equipment, then of course the government has the option to destroy that piece of equipment.

This amendment also includes a clause to allow for the prosecution to be commenced within two years. This is included in order to mirror section 39 of the act. Essentially, members, this is a reasonable statute of limitations.

Finally, the very first amendment includes another piece of designated equipment. Hon. members, it was clear in second reading and discussions with folks on both sides of the House that the Assembly would like to see more teeth in this bill. Fentanyl

patches were raised as per the, quote, one-for-one, unquote, system that was introduced in an Ontario private member's bill. We also talked about other ways in which illicit fentanyl can be ingested. Unfortunately, these do not fall within the scope of this bill, but – trust me – I considered all of these eventualities when I developed this bill.

However, we are dealing with designated equipment relevant to pill and tablet presses, so I wanted to include tablet punches and dies. The device leaves an imprinted stamp on a pill or tablet. Now, there are very few companies in Alberta that require this type of equipment; therefore, the impact on businesses will be very minimal. Now, many of you have seen pictures of a green pill with the letters “CDN” on one side and “80” on the other side. Hon. members, this is simply the drug dealer trying to fool the victim into believing that they have purchased OxyContin, but instead the victim has purchased fentanyl. You may ask: why? It's because people know that fentanyl can kill them, so victims are trying to stay away from fentanyl.

Certainly, kudos to people on the government side and our side as well. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise on this important piece of legislation and just object to one particular statement that the member made, that many of you have seen these pills. I have never seen any drug, so if it's not a Tylenol, I likely haven't seen it.

Mr. Connolly: T-3s?

Mr. Cooper: Or those, even.

Anyways, the long and the short of it, Madam Chair, is that this is a very, very important piece of legislation, and the Member for Calgary-West has done some very good work on this legislation, so on behalf of the folks of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills I'd just like to say thank you to him for that. As I mentioned in my comments last week, anything that we can do to try and ensure that fentanyl or other opiates get into fewer hands, things that can curb some usage, proactive steps that we can take to ensure that law enforcement officials have the tools that they need – as mentioned prior, this is just one step in what needs to be a much larger plan.

3:30

So I rise to support the amendment. You know, as he mentioned, the lawyers have been involved, so there are some significant changes that make the legislation much more technical. But, more importantly than those things, I appreciate it when the House can work well together. The hon. member reached out, I know, to this side of the House and gave us a bit of a briefing on the plan forward today.

I know that my colleague from Bonnyville-Cold Lake does have some additional amendments that will come in the form of subamendments to this piece of legislation. You know, while it's critically important that we expedite the process on this, I think it's very important that we do take the time to make sure that we get it right. It's not just about rushing through legislation. We've seen what happens when we do that. It's also about ensuring that we get it right on the first pass because sometimes it takes many, many years for legislation to come back. We want to do what we can to get it done, and it's my hope that we can get it done in the next two weeks as we head towards the close of session. So I'd like to thank the hon. member.

With that in mind and the fact that there are a number of other amendments, I'll keep my comments brief as we move through the process today and try to ensure that we do wind up with a piece of legislation that meets the needs of stakeholders, that meets the needs of young people as we try to do what we can to slow down this horrible, horrible crisis.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

The hon Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will be brief. I'm just rising to support this amendment. You know, what is really encouraging is that all sides have worked together, took what was a very good idea from a member of the opposition side. I give the government a lot of credit for giving this idea due consideration, taking what is a good idea and recognizing that good ideas can in fact come from all sides of the House.

As the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills has indicated, there will be further subamendments. Of course, we do want to make sure that we take our time to get it right. It is an important bill because it does at least put some speed bumps in place that would help address not just this crisis – fentanyl is really just the latest in a series of crises – but, hopefully, it will have a long-term and lasting impact. It's not going to solve it all by itself but will have, I hope, a positive impact.

Thanks again. Let's hope we can use this as a good example of how to get things done in this House in the future. I look forward to hearing further debate.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will also be brief. Our government is indeed committed to reducing the harms caused by illicit fentanyl. We've been taking a multipronged approach to this issue. Bill 205 is a great bill that gives us another tool in our tool box.

I want to thank the Member for Calgary-West for working with my office and my department to ensure that Bill 205 is as comprehensive as possible. I also want to thank the staff at Alberta Health for their input in this process. Together these amendments will strengthen the bill by including proprietors as persons who are permitted to own the equipment in question; by ensuring that the correct types of legislation are identified as authorizing individuals to compound or manufacture drugs; and by adding regulation-making authority related to the sale and destruction of designated equipment, the granting, cancelling, or suspending of permits for the equipment in question, and the charging of fees for permits.

Under section 18.81 proprietors have been added alongside licence holders as persons exempt from the offence. This is necessary because in the Pharmacy and Drug Act the licence holder for a pharmacy must be a pharmacist, but not all pharmacy proprietors are pharmacists. Therefore, to ensure that proprietors continue to be able to own pharmaceutical equipment, they have been included as individuals exempted from the offence.

Under subsection (2)(b) a reference to regulation has been added because the authority to compound or manufacture drugs may be found in regulations in addition to acts. For example, the authority for pharmacists to compound drugs is located in the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians profession regulation. This amendment ensures that the language of the subsection references the correct types of legislation. This section has also been separated into two subsections for clarity.

Under section 18.82 regulation-making authority has been added so that regulations could potentially be put into place for granting, cancelling, and suspending permits for designated equipment and for charging fees for these permits. Further, sale and destruction have been added so that regulations may address a broader range of options regarding the disposition of seized equipment.

The other changes are for housekeeping purposes. Under the penalties a two-year time frame for prosecution after the commission of an alleged offence has been added, and this time frame is consistent with the period set out for other offences under the act.

We are very confident that these amendments support the intent of and strengthen this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think my colleague spoke to most of the things with respect to the amendment. I would like to thank the Member for Calgary-West for the bill and for working together with the government on these amendments. I think that this will give us one additional tool.

I did just want to speak very briefly to something that the Member for Calgary-West mentioned in his speaking, that this was within provincial competence. I think that that is absolutely correct. It's absolutely the case that this is within provincial competence. I think that what the member was referring to was a suggestion that this was best addressed by the federal government. It's not that the province can't act here, but it's our view – and it was the view, I understand, of the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police when they came forward and asked us to work with the federal government to have them restrict pill presses – that it's better addressed by the federal government. The reason it's better addressed by the federal government is because they have a stronger deterrent effect. I think that given that there has not yet been movement, although we are still hopeful that there will be movement on that front, this additional tool is very useful.

I hope that this will have the impact of deterring people, but if there are individuals out there listening to this today: don't stop working on your federal Member of Parliament. Continue to do that. It is still important that the federal government make those changes, both with respect to pill presses and with respect to precursors. I hope that we can move forward on that.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a couple of points in this amendment that I'd like to speak in support of. The fact is that this is a great bill. I know that I have to commend the Member for Calgary-West for his commitment to limiting the number of fentanyl pills. This is also a commitment made by the Wildrose Party, which was brought out by myself and the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat in points in our fentanyl reduction plan.

Specifically, the fact is that this amendment deals with adding another tool to this great bill. To be specific, the bill wants to restrict or license pill or tablet presses, tablet machines, capsule filling machines, or pharmaceutical mixers. This is where this amendment really speaks. It wants to add a punch or die.

The fact is that we've got very devious criminals out there right now that are really going out and making pills to look like either competition pills or, actually, pills that look harmless like Aspirin or Tylenol. The fact is that when you think you're taking one thing and you're actually taking something else, for one, it's hard if you do overdose to actually work out what it is that you took. The second problem here, when you're looking at reducing the amount

of pills that are illegally made on the streets, is that we are assuming one thing, that we're taking an Aspirin, but we're receiving something totally different. It could be that you just think that you're having a reaction to the pill or something you ate. You might not even know that you're at risk.

3:40

Now, the hon. member mentioned that dies can be used to make counterfeit tablets by stamping them. This absolutely is a reality these days. We have people out there that are just outright, I guess, putting the lives of Albertans at risk, to be exact. Cracking down on this equipment will make it harder on the criminals. The fact is that this gets this equipment off of the streets, gets it out of the households. It doesn't mean that we will be eliminating W-18 or fentanyl through the reduction of these, but it will reduce them hitting the streets, and every tool that we have is best for all of us.

We also need to be looking at some of the other things that this amendment is doing. It's trying to make sure that the owners of the property that have these criminals in them don't have their property, I guess, seized or be held responsible for the equipment on the premises. The fact is that that's very admirable. You know, it's great to see that we've got the government and opposition and even – as mentioned by the Member for Calgary-West, we actually have people writing in and saying: have you considered this, and have you considered that? That is the power that we have when it comes to working together, working with stakeholders, working with all of those that are going to be affected, people actually wanting to make a difference.

The fact is that last year we had more than 270 deaths because of fentanyl alone. When we look at these deaths, we have to look at: how can we prevent them; how can we be proactive in this? The question here comes down to: where do we go from there? It comes down to really spending some time and thinking about it.

I do believe that in the end what we've got is that the hon. Member for Calgary-West has put a lot of thought in this, and that's good. I'm glad to see that he's worked forward with this. I do think, though, that this bill may overreach a little, and this is where I would like to bring forward a subamendment to A1.

The Deputy Chair: If you could just wait, Member, until I receive a copy, please.

This subamendment will be referred to as SA1.

Please go ahead, Member.

Mr. Cyr: All right. I'd like to read the subamendment. I would move that amendment A1 to Bill 205, Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016, be amended in part A by striking out section 2(a) and substituting the following:

- (a) in the proposed section 18.8
 - (i) by striking out “or pharmaceutical mixer” and substituting “, pharmaceutical mixer or tablet punch or die”, and
 - (ii) by striking out “, and any other equipment prescribed by the regulations”.

This subamendment that I have proposed makes two changes. I am striking out the questionable clause in Bill 205, that will remain focused on punishing unauthorized users of commercial pharmaceutical equipment. The fact is that when we read specifically – I've got a lot of amendments here – “and any other equipment prescribed by regulations,” the spirit of the bill is good, but we also need to be looking at what exactly it is we're restricting. I believe that in the end what we're looking at is moving forward. Where is it that we actually describe what it is going to be in the

regulations? This is my concern here. We're not specific. Amendment A1 is a good example of the fact that we need to be specific when we start to move forward with restricting and licensing different pharmaceuticals and mixing and creation items.

Now, really, what is other equipment prescribed by the regulations? I don't think it's unreasonable to say that that seems to be a little general. I would like to strike that out and be very, very specific in what exactly it is we're trying to accomplish so that, in the end, we don't hit innocent Albertans with an unintended consequence. Now, the vague language opens the door to legislation being overreaching, which I've said already. By far what we're trying to do is reduce fentanyl. We're trying to reduce fentanyl. We're trying to reduce these drugs, but with good intentions we also need to be clear that being vague is never good for Alberta; being vague is never good for what we're trying to accomplish.

For this I would like to move forward, and I encourage everybody in this Assembly to vote for my subamendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Would anybody like to speak to subamendment SA1? The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Chair. I certainly would like to thank the hon. member for this amendment. I know he and I have had discussions, again in the spirit of collaboration, with all parties. It's certainly something that we have discussed.

I'm afraid I cannot support this subamendment, and I certainly would like to give my explanation as to why. For me it's the understanding of the justice system but also the understanding of the drug dealers themselves. The drug dealer is always ever-evolving. The drug dealer is always trying to be one step ahead of us. If we limit ourselves to literally the content that we have in the act itself, then what we're doing is that we're really putting handcuffs on the government to evolve with the drug dealers as they come up with new ways to press these pills. Believe me, you know, I racked my brain, and I consulted and consulted and consulted, and we came up with everything that we can think of. However, as we have seen with the history of the drug dealer, he will always find a way to come up with a new way. We have to give our Justice department the ability to be ahead of the drug dealer by making sure that we put the necessary legislation in place as it evolves.

You know, that goes back to what I was talking about before with the drug dealer. We're succeeding in that we're getting the message out that fentanyl is killing people, so the drug dealer must always evolve himself. What does he do? He pretends that the pill that he is selling is Oxy, and that is then fooling the victim into thinking that. I know that, again going back to the equipment itself, the drug dealer will always be evolving, trying to come up with new innovations, and we have to be able to react to whatever he is coming up with. That's why this is an ever-evolving process that involves each and every one of you in this Legislature.

For that reason – and again I do appreciate the spirit and the argument that he gave – I'm afraid that I cannot support this amendment. Thank you.

3:50

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Chair. Echoing the comments of my colleague from Calgary-West, the concern with this amendment is that the purpose of including other equipment as prescribed by regulations is to allow government the flexibility to adapt to the changing illicit drug market in order to enable us to have all of the tools potentially available to us as quickly as possible. By keeping

this definition within regulation and allowing for that flexibility, we're going to be able to address these emerging concerns as they come up. I think we've seen in this House – and we've certainly discussed it many times in this House – that one of the best tools that we have at our disposal when dealing with an illicit drug crisis is the ability to move quickly to address the actual concerns and the actual problems. So I am speaking against this amendment.

I would also like to add that if in the future we find that "pharmaceutical mixer" does not in and of itself capture the types of equipment that are being used to manufacture illicit drugs that we're targeting with this bill, by leaving the regulation allowance within the bill, that allows us to amend the regulations as quickly as possible to ensure that the appropriate equipment is being identified.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very briefly, I appreciate the comments from the Member for Calgary-West and the Associate Minister of Health about the need to be able to move quickly, particularly in crisis-type situations. We know that drug dealers don't respect any law that we write, anyway.

Now having said that, I am speaking in favour of the amendment, and here's why. We do run a risk when we write into legislation sweeping powers for regulations. Not that the two things are the same, but we've seen, as an example, just for this Legislature, in Bill 6 significant amounts of widespread opportunity in regulation, and it often can create uncertainty and frustration. The challenge with regulation is obviously not the ability to move quickly to catch drug dealers. The challenge with sweeping powers in regulations in the minister's office is the unintended consequences that can come from them. There are lots of examples throughout history of that.

While it sounds like this particular amendment isn't going to pass, I think that it's important that we speak about the role of legislators and the role of regulators, and those are two very separate things. To give wider power around regulation just creates some pause and concern for us and for me, not that it would stop me from supporting the legislation should this amendment fail, but I think that it is worth while putting on the record.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to SA1, the subamendment? I recognize the leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thanks, Madam Chair. I would say that on this I'm going to take the side of my colleague from Calgary-West, but that's not in any way to criticize the amendment. I know it's well intended. This is one of those areas where I also appreciate the House leader from the Official Opposition because we do need to be a little bit careful about what we put in regulation and what we put in legislation.

At the end of the day, I think this is one of those cases where we need the government of the day having maximum flexibility to make changes. Of course, the government could always come back and change the legislation, but I don't think we can always count on the fact that when the government does that, we can always be holding hands and singing *Kumbaya* as we seem to be on this piece of legislation, which is kind of nice. As much fun as it is to fight with the government and sometimes the opposition, it's also nice when we can come together on something of common interest that matters to Albertans and work together as, it appears, we're doing today. That may not always be the case if the government needs to make some slight adjustment to the regulations. If it's in

regulations, the government can do it more quickly than if they have to bring it back into the House.

While I won't support the amendment, I would not want the mover of the subamendment in any way to think that I'm criticizing it. I'm only concerned about the government's ability to be nimble because when the folks on the other side of the law don't have to obey any rules, they can always be nimble. We, on the other hand, cannot always be that way. So I'll be voting against the subamendment.

Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any additional speakers on the subamendment?

[Motion on subamendment SA1 lost]

The Deputy Chair: We will return to amendment A1. Anyone wishing to speak? The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Sorry. This is for A1?

The Deputy Chair: Speaking to the original amendment?

Mr. Cyr: Yes. I have another amendment I'd like to put forward.

The Deputy Chair: Member, please continue.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to move that amendment A1 to Bill 205, Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016, be amended by striking out part D and substituting the following. Section 5 is amended in the proposed section 39.1: (a) by renumbering it as section "39.1(1)," (b) in subsection (1) by striking out "18.81" and substituting "18.81(1)," (c) in subsection (1)(b) by adding "or to imprisonment for a term of not more than 6 months or to both fine and imprisonment" after "\$125,000," (d) in subsection (1)(c) by striking out "6 months" and substituting "1 year," and (e) by adding the following after subsection (1):

(2) A prosecution under this section may be commenced within 2 years after the commission of the alleged offence, but not afterwards.

(3) A member of the Executive Council shall, within 6 months of the coming into force of this section, beg leave of the Assembly to introduce a Bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act to provide for the funds collected from any fines imposed under this section to be deposited in the Victims of Crime Fund established under the Victims of Crime Act.

That was a little longer.

All right. This subamendment aims to make two changes. The first is to the ability of law enforcement to be tough on crime and to ensure punishment that reflects the severity of the crime. I believe that people that are making pills illegally should be thrown in jail; that's where they belong. The fact is that we need to be stronger when it comes to commitment to keeping these men and women off the street. The fact is that they're killing people.

The second part of this is to amend A1 to ensure that funds go towards the victims of crime. When we see these people making these illegal drugs through these pill presses and the different tools that they're using, it's appropriate that this money end up with the people that they're actually impacting, the actual fentanyl users. The fact is that they're hurting people, and through the victims of crime fund we can actually start addressing some of the crimes that they're committing to get these drugs.

4:00

The criminals that are targeted by this bill should be facing strict punishment, which helps enforcement to do their job in protecting

the public. Under this amendment an individual who is charged for a second time will face the punishment of a fine to a maximum amount of \$125,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months. This amendment is a minor change to the legislation. It simply accelerates the punishment for a third offence to being the punishment for a second offence. The punishment should be firm but fair, and jail time for a second breach of this legislation would be a serious punishment to match a serious threat to public safety.

As the Auditor General pointed out in his February report, the victims of crime fund is far from being well managed. It needs to develop and accept a business plan to administer the surplus funds that have been accumulating in this fund's account. When it operates properly, the victims of crime fund is meant to fulfill an important function by helping to rehabilitate those who have fallen victim to criminal acts. This amendment calls for the government to amend the Victims of Crime Act so that funds collected from the individuals convicted under Bill 205 will be directed to the victims of crime fund. Rather than putting the money collected under this bill's provision into general revenue or a government slush fund, I believe that any funds collected under this act would be best used helping those who have suffered at the hands of the criminals who create fentanyl or any of the different opiates that they're sending out to Albertans.

Now, what we're actually looking at when it comes to this amendment is that we need to be ensuring that Albertans are safe. We need to be ensuring that in the end, those who are abusing these pharmaceutical machines are being held to account. We also need to make sure that the victims of these criminals are helped through the transition, I guess, so that they're able to move from being a victim to being a rehabilitated Albertan and are actually helped by these criminals' paying a fine.

In the end, I encourage everybody to vote for this amendment, vote for harder penalties. Let's actually get some funds to where the people actually need them.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Just to clarify, the subamendment will be referred to as SA2.

The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be brief. Of course, upon initially reviewing this, I am absolutely, you know, in favour of harsher penalties against violators of this act. My only concern – actually, before I get to my concern, let me just say that I remember that in my opening remarks I had mentioned that my hope was to have monies going to the victims of crime and make sure that, you know, people who are truly victims of crime get this money. However, when I look at subsection (3) – and this will ultimately be up to the government to take a look at, and I know that the hon. Minister of Justice is going to speak here momentarily – my question, of course, is: is subsection (3) even possible? If it is, I certainly would support it, but I will allow the minister to speak on this.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I rise also to speak to the amendment and to echo the comments of the Member for Calgary-West. We are absolutely supportive of the increased penalties found in here and of most of the amendment. The challenge, of course, that we are having – and this is a challenge that often comes with subamendments that come in rather late – is

that we are not confident as to how exactly one would execute subsection (3), which has to do with the victims of crime fund.

The challenge is that that would require impacts on ministries of my colleagues, and as of right now we're not confident that we can execute those things. You know, I think it's very important for everyone here in this House and certainly everyone in the government to ensure, if we're going to commit to doing a thing, that in fact we are able to do that thing. The challenge we are having currently is that we are not confident that subsection (3) is something that we are able to do, and without the assistance of some of my colleagues from Treasury Board and Finance it's difficult for us to determine if that is something that we can manage in that particular way.

That being said, we're certainly supportive of the early parts of the bill. I mean, certainly, the more force we can put behind this, the better and the greater the deterrent effect on those who are out there. This drug is very challenging and is very dangerous for individuals, so we think that greater punishments are certainly warranted. We would like to support those portions of the amendment, but it can be a little bit challenging to do this.

With respect to the rest of it, though, we are quite pleased. We think that the stiffer penalties, sort of advancing the penalties, particularly when we're talking about people who have been caught, you know, a second or third time – it's really critical that we be deterring those people in the appropriate way and that we send the appropriate message. That is our concern.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you so much, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to subamendment SA2. I appreciate the comments from my colleague for Calgary-West and the minister, particularly around their desire to ensure that portions of the amendment could be passed with respect to ensuring that we're actually tough on these individuals who are out there selling this horrific drug. At the end of the day, those people have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Albertans, so we ought not to take this lightly.

I thank my colleague for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for bringing forward this amendment, which strengthens this piece of legislation, increases the fines, increases the opportunity for drug dealers to reflect on their actions should they be caught on subsequent offences and, as a result, spend some time in jail. It sounds to me like the government members have some significant challenges in supporting the entire amendment, and the big challenge is found in subsection (3). "A member of the Executive Council shall, within 6 months of the coming into force of this section, beg leave of the Assembly to introduce a Bill."

Now, because this is a subamendment, we are in some unique parliamentary territory when it comes to being able to deliver on changing any amendments before the Assembly. The Assembly, when provided with unanimous consent, can move forward in a number of positive manners because in some respects the Assembly can set the rules that are best for the Assembly. If unanimous consent could be granted for the withdrawal of subsection (3), which, at the end of the day, would strike that section from the subamendment, one could assume that unanimous consent would be a reasonable tool with which to do that.

4:10

This is a very important piece of legislation, and we definitely want to make sure that we get it correct because what it means for all Albertans is that there will be the appropriate fines and jail

sentences. Because I know that members on this side of the Chamber would prefer to not see all of the good work in the front half of the amendment lost to a vote, I think it seems reasonable that we ask for unanimous consent of the House to withdraw subsection (c) of the subamendment presented.

The Deputy Chair: Subsection (3)?

Mr. Cooper: Subsection (3). Sometimes C and 3 sound similar. Just for clarity purposes, subsection (3).

What I would propose is that we ask for unanimous consent of the House to withdraw or scratch or delete subsection (3) of the subamendment.

The Deputy Chair: Just to clarify, Member, you're referring to subsection (3)?

Mr. Cooper: That's correct, Madam Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you for clarifying that.

Hearing the motion to remove subsection (3) in clause (e) of SA2, is anyone opposed?

Hearing no objection to the request, the original copy of the subamendment will be amended in clause (e) by striking out the proposed subsection (3).

Returning now to subamendment SA2, are there any additional speakers?

[Motion on subamendment SA2 carried]

The Deputy Chair: Now we'll be returning to the original amendment, amendment A1. Are there any additional speakers?

Hearing none, are you ready for the question on amendment A1?

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Deputy Chair: We are now back on the main bill, Bill 205. Are there any members wishing to speak to the now amended main bill?

Mr. Cyr: I'm pleased to stand to speak on Bill 205, put forward by the Member for Calgary-West, because there are some aspects of this bill that directly align with what the Wildrose has put forward. As members may be aware, in December Wildrose issued a report addressing the fentanyl crisis with the following recommendation: "Urge the federal government to enact federal laws or regulations regarding the import, export, sale, and possession of commercial pill presses in Canada."

Fentanyl has been a deadly problem across the country, most especially in Alberta. Last year 270 Albertans died from fentanyl overdoses, which was more than double the number in 2014. The problem doesn't end with fentanyl, however. As deadly as fentanyl has proven to be, the sad reality is that prior to fentanyl there were other drugs that surged in popularity, that became drugs of choice, so the strong likelihood is that once we effectively combat and limit the effects of fentanyl, we will be faced with a new drug. In fact, we're already seeing W-18.

Madam Chair, Wildrose is committed to keeping Albertans safe on the streets and in their communities, and we're pleased to see that members on both sides of the House are supportive of this bill. While naloxone may be made more readily available in Alberta, that measure only addresses the issue after the fact, once a user is already in danger. Wildrose has been advocating that the House do more on this issue, and this bill certainly paves the way forward for taking further action against drug makers, suppliers, and pushers.

Listening to people's stories about lives being cut short due to the awful influence of drugs is both sobering and heartbreaking. Family

members and friends remember marking the change in character and behaviour once drugs have taken hold. Even more, there is an ongoing litany of phrases dreaming of what could have been, statements that begin with, “He would have just graduated university now” or “She had such a promising career ahead of her, and we’ll never know what she could have accomplished.” Albertans are crying out for help because they recognize that this war on drugs is proving too costly in terms of human life, relationships, and potential.

Because of this, it’s important that we look at ways to combat the fentanyl crisis and the war on drugs right from the start. We cannot afford to sit back while hundreds of Albertans are dying and many more are beginning to experiment with drugs and growing more and more addicted. Even one life lost to drugs is too many; 270 is unacceptable. I tried to think how high that number really could climb to. Because of that, Wildrose supports this bill. I support this bill because it will clamp down on the ease with which people can fabricate drugs and push them out onto the streets and into the hands of Albertans from every walk of life. Madam Chair, drugs, specifically fentanyl and W-18, are not problems just for vulnerable Albertans. Drugs infest the living rooms of Albertans on all ends of the social spectrum and in all corners of the province. Furthermore, drugs taint school classrooms and boardrooms and businesses in all sectors. It is truly a crisis that requires our attention.

We need to equip our law enforcement agents and agencies with tools and skills that are needed to combat the rampant use and abuse of drugs within Alberta. We need to take steps to ensure that we keep our communities safe. To put a different spin on it, Madam Chair, we need to make sure our neighbourhoods are safe and cared for. Police officers invest their lives doing what they can to ensure the safety of all of us. We need to support them in the endeavour. The stakes are too high to just let things slip past us simply because we don’t have the resources or tools or the training to stop them right in their tracks. The work that is being done by police officers and law enforcement agencies is absolutely critical, and we need to provide them the tools that they need to carry out their work.

Madam Chair, now is the time for that action. Now is the time for all members of the House to stand up and say: this has gone too far. Let’s make sure it doesn’t go any farther. We have slid down the slippery slope too far already, and we need to put on the brakes. We cannot afford to wait. Families are begging us not to wait. They’re watching their children and siblings, parents and friends fall farther under the grip of drugs, and they’re asking us not to stand by idly. When we have the ability to make changes that will truly help and have a positive effect on Albertans from all walks of life, from all communities, we need to take advantage of it.

There is simply no more time to waste, Madam Chair, and that’s why I’m happy to see this proactive bill from Calgary-West move forward. The fact is that I believe that we need to support this unanimously.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any additional members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you. Bill 205, the Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016, is a good start. It’s a good start because we don’t just need a punishment for wrongdoers; we need a way for it to help people that are stuck in these circles and these cycles. We need a holistic wraparound strategy for opioid use. We need this strategy to prevent overdose and abuse within our system. Bill 205 can be part of this strategy, which may assist law enforcement to get drugs such as fentanyl off the streets. It’s a tool in the tool kit, and that tool kit must also

include data reporting, prescription monitoring, triplicate drug prescription programs, education for the public and professionals, and advocating for stronger measures across Canada as well as continuing to support harm reduction strategies with access to naloxone, which can help reverse opioid overdoses. It saves lives.

4:20

To see patients come into hospitals suffering from opioid overdose is heartbreaking. Fentanyl does not just affect any one demographic; it affects all Albertans because it’s hidden. Naloxone can save lives, but there are much longer term effects once a naloxone kit is used. We see patients suffering from psychological trauma and guilt when they’re conscious. For addicts we see severe instances of delirium tremens, also known as the DTs, and long, long recoveries. I’ve had to tie people to their beds. I’ve had to drug people so that they aren’t conscious. That’s part of what happens when somebody is an addict. Many times this leads to a relapse. Many of our patients that we see have compromised mental health, and many times this is the first opportunity or the best opportunity for mental health intervention.

With an overdose treatment must be holistic, and the problem is that many times these treatments can be refused, which is why we need to work on our education and our outreach activities by making it illegal to own a pill or tablet press or capsule-filling machine unless licensed, with consequences increasing as these things happen. Bill 205 is a good start to help our populations at risk of an overdose, as is Alberta Justice making proceeds of crime grants available to police and community partners to fund awareness and prevention.

It’s estimated that 1 in 10 Albertans over the age of 15 will battle drug or alcohol dependency at some time in their lives, and over half of those are between the ages of 20 and 39. We see them in the emergency departments. We see them in our urgent care centres. Being able to access naloxone easier is a great thing, and not having to deal with this hidden danger is even more of a great thing.

Most of our teens – I have two, and I know that many people have or have had them – don’t think about the long-term consequences of their actions. They’re looking for a fun night, and they don’t know that fentanyl is in those drugs. I want to protect our teens, and I want to protect our young people, and I want to protect these 20- to 39-year-olds, who have so much promise. I don’t want to see these kids, these young people become addicts in our society and be punished just because they’ve made a bad decision.

This devastating effect on our communities is why our government takes the essential issue of fentanyl and opioid abuse very seriously, and I think that we need to support a bill like this. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak on the original bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question on Bill 205, Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016? All agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Agreed. Thank you.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 205 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Opposed? Carried.

The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Madam Chair, I rise to request the unanimous consent of this Assembly to waive Standing Order 8 to allow the Assembly to proceed immediately to third reading of Bill 205.

The Deputy Chair: Member, sorry to interrupt. We have to rise and report first, and then we can move forward.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Chair, I move that we rise and report Bill 205.

[Motion carried]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 205. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Does the Assembly concur with the report?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker: Any opposed? It shall be so ordered.
The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to request the unanimous consent of this Assembly to waive Standing Order 8 to allow for the Assembly to proceed immediately to third reading of Bill 205.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 205

Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Madam Speaker, thank you so much. I guess I first want to take a moment here and thank the government members as well as all members of the opposition, from over to my right and over to my left, including my own colleagues in the PC caucus. I think this is truly an example of what Albertans have been looking for in identifying an issue, having a collaborative approach, and actually coming up with a solution.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I'd like to touch on a couple of things here. You know, as I have stated, as members of the opposition have stated and government members have stated, this is a multipronged approach. This is but one tool – one tool – that law enforcement can use in their battle, their fight against a deadly disease and against some really, really unscrupulous people.

We must also understand the addiction itself and make sure that we have all the appropriate mechanisms and measures that are available for the addiction itself. That's why I support long-term care beds. I support funding for the long-term care beds. I certainly

applaud the government in their approach to naloxone, as well, certainly. Again, one more tool. The only thing I would like to say is that people who may be watching this need to understand that naloxone is not a cure. All it really is – it just stops somebody from dying. We must, again, focus on the actual addiction itself.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone from all parties in this Assembly for this. We will continue this fight as a team together for Albertans. We will continue to support the government in their request of the federal government, of course, to get this as something that is in the Criminal Code.

Thank you very much, and thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any others who wish to speak to Bill 205 in third reading? The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today in support of Bill 205, and I want to take this opportunity to commend the Member for Calgary-West. Our government takes the issue of fentanyl abuse very seriously. We know people all across the province are facing life-and-death situations and are moving forward aggressively to curb the impact of fentanyl here in Alberta. As we all know, so far this year we have already lost 69 people here in Alberta to fentanyl. Madam Speaker, I know this all too well as I just lost a close friend of mine very recently to this very dangerous and awful drug. These deaths need to stop, period.

4:30

Since I was elected back in May, I've been very active with an organization in my riding of Calgary-Bow. Simon House is one of the highest performing addiction treatment programs in North America. On the last Wednesday of every month the clients have a celebration of their sobriety, which I or my staff attend on a very regular basis. I've spoken with the president and CEO of this organization, Trevor Loria, at length about our shared concerns surrounding this drug. I'd like to quote Mr. Loria as saying in support of this bill:

I believe that this Bill is a necessary, appropriate, and ultra-important step in addressing the opiate crisis in Alberta.

Simon House clients who have used non-prescription pills & tablets purchased on the street are playing "Russian Roulette" with their lives, as the chemical make-up of these pills and tablets is unknown, even to the people producing them via the currently unregulated machines.

Simon House supports this Bill, and the rationale behind it in bringing it to the house.

I am pleased to be able to bring the voices of this stakeholder group to the debate on this bill today and share support of Bill 205. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to rise in support of the bill and first of all thank my hon. colleague from Calgary-West for bringing this forward. Certainly, with his experience as a police officer and, as such, an expert in public safety this is – I know that it's been a passion of his. He's spoken of the fentanyl crisis many times in this House. I also want to thank the other opposition parties for their support, and I want to thank the government for their support of this. This is one of those cases where I think that when we're doing our jobs well, we can rally around an issue that matters to Albertans, put our heads together, even work together on some amendments, and improve what started out as a very good piece of work but, in a collaborative way, make it so that it will better serve Albertans.

I know that there are probably members in this House that haven't laid eyes on a fentanyl pill – and I may be one of those –

but there are other people in Alberta that are addicted or other citizens of Alberta, as has been talked about in the debate here, that may think they're buying something that, maybe even while they don't think it's legal, is a lot less dangerous than what they actually get. That's why they call them drug dealers. They don't follow anybody's rules. They don't follow even the most basic codes of decency and conduct and care about their fellow human beings. They'll sell somebody something, simply to make money, that will kill them and turn around and not even think about them again. This ought to make the business a little bit harder for those people to do.

I think that there's some leadership here, basically, in terms of doing that. I also believe that while other provinces haven't done this yet, I wouldn't be surprised to see some follow. This is a great place for us to lead. I will be supporting this, and I thank all members of the House that have spoken their support for what I think is an important bill and one that, for certain, will save lives in Alberta once we get this business done.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise to speak in favour of Bill 205, the pharmacy and drug amendment act. The intent of this bill is to regulate the possession of pill presses, which criminals use to produce and create homemade illicit drugs such as fentanyl and the new W-18. These drugs are no joke, and we certainly need to take action now, which I think is something we all agree on in this Assembly today. Wonderful news.

Madam Speaker, last year we had 272 Albertans die from fentanyl overdoses, which is more than double the 2014 death toll. According to AHS this represents a 126 per cent increase in fentanyl-related overdoses in a time span of just one year. Fentanyl is an opiate up to 100 times more powerful than morphine, and now an even more lethal drug is about to hit our streets, W-18, which is a synthetic opioid with no known clinical use at all. It'll mean an even greater risk of overdose given that this is 10,000 times more powerful than morphine and 100 times more powerful than fentanyl. According to the AHS website fentanyl and W-18 are often sold on the streets as green beans, beans, green apples, apples, shady eighties, eighties, greenies, or fake OxyContin. They receive these names because of the way dangerous drugs are manufactured and presented.

You can never be sure what will be in any drug you purchase off the streets. Please, I'd like to make that very clear: you can never be certain of what is in the drug that you purchase off the streets. Criminals are using these pill presses to deceive vulnerable Albertans into consuming an even more lethal drug. It's a deadly bait and switch for these criminals. It's shameful. Drug use is something that has permeated through cultures, and while there is not an ultimate solution, we need to take every real step we possibly can to protect people from these deadly drugs. This bill is something that I certainly support as it takes another tool out of the hands of criminals.

This is why the Wildrose Party actually released its Safer Communities, Saving Lives: Combatting the Fentanyl Crisis plan in December of 2015. In this document our shadow critic for Justice outlined 10 key recommendations for this government to follow to save lives. This is just something – I think everybody here is just trying to do their part to help. Point 9 of the Wildrose's fentanyl plan states that we “urge the federal government to enact . . . laws or regulations regarding the import, export, sale, and possession of commercial pill presses in Canada.” Certainly, I will take the recommendations as well from our hon. Justice minister and urge my MP to do the same. Madam Speaker, this is because we view

this problem as one that transcends all legal borders of our province. A complete, Canada-wide strategy must be implemented. This government should be raising this point at a national level when the Council of the Federation's health ministers meet again, which, I have no doubt, this government will do.

This bill is an important first step in leading the Canada-wide crackdown on pill presses and introduces real measures to hold those drug dealers responsible for the thousands of senseless overdoses and deaths in our province. Now more than ever Albertans are looking for hope and for strong leadership, Madam Speaker. With threats like fentanyl and W-18 seeping into our communities and even into our schools, now is the time for action. As a mother of two young children there is nothing more important in my mind than keeping Alberta's streets safe. We need to ensure that our law enforcement teams like ALERT are equipped with the mandate to crack down on crime. Mass-producing illicit and lethal drugs is not a victimless crime at all, and the consequences are documented and absolutely tragic.

I support this bill, Madam Speaker, and will support any other real measures to stop the W-18 and fentanyl crises in our province and take the criminals off our streets. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to third reading? The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I, too, rise in support of Bill 205 on third reading. I'd like to very much commend our Member for Calgary-West for bringing this forward and for his words and his diligence. Of course, he has my full support.

I'd like to take a second and offer my condolences to the Member for Calgary-Bow. My goodness, I can only imagine losing one of your friends. My sincere sympathy.

4:40

You know, it's refreshing to see the House work together, 87 of us, starting from the seriousness, the absolute crisis of what fentanyl and now W-18 and other opiates have done in our society to our people – the first responders, the police, how difficult their jobs have been at different times – respecting, of course, the civil liberties that are crucial and important to us all but ensuring that those that have such little respect for our society and for others in it have the opportunity to be brought to full justice. I absolutely believe that Bill 205 will help do that. Again, I commend the Member for Calgary-West for doing that.

Of course, our critic for Justice, from Bonnyville-Cold Lake, and I worked on the 10-point plans in November, and I'm glad to see that the government has picked up some of those and is working on others. The naloxone thing is absolutely a critical step. I absolutely commend the government for making these kits widely available at no charge to those that need them, want them, and can help. ALERT, of course, the extra concentration and help to ALERT and the good work that first responders and police do: that's another good thing. Detox beds: my goodness, a brand new detox centre just opened up in Medicine Hat, and it is well done. It is staffed by excellent, excellent people. So the addition of these types of resources around our province will go a long, long way to ensure that, you know, this fentanyl crisis – and as others have mentioned, W-18, methadone, oxycodone, all these other names and the potential that's there are alarming and are going to continue to take a consistent effort.

I would ask that this House not forget to continue to support our good first-line responders, our good medical people. We had some talk about the patch, how in Ontario there is a system where you cannot get a new patch unless you turn in your old one. Unfortunately,

a policeman in my constituency told me that our last two overdoses were directly related to used patches. I would ask the government to please keep that high on their radar.

Education and information: it's a hard world in which to get information out there now, with all the fragmented media and all the different things that people support, but again that's maybe one of the bigger steps. I would strongly, strongly encourage the government to do that. B.C. has had some success in treating their crisis as well by gathering some information and doing things with that information. Perhaps there's something the government can look at there to make it as effective as possible.

When the Wildrose released our report in November, on Twitter a couple of people messaged me with the concern: jeez, we need to look at how come Alberta is such a leader in opioids being prescribed in the first place. I understand that we're the highest per capita. That's maybe something that has to be part of this equation as well. Yes, this is a good step, but as the hon. Member for Calgary-West said, it's not the only tool in the tool kit. I would strongly, strongly encourage the government to keep fighting it with all of our great people and all of our resources.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill. Also, many thanks to the Member for Calgary-West for his initiative here and, as importantly, as mentioned by my colleagues earlier, for the support and co-operation of the House in addressing this very important initiative, one step forward, I think, in hoping to reach some resolution in terms of some of the addiction issues that we have.

There are many challenges we face, I think, as a society, and unfortunately addiction is one of those that does not discriminate. Unfortunately, on top of that, while it doesn't discriminate, it does show itself on an overrepresented basis within our indigenous populations, and I think that's a further challenge we have within those communities, certainly, to ensure that this is one step in solving that. The root causes, I think, are there. We need to invest more in preventative and supportive programs.

I had the honour and privilege of attending about a three-hour session at AARC, the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre, in Calgary a few months back. I was honoured to be there, but I was shocked, of course, at the level of addiction of some of these young people, some as young as 13 years old, and, luckily, some of the graduates that survived. They'd had a number of people that they'd lost through that program, who had passed away during treatment and had not quite made it across the line. Many of their peer counsellors there are graduates of the program. To hear their stories and about that, unfortunately, slippery slope that they still live on, about the commitment that they've made to themselves and to their families, was very touching. It was heart-wrenching, but it was touching, the commitment that we have in the community.

I know the people from AARC have been up to the Legislature just over the last few weeks to visit the government. At this point in time they do not have any government funding and are seeking that. I encourage all members if they're in Calgary – and I'm sure that there are similar organizations not just in Calgary but in Edmonton and across this province. I think it's very important that we address that.

You know, I think that in looking at the numbers here, the deaths last year, they represent about three individuals in each one of our 87 constituencies, to put it into perspective. That's frightening for us to see. Those are mostly young people and those that are facing

challenges within their lives. We hope to get them through that to lead the fruitful and full lives ahead of them.

This is a great step forward, again one of the many tools that we need to keep bringing forward. Of course, the addictions and alcoholism and many of these issues are ones that we need to face. I think, of course, we've had discussions. I know that with the federal changes in marijuana laws coming forward, we need to make sure, even with those, that as we move forward with the issues around that in terms of distribution and how we're going to tax and distribute that, we also take into account that any type of drug, whether it's alcohol, marijuana, or other opioids of different sorts, can be abused at different levels and can ruin lives. We need to be cognizant of that.

I'm proud of my colleague for his hard work. I'm proud to be able to support this and very proud that we've been able to work together in the Legislature. I hope that this is a sign of some of the work we can do in the future together to not only table legislation but to improve it and to bring it forward for the betterment of all Albertans.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak? I'll recognize Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking my colleague from Calgary-West for his passion with respect to Bill 205. As you know, during second reading of this bill I used my full 10 minutes to speak on this, including experience as chair of AADAC and as minister of wellness. At the end of my speech I offered a rather impassioned plea to ensure that this issue would not be politicized. I know that at the time more than one government member seemed offended by this, but thankfully very shortly thereafter members from all corners of the House determined that I was simply trying to point out that this is an issue that transcends all party colours.

It reminds me of a number of private members' bills that I've been honoured to spearhead in this Chamber, each of which required consultation and homework and co-operation from everyone in the Legislature. I'm thrilled that on this occasion all-party co-operation is indeed alive and well.

Colleagues, you've heard me speak on this topic many times very passionately, including with our indigenous Albertans, even today in question period. In the name of passing this bill expeditiously, I will conclude my comments today this way, by thanking you sincerely in advance for your invaluable part in passing this legislation, which will indeed save Albertan lives and communities. Long live Alberta.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, I'll call on the hon. Member for Calgary-West to close debate.

4:50

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess just a few points. I will really, truly be brief here. Members of this House, I think it's important for everyone to know that this was Manmeet Bhullar's bill draw. Sadly, as we know, he's not here, but I will speak and say that I know that he would be proud not only of the co-operation by this Assembly but of the fact that this is a bill that will go to saving lives. That is something that Manmeet was always all about.

I would also like to add a couple more points. About a year ago I put on the six-inch pumps and did the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event. I did it with two other individuals. One of those individuals,

who was an acquaintance of mine by the name of Joel Dixon, passed away from a fentanyl overdose. I certainly didn't know the man very well, and I was absolutely shocked to find out that he had passed away, but again this is a drug like any sort of narcotic; it does not discriminate. It touches everyone from any and every socioeconomic class.

Thirdly, I would like to just say again in support of addiction treatment centres – and I know that my good friend Rob Laird is here today from 1835 recovery house – that the support for addiction treatment is absolutely paramount in getting to the root causes of these problems.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for their support. I know that we will all do the right thing here and support this bill.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 205 read a third time]

Written Questions

[The Clerk read the following written questions, which had been accepted]

North West Redwater Partnership

Q12. Mr. Clark:

What is the status as of March 15, 2016, of the approval process for phase 2 of construction for the North West Redwater Partnership upgrader?

Ministerial Trip to Washington

Q13. Mr. Clark:

What are the deliverables of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade's recent trip to Washington, DC, from February 3 to 5, 2016?

Adult Learning Review Program

Q14. Mr. Clark:

What is the status as of March 15, 2016, of the adult learning review program proposed in the New Democratic Party election platform during the May 2015 Alberta provincial general election?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Disaster Recovery Program Claims

Q11. Mr. Clark asked that the following question be accepted.

How many disaster recovery program claims arising from the 2013 flood event that were previously approved have since been deemed ineligible?

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think this is a timely question as we move, I hope swiftly, into recovery mode in Fort McMurray and a significant number of people in Fort McMurray will unfortunately have to make claims in the disaster recovery program. I look forward to having a fulsome discussion about that tonight in Municipal Affairs estimates.

The reason I want to know this is that I've had a number of constituents that were previously approved, initially approved, for disaster recovery that now have been told they're either no longer eligible or an argument has been made through the appeal process by the government that they are no longer eligible. I think this is relevant at any time because it's an important question of public policy when you have Albertans being told one thing at one point in a process and then something entirely different, perhaps being

disentitled to compensation under disaster recovery, at some later time in the process.

I'm very curious, and I think Albertans are owed an explanation as to the scale of this particular issue. How many claims were approved initially and were then denied at a later time? I understand the government may in fact be bringing in an amendment to this question, but I will stand by my original question, that I think is a very important one, the point being that if the government is interested in answering only how many at any point have been deemed ineligible, including those that were deemed ineligible at the very beginning of the process because that sort of claim was not eligible within the DRP, that is not something that we don't already know. We know that from the government website, and should it become necessary, I'd be more than happy to share those statistics.

In fact, we know that 2,647 were deemed ineligible for a number of reasons because, of course, not everyone who applies for the disaster recovery program is, in fact, eligible. The government did their work right up front and deemed that number ineligible, but of the 2,647, which were originally deemed eligible? I think that's a very important question, especially as we, unfortunately, move into a new phase of having to rely on the disaster recovery program. I think it is an urgent matter for this government to answer, and I would certainly hope that they provide that answer in due course.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice on behalf of the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs to respond.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise today to move an amendment to Written Question 11. I am proposing that Written Question 11 be accepted as amended. The question is currently written: "How many disaster recovery program claims arising from the 2013 flood event that were previously approved have since been deemed ineligible?" I propose to accept the question amended as follows: "How many disaster recovery program claims from the 2013 flood event have been deemed ineligible, and why were they deemed ineligible?"

Amending the question will allow for a better response to the question as it more appropriately reflects the two-stage process that all DRP files go through. As the member will be aware, the first stage of the process determines whether an application can be accepted under the established program criteria. Program criteria include things like whether the losses occurred during the prescribed timeline of the event, whether the applicant owns the property in question, and if the losses were uninsurable in nature.

The second stage in the process determines whether the items being claimed are eligible for reimbursement under the disaster assistance guidelines. Claims can include lost or damaged items, cleanup hours and expenses, and the repair and replacement of structural damage. Additionally, it's important to remember that funding under the disaster recovery program cannot be provided if other sources of funding are available to the applicant. For example, the program is not designed to duplicate other means of financial assistance that may be provided through insurance or charitable donations. The disaster recovery program does not apply to cover second residences, pre-existing damage from before the disaster, lost income or profits for business, or losses that insurance also covers.

For the 2013 program we received more than 10,600 private-sector applications. This was, by far, the largest disaster recovery program not only in Albertan history but in Canadian history. Madam Speaker, we've provided more than \$144 million to individual Albertans to help them recover from this unprecedented disaster. I want to assure you that all applications were considered

carefully and fairly to ensure that Albertans received all the assistance that they were eligible for while spending taxpayers' dollars appropriately.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers who wish to respond? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: May I speak on the amendment?

The Deputy Speaker: You may speak.

5:00

Mr. Clark: Yes. Thank you. I will speak very briefly. We know the answer to the first half of the proposed amendment, how many DRP claims. I've already talked about that being 2,647. Why they were deemed ineligible: I think the minister listed off many good reasons why a claim may be deemed ineligible. Given that there were more than 10,000 claims, of which roughly a quarter were deemed ineligible – that, of course, I think is a normal course of this program.

The heart of my question is: how many that were previously approved were subsequently deemed ineligible? That is a vital question to answer because this was a terribly poorly administered program from the very, very start. I think that that would be my point, that it does fundamentally change what I'm driving at and I don't think answers the important question that Albertans ought to have an answer to. I can tell you that so many people had difficult times with DRP. This is an important question to answer.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, but I guess the time now has arrived to move on to the next order of business.

Motions Other than Government Motions

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Crude Oil Tanker Traffic and Pipelines

506. Mr. Loewen moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to request that the federal government not implement the moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic along British Columbia's north coast and that it swiftly approve pipelines such as the Energy East, Trans Mountain, and Northern Gateway in order to increase employment in Alberta's energy sector.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak on my proposed Motion 506. Wildrose has always been committed to responsible energy projects such as these. Alberta needs all members of the Assembly to voice their support and send a clear message to the federal government that our energy sector is important not just to us but to all of Canada. Wildrose knows that when Alberta prospers, Canada prospers.

The economic benefits of these three pipeline projects are enormous. I would like to share some numbers with all members in the House. First of all, the Trans Mountain expansion. This Kinder Morgan project would twin a pipeline from Strathcona county to Burnaby, B.C., almost tripling the capacity of the existing system. The most significant benefit of this pipeline would be in getting our landlocked oil to overseas markets, which is crucial to the health of our economy. The economic benefits are significant, specifically for Alberta. The benefits of project development, operations, and net-backs will be as much as \$19.4 billion.

At the municipal level Kinder Morgan expects property tax revenue to jump by \$530 million. That's half a billion dollars going to local governments along the pipeline right-of-way in Alberta and B.C. over 20 years. Beyond property tax, other existing and new municipal and regional tax payments would exceed \$1 billion over 20 years.

Madam Speaker, it's clear that this pipeline would reap significant benefits for Alberta, from the provincial government down to regular Albertans, because like the other pipeline projects, it will also create much-needed jobs: 16,000 construction jobs and 37,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs per year of operations.

Now, as far as Energy East, the Energy East pipeline for its part would create almost 2,000 of those jobs right here in Alberta. Those are good-quality, well-paying jobs, Madam Speaker, that would give a fresh start to thousands of Albertans who are out of work right now. But this pipeline, which would get 1.1 million barrels of western oil to eastern refineries and then to tidewater every day, is currently stuck in the seemingly endless delays in its approval process. Despite the fact that it would address the fact that eastern Canada imports 86 per cent of its oil from outside Canada instead of using good Alberta oil, this project languishes in red tape.

The Northern Gateway pipeline, one that has already been approved with conditions by the National Energy Board, is arguably one of the most important energy infrastructure projects for putting a stop to Canadian oil being sold at a discount because it would allow Canadian companies to sell their products globally and, in particular, directly across the Pacific to the growing Asian markets. This access would also help to reduce supply bottlenecks that result in the discounts on Canadian heavy oil, which trades for about \$14 U.S. a barrel lower than the North America benchmark, west Texas intermediate, costing the Alberta government and companies billions of dollars each year.

Now, this pipeline, that the Premier last year called, quote, not the right decision, end quote, though she has now apparently come around to cautiously supporting it – while Wildrose is pleased to see a glimmer of common sense in the current government, we also know that it will take more than a few words to convince us and all Albertans and the energy sector itself that this government really means business. What better way to do that than by supporting this motion and producing results on pipeline approvals?

Albertans need more than a government that can't seem to make up its mind on pipelines, one that supports its antipipeline friends in Ontario one day and then the next day spouts pro-energy, pro-pipeline talking points. We need leadership that will consistently support Northern Gateway, a project that would trigger a \$312 billion increase in our national GDP over 30 years, that would create \$50 billion in provincial revenues over the same time period, and that would help 1,100 people get to work during construction and then create 260 permanent jobs during its operation. Crucially, though, we need leadership that will consistently support and produce results on getting our landlocked Alberta oil to market, which this pipeline would do.

The thing is that claiming to come around in support of Northern Gateway isn't actually enough to support it. If the tanker ban proposed by the federal Liberals is put in place, it will spell the end of the Northern Gateway project and any other pipeline to the west coast with a terminus north of Vancouver, which means that the Premier must come out against this proposed ban. For context, the current Prime Minister has directed his Transport minister to formalize a moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic on British Columbia's north coast. While it doesn't explicitly define what the north coast is, most assumptions place it north of Vancouver Island, in the area that covers Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and the Queen Charlotte Sound. It is commonly understood that this tanker ban

would kill Northern Gateway and any similar project that terminates in that area.

Wildrose is standing up for Alberta and for our energy sector and the jobs it creates. Our leader, Brian Jean, personally wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to abandon this tanker ban and effectively to allow Alberta's oil to get to market without going through a glutted American market. In contrast, the Premier so far said nothing, this despite the fact that a moratorium on the north coast could open a Pandora's box of issues, primarily regarding the United States. Issues that could arise include a potential violation of freedom of navigation rights such as the right of innocent passage, which allows vessels from other countries to pass through Canada's territorial waters. The U.S. may also see this as a pointed bilateral legal and security issue and act accordingly.

Furthermore, the reality is that Alberta itself could conceivably launch legal action due to the federal government's disruption of co-operative federalism principles, resulting in interference with Alberta's jurisdiction over our ability in development and global sales of our natural resources. Yet we have heard nothing from the current provincial government about standing up for Alberta's rights.

While many within this government seem to have changed their stance on some pipeline projects, the fact remains that many actively protested and spoke out against these energy products and anything that supports our oil sands. It was such a perception issue that in B.C. the NDP acknowledged that resource development equals jobs, and if the NDP say no to a project, they are against job creation. They didn't manage to dispel that notion during their election. As one of our colleagues across the floor stated, that argument is a trap, and the NDP need to rewrite that narrative.

5:10

Albertans can rest assured that the Wildrose will always be consistent in lending our voices in support of our energy sector. The members opposite seem to have a revisionist approach to their pipeline stance, and their tepid approach is simply not good enough if we truly want to convince Albertans and the federal government that they're serious about supporting our energy sector. Comments such as our energy sector being the embarrassing cousin do little to change the perception that the NDP just aren't up to the task of protecting Albertans' interests.

Madam Speaker, Albertans need to be assured that this government truly has Alberta's best interests at heart. Supporting this motion would send a message to not only our energy sector but to all of Canada that this government is committed to energy projects such as these. We need access to the global market, and this is our best opportunity to get this accomplished.

Again, Motion 506, "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to request that the federal government . . ." [Mr. Loewen's speaking time expired]

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Just a reminder, hon. member, that we don't refer to other members by their names in the House.

The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you. I rise in response to the motion before the House, Madam Speaker. Opening up new markets for Alberta's oil is a high priority for this government, and we are working diligently and with purpose to achieve that goal. The reason is clear. We need access to tidewater to diversify our energy markets. It's just that simple. However, getting the job done is much more complex. Former governments in Alberta and Ottawa took the approach that has set us back. I will leave those details to historians,

but let me just say that those governments offered everyone a lesson on how not to get a pipeline built.

So here we are confronting an oil price collapse without the access to tidewater we need to get full value for our energy. Things might be different were it not for years of inaction, denial, and political game playing. But we can no more turn back the clock to avoid the mistakes of the past than we can control the world price of oil. We must confront the situation we face today head on with a plan to move our province forward.

Madam Speaker, let me take a moment to lay out the argument for building a pipeline to tidewater. Owing to the inaction and failed policies of former governments, Alberta must sell its oil with North America at discounted prices. That puts us at a competitive disadvantage. First, we need to build a pipeline to tidewater to diversify our energy markets so that we can get the best price for our product. It's important to the future of our economy and to the well-being of every Albertan.

Second, it is also important to note that pipelines are the safest and most environmentally responsible way to transport our products. In Canada we have the expertise, the knowledge, and the technology to build a modern, safe, and well-regulated pipeline.

Third, our energy industry needs access to the Canadian market itself. In a country as rich in energy resources as ours, it makes no sense to import almost a million barrels of oil from other countries. That needs to change.

Madam Speaker, the case for a pipeline is clear. Pipelines are the safest, most environmentally responsible way to diversify our energy markets, to get the best price for our products, and to ensure that Canadians benefit from our country's energy resources. Faced with this reality, we have a choice to make in how we achieve this goal. As I said earlier, former governments failed miserably. Instead of bluster and political game playing that got Alberta nowhere, this government is taking a better approach. We are engaged in a drama-free discussion with industry, with the environmental community, with governments across Canada, and with indigenous peoples about judging individual pipeline proposals on their own merits.

The principles underlying this discussion are very clear. To move forward, pipelines must be judged independently with a fair and balanced framework, and they must meet the highest possible standards for environmental safety and community consultation. These principles apply to every aspect of a pipeline proposal, from construction through to transport and distribution.

Madam Speaker, we are making good progress. The Canadian energy strategy adopted last July provides Canada with a framework to protect the environment and develop our energy industry. Every government in the country understands that these issues must be dealt with. The work continues, the hard work of government.

The motion brought forward today does little new to advance this effort. Quite frankly, it repeats the kind of political gamesmanship that former governments pursued so relentlessly and with so little effect. Sound and fury signifying nothing: that's the opposition's prerogative. They failed in the past, and they are not accountable for their actions today, Madam Speaker.

We are not going to play that game. Grandstanding is no substitute for a strategy that is focused on results, a strategy that can bring people together, that addresses real and legitimate concerns about the environment. That is why our government brought forward a climate leadership plan, the single most important step any government has taken in Canada to address climate change, because climate change is real, Madam Speaker, and we must take action to deal with it. That is why our government continues to pursue a thoughtful and constructive approach to achieving market access, an approach that sets aside the divisive battles of the past

and focuses on what really matters, getting the best possible world price for our energy exports, that are permitted under our climate leadership plan. What matters to Albertans and what matters to this government is that we make meaningful progress towards our shared goal.

When members across the aisle were in government, they did not do this work. Now they have brought forward a motion whose aim is clear: to turn back the clock to the failed policies of the past. Madam Speaker, the reality is that a tanker ban on the north coast of B.C. may or may not be a problem for Alberta, depending on its terms and on the progress being made on one or more of the projects currently before us. The members opposite want to play political games with these critical strategic issues.

We won't play those games. We won't give the quick political win they are looking for. We are working to achieve practical results. We'll stick with our plan and work in close partnership with other government stakeholders until the work is done, because on this side of the House we are focused on what matters, moving Alberta forward with a plan that builds a more diversified and a more resilient economy, that protects our environment and addresses climate change, that effectively advocates to new markets with a safe, environmentally responsible pipeline, and that ensures that we get the best price for our energy products. Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, that is what matters to Albertans, and that is how this government will continue to proceed.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow, followed by Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, I rise to speak in favour of this motion. What I hope is that we may be able to carry on in this House in the collegial attitude that we had earlier on today, and I hope that perhaps we can still find a way to get to that place where we can have the government supporting this important motion.

I would sincerely hope that the government of Alberta would be advocating for an end to the tanker ban on the north coast of B.C. because it is in Alberta's interest to do so. I would sincerely hope that that is part of the conversation that's going on between this minister and her government and the federal government.

I'll say that it is good to see that this government seems to be coming around on Northern Gateway. I'm a supporter of pipelines in all directions. I think we'd all agree in this House – it sounds like we do – that pipelines are, in fact, clearly the safest way to ship Alberta's energy or any oil of any kind around the world.

One thing that I guess I want to pick up on in the previous comments from the minister is that I find it really unhelpful to continue blaming the previous government and the previous federal government for their approach when it's been a year that this government has been in power. I think it's now time where this government can take accountability and should take accountability for their own actions in driving this conversation forward.

I would certainly hope that you're advocating for this tanker ban, because it's the kind of thing that came up as a result of the now federal government's fairly vague campaign promise, that was made at a time when they didn't think that they were really, perhaps, actually going to be government. The polls certainly didn't have them in that position. That is something that I'm sure this government understands full well: making campaign promises at a time when perhaps you don't expect to be government and finding yourself in the position to have to actually implement those things. I would think that this would be something, I hope, where our provincial government can use fact-based arguments – and I'm fine

with it being drama-free or however you want to put it – but it is important that this government advocate strongly for the best interests of our province.

5:20

I'm also very curious why this tanker ban applies only to northern British Columbia but not to the supertankers off the east coast, who also have to dodge islands. The supertankers bring tankfuls of Saudi crude to Canadian refineries, something that – we would be far better served by a pipeline, Energy East in particular, taking Alberta crude to the east coast and supporting domestic Canadian production.

The same thing applies to Northern Gateway. Northern Gateway is equally safe, perhaps even more so, than Energy East. Energy East is a very safe pipeline, given the rigour that has gone into supporting and designing Northern Gateway and given some of the terrain that it goes through. Very clearly, a tanker ban is yet another part of the proxy fight against Alberta's oil sands, restricting pipeline development in any possible way they can, facts be damned.

They are going to have a big impact not only on Alberta's economy, not only on the economy of our country but on our social well-being, because while Alberta has a strong social safety net – and so does the rest of our country – it's important to ask: where does the money come from for those social programs? We can have strong social programs, a strong economy, and strong environmental regulation, all at the same time. That's one of the tremendous benefits of being Canadian and being Albertan. In fact, it's something we do better, I think, than anywhere else in the entire world.

It's time for this government to stand up and say proudly that Alberta does have strong environmental regulations, that Alberta does have a strong track record on the environment, that that track record is only getting stronger and only getting better, that Alberta innovation will help the world address climate change in a way that means that we can continue to succeed with the oil sands but also address carbon emissions not only in this province or in this country but around the world. Those are the sorts of things that I'd like to hear from our government as they advocate passionately for Alberta's interests. Advocating against the tanker ban is one of the things I would hope this government would do.

I sincerely hope that all sides of the House will be supporting this motion. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills, followed by Edmonton-Centre, followed by a member of the third party.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak in support of Motion 506 because pandas, just like tigers, can't change their stripes. I will always be in support of pipelines. I will always be in support of increased market access for Alberta's resource sector. I will not flip-flop and one day stand in protest, opposing Alberta's oil sector. I will not write an introduction and support a book that encourages the protest of market access and pipelines and details how to go about opposing what makes Alberta great. I will not sign a manifesto that encourages people to oppose the livelihoods of thousands and thousands of people here in Alberta. I will not change my stripes, and I do not take a position that opposes Albertan values and Alberta's oil sands. I am proud to be consistent in what I believe.

I was elected because people met me while I was door-knocking and promoting a party that backs Alberta's oil sands. I was not elected because people saw me at antipipeline protests. Now that I'm in the House, I have not changed my values. I still support our oil industry, and my actions prove my support. I have questioned

this government time and again as to what they're going to do to support market access. I have stood up with the members of my caucus and put forward a jobs action plan that supported pipelines and was swiftly mocked by the members opposite. My values do not change, and that's why I ran and was elected with the party that supports pipelines.

I have asked the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: what is being done to approve oil and gas pipelines? He told me that his government has, quote, made more progress in the last eight months than the previous government had in decades. Yet not a single ounce of oil has been transported in a new pipeline for the last year, since this government has been elected.

Under the previous provincial and federal governments we saw the conditional approval of Northern Gateway and the pursuit of Trans Mountain expansion and Energy East. Just as a reminder, the Wildrose leader was part of the government that not only oversaw the conditional approval of Gateway but the line 9 reversal and many other pipelines across the country. Could they have done better? Absolutely. There's always scope for improvement. This party has members who have done more and had more success getting pipelines approved than the NDP government.

But they still have time to show results, and this motion will help them to get a commitment to get pipelines approved. The government does not need help on this anti-oil image they have created. Its sudden transformation into a pipeline-friendly group isn't enough to convince Albertans. This government is closely related to the federal NDP Party, who backs manifestos that oppose the production of fossil fuels here. This government says that they have changed their stripes, and they say that they support market access. Yet other than taxing charities, seniors, families, and hospitals with a carbon tax, what actions has this government done to support the pipelines? Have they spoken out against the protest that took place against Alberta's pipelines, that they say they support? Did the Premier speak to the Prime Minister about reversing his stance on a tanker ban?

There were thousands and thousands of dollars allocated to advertise the carbon tax, but not a single dollar, Madam Speaker – not a single dollar – was allocated to educate their former pipeline protest friends that pipelines are safe and that increasing our market access is the right and proper thing to do for Alberta. The NDP is set on spending taxpayers' dollars on advertising their poorly-thought-out attempt to create some sort of elusive social licence instead of using the simple truth about pipeline safety to reduce opposition to pipelines.

What actions has this government truly taken to get a single pipeline approved so far? What actions has this government taken to assist oil and gas companies to expedite their approval process? What actions has this government taken to reduce the regulatory burden for pipeline approvals? What actions has this government taken to oppose a proposed tanker ban that would make a pipeline to the west coast useless?

Madam Speaker, we are here to help. The Official Opposition is here to help. We are here to help rid this government of their risky ideological policies. This motion is just another action we're taking to help this government do what is right for Alberta. This motion would help Albertans and support the oil and gas industry. This motion requests action that this government should not have to be encouraged to take, action that should have been taken when the issue first surfaced. The opposition party should not have to encourage the government to act on behalf of one of Alberta's largest job creators, yet here we are. We have to encourage this government to act because they refuse to do anything except tax Albertans.

This government needs to act and to produce meaningful results. They need to publicly and definitively request that the federal government not implement a crude-oil tanker ban. If this government is not willing to oppose this tanker ban, then we will know that that tiger cannot change its stripes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise in response to this motion before the Assembly. I'd like to thank the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky for bringing it forward and providing us with the opportunity to affirm the hard work and advocacy of the Premier and our ministers over the past year. Since our election they've been in continuous consultation with stakeholders in the energy industry. They've been building relationships, hearing their concerns and recommendations, and our government has clearly heard their biggest concern, the need for a pipeline to tidewater.

5:30

Madam Speaker, as others have already referenced, previous governments, both federal and provincial, have failed to meet this need. They've skirted around the need to truly address the issue of climate change, made empty promises, implemented cosmetic policies, and their failure to truly engage with the concerns of those we needed to partner with has ensured that our largest export commodity remains landlocked and unable to access global markets. As a result our province loses millions of dollars a year due to being restricted to a single customer and a single price, and with the rise of production in the U.S., that's projected to get even worse by early next year.

With this in mind, our government has chosen a different path. This past November, in consultation and partnership with the energy industry, with indigenous leaders, and with environmental groups, we introduced our climate leadership plan. This is a bold commitment to real, concrete action on climate change, a commitment built on consensus and partnership that moves Alberta from the back to the front of the pack, and this climate leadership plan will make our province one of the most environmentally responsible energy producers in the world.

Madam Speaker, this plan has not gone unnoticed. The Prime Minister referred to the plan as a historic moment and a positive step, a strong positive step, in the right direction. Our federal minister of the environment stated: we are very proud of the government of Alberta; I think they have shown real leadership. This bold action to improve our environmental standards, to reduce emissions of carbon and methane, and reinvest every dollar collected through the carbon levy back into our economy has begun to open doors where previous governments proved unable.

Recently the Premier was given the opportunity to present our case for pipelines directly to the Prime Minister and his cabinet, clearly outlining Alberta's contributions to Canada's economy, GDP, and revenue base and noting that pipelines from Alberta to tidewater will create increased employment and prosperity across Canada. Now, this is something our government has been consistently vocal and clear about, that, as stated by the Minister of Finance, we cannot continue to help Canada if Canada will not help Alberta.

Madam Speaker, that message is being heard. Following the Premier's meeting with the federal cabinet, federal Natural Resources minister Jim Carr stated that she was very effective at making her case. He stated that she has an argument and a story to tell, and ministers were very keen to hear it.

The Prime Minister has openly acknowledged that one of the fundamental responsibilities of any Canadian Prime Minister is to get Canadian resources to international markets, and in order to get our resources to market in the 21st century, we have to be responsible around the environment.

Mr. Mark Salkeld, CEO of the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, also acknowledged the ground that we've gained, stating that the federal government is stepping up to the plate and creating conversations that we weren't having before. This, Madam Speaker, is as a result of the bold steps we have taken in the government of Alberta.

Even David Manning, the former Alberta representative to Washington, has praise for our approach, declaring that the Premier is a great messenger for the idea of reconciling environmental action with a vibrant resource economy, an important step, as was noted by the Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Madam Speaker, because of the work of our government we are closer than ever to ensuring that we have access to the safest infrastructure available to get our product to tidewater, that being a pipeline, and we are there because we have worked collaboratively and built partnerships through responsible action and diplomacy instead of falling back on belligerence and petty politicking.

While this motion does little to help advance the case for pipelines or add to the ongoing conversation with our provincial and federal colleagues, I will support it as a reflection of the work our government is already doing and the considerable ground we've gained in this last year.

I should note that I'm also proud of the work that's going to continue, that I support the work being done through the Canadian energy strategy, which was adopted last July, which provides the framework to ensure that we protect the environment and develop our energy industry. We understand that every government in this country understands that these issues need to be dealt with. It's going to take focus and determination, collaboration with our partners in industry, the environmental community, with governments across Canada, and, of course, the important consultation with indigenous peoples.

I look forward to the continued work of our government, the implementation of our climate leadership plan, and the eventual success of securing Alberta a pipeline to tidewater. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. leader of the third party, followed by Edmonton-Manning, followed by Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and speak to this motion requesting that our government ask the federal government to not have a tanker ban in place in northern British Columbia. Let me say this. This should be easy for every member of this House to support if indeed we care about the economy of Alberta.

You can imagine that I was just a little disappointed to hear the Energy minister talking at length, when I think she used the word "gamesmanship" 30 times. If it was 20, then I stand corrected. The gamesmanship happens when the minister, frankly, talks about how we shouldn't be importing energy into Canada when Alberta can supply it. This is the minister from the same government that is going to squeeze off Alberta's electricity supply that we can provide here so much that they're making a deal to bring in more electricity out of British Columbia.

That's gamesmanship, when you talk out of one side of your mouth about it being bad to import energy and out of the other side of your mouth you're actually forcing energy to be imported into one of the most energy-rich jurisdictions in the world by your failed policies, particularly when the government ought to know that

when you look at the coal-fired plants right now, the best one in Alberta – and we know that they're not all up to this standard – produces electricity from coal with emissions very similar to burning natural gas. That this government would lock all those billions of dollars in the ground when the technology is almost equal to what they're going to shift to: now, that's gamesmanship.

This is about clearing the path in hopes that we can negotiate a pipeline. This is clearing a path, for the next three years at least, for this current government to try to negotiate a pipeline, and every member of this House would like to see them succeed. But the gamesmanship comes in when they stand up and pretend that no one tried up till now or that no one cared. What I've heard members from the opposite side say here in the last few minutes is that we're going to bring Alberta up to some world standard for how we produce energy. Well, folks, we've been the world leaders for decades.

The previous pipeline deniers on the other side, at least up until recently, are the ones that were on the record calling Alberta embarrassing cousins. Meanwhile the people in our industry, named by the Energy minister, have been at the forefront of making sure that we live up to those standards that were in place by the previous government. Yes, we haven't got a pipeline now, but you know what? Talking down about the standards that the men and women that work in our industry live up to every single day and have lived up to for years isn't going to get it done.

Now, I appreciate it. Thank you. Welcome to the party, government. I'm glad you're now on the pipeline bandwagon. Thank you. That's the right place for you to be. But for them to pretend that no one was trying to get this done before when they've got people on the front bench that have written forewords for books designed to actually shut down the oil sands . . .

An Hon. Member: *An Action a Day.*

Mr. McIver: Yeah. *An Action a Day.* These are the *An Action a Day* people, that will keep the oil sands away.

Now they're done being pipeline deniers, and that's a good thing. But the fact that they're trying to pretend that no one else has tried anything: now, there's the gamesmanship. That's what's really sad. That's not collaboration, Madam Speaker. That's actually counter-productive to Alberta's best interests, to say that we are going to somehow now magically become better, particularly with what the government calls their climate change strategy, which will do next to nothing about climate change. What it will do is transfer a lot of money from people that use energy to buy votes from 60 per cent of Albertans.

5:40

We also know that even those people receiving the rebates are going to pay more because of the carbon tax, a lot more than the rebate that they get back is going to be worth. We know that. It's in the government's own documents, Madam Speaker, where they say that people will be rebated. If the government is right – and that's quite a stretch, but we'll give them the benefit of the doubt for a minute here – they'll be rebated for the amount of gasoline they use and the amount of natural gas they use to heat their homes.

Let's just say that the government is right about that – congratulations – but what the government ignores is the extra cost people will pay for the electricity they buy, for the clothing they buy, for the food they buy, for the furniture they buy or anything else they buy that rides on a truck or a train. The fuel that those trucks or trains use will be taxed, and as things go through the distribution chain – although the government might not understand it, you can't run a business without making a profit – the fuel tax

will be paid at the manufacturing stage, at the distribution stage, and even to heat or cool the stores where the retailing is done. So there will be three or four times, potentially, the cost of the carbon tax, the carbon attack, as I prefer to call it, because that's what it is. It's a carbon attack on Albertans. The carbon attack will make everything that Albertans buy cost more.

The government says that they're rebating two pieces of it. Well, okay, but even the government's own documents – the government members talked about that the average family of four makes \$90,000 a year. Well, that family isn't going to spend more than \$5,000 or \$10,000 a year, probably, on gasoline and to heat their home. So with the other \$80,000, \$60,000 if you will – it doesn't matter – the vast majority of what they spend, everything will cost more, and they're doing nothing for that. The government really knows that the poorest of Albertans – and not everybody that is getting the rebate is the poorest, but the poorest are included in that – will be paying more as a result of this government's carbon tax than they're getting back.

The fact is that if you want to talk about gamesmanship, the Energy minister hasn't really thought it through. Now, getting a pipeline: the government ought to support this. I think one of the government members said that you can't tell for sure whether this will make a difference to the Northern Gateway pipeline. Okay. I'll even buy that from them just for a second though I'm not convinced. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt for argument right now. The fact that it might mean that the government should be all standing up, every single one of them, and supporting this motion because all it says is that we're going to encourage the federal government not to have a tanker ban on one of the lifelines to get our product to market on the world market and get full price for it, which is very important. Then they'll have more money to spend. Lord knows what they'll spend it on. Maybe they'll even make a payment on the debt.

Madam Speaker, the fact is that the government's arguments are disingenuous. They have been harmful to the energy industry before they ever so recently stopped being pipeline deniers. This is one more chance for the government to have a modicum of credibility on this file by saying: we are in favour of one of the many roadblocks being taken out of the way to a pipeline. If they want to be believed by anyone, then they ought to all stand up and vote yes for this at the end of this debate, as I shall, because I care and the members of our party care about the jobs that Albertans have, the men and women that work in that industry. We also care about the environment, which is why the standards are so high in this province. We also care about the things that the royalties will pay for: roads, schools, hospitals, seniors' homes, social services. These are the things that the money will pay for if we can get it to market at full price.

When the government wants to spend so much money on these things – and I have to say that there are a lot of things that they want to spend money on that are good ideas although they still don't seem to have any sense of when it's too much and when they should stop borrowing – the fact is that if you want to spend money as bad as this government does, you would think they would get obstacles out of the way of the money going into the cash register. Today the government has an opportunity to do just that by voting for this motion.

Madam Speaker, that's what I think. I believe this is such an easy thing to do. Nobody is asking them to pick a fight. They are asking them to say that we will encourage the Prime Minister and the current federal government to take a roadblock out of the way of Alberta's economy.

I strongly, strongly recommend to the government that they vote yes as a sign that they care about Alberta men and women who have

lost jobs and need jobs because up till now they're falling pretty darn short of making their case. This is a chance for them to provide a little bit of evidence to the public that they might care.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I rise in response to Motion 506. As many of you know, I was raised on Vancouver Island until I was 16, a beautiful little town dependent on forestry, fishing, and the tourism industry. During my time growing up I had the unique opportunity of being able to go camping not on land but on water. Our family would take our family boat out and go and anchor at night in a harbour or at a local dock. Due to this, I was able to see killer whales scratching their backs on the bluffs, porpoises racing the boats, and sea lions and otters playing in the water. So I have an understanding of the concerns for the residents of the west coast and the tanker ban. I understand that our ecoclimate on the island and along the coast is vulnerable and fragile and that it can be impacted by increased freight traffic.

However, I also recognize the fragility of our Alberta and Canadian economies. We are an energy country, Madam Speaker, and Alberta is the economic driver of our country. We currently depend on the oil and gas industry to support the financial stability not only of Alberta but of many other provinces. However, this is currently at risk. With the competition from the United States and our lack of access to tidewater we have a limited ability to get our product to market.

This must change, Madam Speaker, if we as a province and as a nation want to continue to be economic leaders across the globe. To succeed in this important goal, we must work with our neighbours thoughtfully, constructively, and respectfully to achieve this important market access. We need to move past the divisive battles of the past and focus on what matters, getting the best possible price for our energy exports. That's what my constituents in Edmonton-Manning elected me to do.

Madam Speaker, every day I see my constituents working together to solve problems in their community. In reality, the tanker ban on the north coast of B.C. may or may not be a problem for Alberta depending on its terms and on the progress of more of the projects that we currently have before us. We'll stick with our plan. We will work together with the governments and the stakeholders to get the work done of getting our pipelines approved. That's what Albertans expect from us, and that's how this government will proceed.

This can be done, Madam Speaker, in a way that not only supports the concerns of the environment but also the economic development opportunities. Our government recognizes that we need to address climate change. This is why we have introduced our climate change strategy, a plan that will create new jobs by diversifying our economy as well as ensuring the environmental safety of our oil and gas industry. This is the right thing to do. It will ensure that we have a sustainable economy for generations to come. It will support Albertans in their jobs, and it will take care of them, as we said we would.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. I rise today to speak to the important motion put forward by my colleague from Grande Prairie-Smoky, Motion 506, regarding pipeline access and regarding the proposed moratorium on the tankers. It should go without saying that

Northern Gateway is one of the most important infrastructure projects for Canada.

Our province has long suffered the discount of petroleum products, and it is commonly stated that our province is blessed by geology and cursed by geography. As a landlocked province we are reliant on our neighbouring territories to obtain access for a project, and this may come as a surprise to members across the way, but we've actually worked together in the past for our economic interests by permitting our beautiful province access to the ports we need.

Just in the last 10 years, while my esteemed colleague from Fort McMurray-Conklin, now the Leader of the Official Opposition, was in federal politics, supporting common-sense infrastructure projects like pipelines – and I'll reiterate this again, just in case – four major pipeline projects were approved. Projects ranged from major repairs to expanding Alberta's existing access to tidewater, line reversals, expanding the province's access to domestic, international ports.

5:50

In June 2010 Keystone phase 1 between Hardisty, Alberta, and Roxana, Illinois, spanning 3,456 kilometres, was completed. The Alberta Clipper, or Enbridge main line 67, was completed in April of 2010. This pipeline is part of Enbridge's extensive pipeline system, with this particular pipeline running from Hardisty, Alberta, to Superior, Wisconsin. Then in 2008 a major pipeline expansion project was completed on Kinder Morgan's anchor loop, expanding the already existing Trans Mountain pipeline. As everyone in this House should already know, the Trans Mountain project provides Alberta access to tidewater through British Columbia. In 2012 Enbridge completed its reversal of line 9. These are just recent examples of expansions that brought significant changes to massive pipeline infrastructure. However, the access is insufficient.

Perhaps what is more problematic is that this infrastructure is largely designed to service a market that is no longer reliant on significant volumes of Canadian crude. The shale oil and gas revolution has significantly reduced American reliance on Canadian crude, and significant technologies accounted for under this revolution have meant that the American market is now oversaturated. So our neighbours to the south went from being a country so traumatized by the oil price shock of the '80s that both their foreign and domestic policy was largely guided by the goal of ensuring the security of their country's energy supply to a country that is now nearly self-sufficient in energy.

Much of our infrastructure was built around supplying American markets. To repeat what the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky has said, this oversaturation in the market has meant pipelines are overcapacity, so we are bottlenecking at this point. Canadian producers are so desperate to move their product out of province that they're selling it at a discount. To reiterate again, that is billions less in royalties and taxes for this province.

Western Canadian select trades at \$14 a barrel lower than North American benchmark west Texas intermediate. When you are a province producing millions of barrels a day, that discount hurts. Our oil and gas industry needs to access new markets, particularly economically booming Asian markets, and this access will come from this project of Trans Mountain and Northern Gateway. The moratorium on tanker traffic would be unequivocally detrimental to Alberta's energy industry and, consequently, to the Albertans who rely on this.

Long before I was elected to represent the constituency of Chestermere-Rocky View, while the Leader of the Official Opposition held a seat in the federal office, our then Conservative

federal government showed explicit support for the arm's-length agencies which are charged with pipeline regulations and approvals, the National Energy Board. Arm's-length bodies made sound recommendations to our federal cabinet, and in turn the cabinet generally – and this was true for decades, in fact – trusted the strict standards of these agencies and followed their recommendations. It was a time of quiet recognition and rigorous requirements mandated by the NEB in order for a company to gain a licence to build a pipeline, rigorous regulatory requirements that meant Canada had and still does have the highest for pipeline approvals in the world, just to be clear.

During this same time period – this government was newly elected and had antipipeline protesters, and then the federal government was also elected with anti Northern Gateway activism – the Member for Calgary-East was one of the members opposite who was protesting Keystone; our current Premier was attending anti, quote, unquote, tar sands rallies; while the Member for Edmonton-Calder, our new Education minister, was riling up the crowd, not to be outdone by the Member for Lethbridge-West, our environment minister. The actions taken by members of the NDP and their fellow travellers have had a profound impact on pipeline approvals.

Members of this government are personally responsible for pushing pipeline approval, a process once handled by an apolitical, arm's-length body, a process that until recently saw pipelines regularly gain approval and construction, into an issue of partisanship. The members of this government contributed to the politicization of a process of pipeline approval to the detriment of these common-sense infrastructure projects. Because of the actions taken and written about by members of this government, pipeline approval is no longer apolitical, and it's those members of the NDP and the groups this government is usually happy to work with that have caused the massive delays in pipeline construction that we are now facing.

Now that this government is done changing the pipeline approvals process to the detriment of the people they've been elected to represent, it is time for this government to apologize for their past indiscretions, follow Wildrose leadership, and actually support pipelines. The members of this government have created a climate in which quiet support for this process is no longer sufficient. Now it is time for the government to provide active vocal support for these projects, not the hollow, qualified support that we've seen so far. Albertans deserve far more than reserved support from this Premier on a project with economic benefits ranging in the billions. It's time for our Premier to stop recommending that Trans Mountain alter the proposed project instead of actually supporting . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member, but under Standing Order 8(3), which provides for up to five minutes for the sponsor of a motion other than a government motion to close debate, I would invite the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky to close debate.

I will first recognize the hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent of the House to go to one-minute bells.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I want to say thanks for the support expressed today, but I do have to clarify a few points. I want to point out that the NDP government did campaign against Northern Gateway, and they did bring in anti-oil

activists from across Canada to work in their upper staff. So if Albertans are a little suspicious of this government and their support for pipelines, they have good reason to be. How can you convince Albertans that you truly changed a lifetime of work against the energy industry? Well, one way would be to support this motion but follow that with action.

Mr. Panda: Concrete action.

Mr. Loewen: Concrete action.

Now, think about Northern Gateway. Some say that it's looking like it's a little closer to happening. Finally, the Premier has kind of come onboard and said that she might support Northern Gateway, but of course we've never seen any of that support until the last few weeks.

The support for pipelines isn't just about taxing Albertans out of business; it's about actual support to get Albertans working and get Albertans back into business.

Now, this isn't an exhaustive list of pipelines. We picked three good pipelines to put in this motion. These pipelines: we just need to get them approved and get them going. That doesn't take any government money, doesn't take anything. Business wants to do this, and we need it.

I do want to point out a few comments from the Energy minister. She says that other governments failed to get pipelines built. Well, I can't see how you can suggest that the other governments failed when the very people that support this government, that actually sit in the benches across, actively campaigned, put up roadblocks and obstructions against these pipelines. If we want to talk about drama-free action for pipelines, all the drama was against pipelines before, Madam Speaker.

We've spent \$6 billion on carbon capture and now \$3 billion more on a carbon tax. We've increased the carbon emission tax. We're spending billions of dollars here. Finally, maybe we're starting to see a little bit of light, but I don't think it should cost Albertans billions of dollars to get their energy to tidewater.

As far as political games, this isn't a political game; this is about supporting Albertans and supporting jobs. It's our job to do that. That's not a game.

Now, the Member for Edmonton-Centre said that this government has been working hard for a year to get pipelines. Well, sorry. When it comes to Northern Gateway, it might be two weeks of humming and hawing, but it isn't hard work. He also mentioned about making Canada the most environmentally responsible oil

producer. We always have been. We are. He also talks about the carbon tax, reinvesting it. I'm not sure where else tax dollars would go but to be reinvested in Alberta. It's like it's some sort of new idea that you've never heard of before. He said that the federal government was keen to hear the Premier. Well, what about the proposed tanker ban? There hasn't been a lot of talk from the government side on the proposed tanker ban.

Anyway, I want to end with thanks for the support. We may have differences in our view of the facts that got us to this point, but we really need to work together to get fair dollar for our resources and put Albertans back to work again.

Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 506 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 6 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Goehring	Miranda
Babcock	Hanson	Nielsen
Bilous	Hinkley	Orr
Carson	Horne	Panda
Clark	Hunter	Piquette
Connolly	Jean	Pitt
Coolahan	Kazim	Rodney
Cooper	Kleinstauber	Rosendahl
Cortes-Vargas	Littlewood	Sabir
Cyr	Loewen	Schneider
Dach	Loyola	Shepherd
Dang	Malkinson	Sweet
Drever	McCuaig-Boyd	Taylor
Feehan	McIver	Turner
Fitzpatrick	McKitrick	van Dijken
Ganley	Miller	Woollard
Gill		

Totals: For – 49 Against – 0

[Motion Other than Government Motion 506 carried unanimously]

[The Assembly adjourned at 6:05 p.m.]

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