



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday evening, May 25, 2016

Day 33

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)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND),
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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
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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

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated.

Private Bills Second Reading

Bill Pr. 1

Bow Valley Community Foundation Repeal Act

Mr. Westhead: Madam Speaker, I'd like to move second reading of Bill Pr. 1, Bow Valley Community Foundation Repeal Act.

Madam Speaker, as we turn a page on this incredibly valuable aspect of the community in the Bow valley, I'd like to reflect for members of this Assembly the excellent work that the Bow Valley Community Foundation did and the positive impact that it had.

The foundation was established in 2005 by a dedicated group of community leaders along with the support of the town of Canmore. A volunteer board along with representatives from various community organizations provided oversight and management of the roughly \$450,000 in total assets, which generated grants of over \$15,000 per year while the foundation operated. A short list of the many deserving organizations that have benefited from the Bow Valley Community Foundation includes the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing for the Rocky Mountain Adaptive Sports Centre; local cycling, hockey, swim, climbing, and soccer clubs; and the Canmore Illusions gymnastics team, whose new foam pit I had the pleasure of jumping in only a few months ago.

Madam Speaker, as we say a farewell thank you to those who worked so hard to make the Bow Valley Community Foundation a tremendous success, we also start a new chapter on community fundraising in the Bow valley. I'm pleased to tell this Assembly that members of the foundation being dissolved by the bill that we have before us will be joining forces with the existing Banff community foundation to create the Banff Canmore Community Foundation.

Approximately two years ago the two separate organizations starting having conversations about how they might begin to collaborate and work together. August 2015 marked the official opening of the new home base for the expanded organization, where Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the Hon. Lois Mitchell, presided over the ribbon cutting. Mayor Borrowman of Canmore and Mayor Sorensen of Banff held hands as they approached the podium to deliver a message: together we are really stronger; two towns, one heart. The mission statement of the Banff Canmore Community Foundation is: "Engaging hearts and minds to build a stronger community." They certainly do that, Madam Speaker.

In closing, I'd like to thank the hard-working volunteers and board members of the Bow Valley Community Foundation for the hard work that they did supporting many worthy causes. I wish every success in the future and give my sincere gratitude to the equally hard-working folks at the Banff Canmore Community Foundation. I look forward to the incredible projects and dreams that they will make possible.

On that note, I encourage all members of this Assembly to support this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

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

Bill 19

Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Compensation Act

The Chair: Are there any questions or amendments with respect to this act? The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you. It's my pleasure to rise and to just say a few words this evening about Bill 19, the Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Compensation Act. As members will recall, Madam Chair, from the discussion earlier this morning, this legislation is designed to address the wide variance in compensation philosophies, levels, and practices that currently exist in our ABCs. This legislation arises out of the first phases of our government's review of agencies, boards, and commissions and facilitates the creation of rational and consistent frameworks for executive compensation across the ABCs. I think that all members of this House will agree that this is a reasonable objective for the government, and many members of this Chamber expressed that sentiment similarly earlier today.

During the second reading debate a number of members raised issues, questions, and other things with regard to the legislation. I just want to take a few moments to address a few of those items.

First, a member raised some concerns that our government's objective is to create a consistent framework for compensation and, by way of implication, seemed concerned that we would create a single, unitary pay rate for CEOs of all ABCs. Let me be clear, Madam Chair, that we know that there are different ABCs of different sizes and complexity, so our intent in this legislation is not to ensure one single rate of pay for CEOs of ABCs but, rather, to create a framework with many pay bands that will include in the same pay band the same kind of size of ABC or scope or responsibility or complexity. The CEO will be slotted in that pay band, and there'll be a number of pay bands.

We are contracting the work of a professional benchmarking compensation firm to aid us in the creation of these compensation frameworks, and we're also seeking input from Albertans. This is the work we're going to be engaging in as part of this bill. We believe that the legislation is in the best interests of moving forward and creating some harmony across these CEOs' compensations. It will take some time to put in effect after we pass the legislation, but we're committed to moving forward, and as we gain the experience from this initiative with the 27 CEOs initially, we will be looking at others to engage in this.

As members of this House might know, we've completed phase 1 of the ABCs review. We are starting soon phase 2 of the ABCs review, and that will provide us more grist to look at the CEOs in those areas. Then we will be moving on to phase 3, which is the postsecondary institutions, and we will be undertaking that work in the fall.

That's just some of the background with regard to all of this. I'm sorry if it's repetitious, but it is certainly important work. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 19 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

The hon. Acting Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

7:40

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 19.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? Say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 15 An Act to End Predatory Lending

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure on behalf of Minister McLean to rise this evening and move third reading of Bill 15, An Act to End Predatory Lending.

You know, it's been quite heartening today to see the positive reception for this bill both in Alberta's communities and, as I said here today, in this Assembly. In particular, it was encouraging to hear from the members across the floor, many of whom spoke very thoughtfully on this bill. Madam Speaker, we've heard from Albertans from so many walks of life that this is change that they've called for and that they support. It's useful to remind ourselves that the consultation around this bill was robust. Almost 1,500 Albertans, including stakeholders, community leaders, and members of the industry, provided input. I'd like to thank the dedicated staff at Service Alberta for achieving such breadth and depth in their consultations.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to just quickly draw attention – there was a poll of Albertans that was conducted in late 2015 by Abacus research as these consultations concluded, and when asked whether new regulations should be introduced to better protect Albertans, 83 per cent of Albertans agreed.

During tough times Albertans come together, and we support each other. The intent of this bill follows on that, to protect Albertans, to support their families, and help to ensure that all can be resilient and strong. As such, I'm pleased to move third reading and support this bill.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Just to clarify, hon. member, you're moving it on behalf of the Minister of Service Alberta?

Mr. Shepherd: That's correct.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any other speakers wishing to speak to this bill in third reading? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to rise briefly and offer my unequivocal and enthusiastic support for Bill 15. You know, as I said in my earlier remarks in second reading, if this bill results in payday lending companies being less viable and therefore less populous, there just simply being less of them, that's a good thing. That means that fewer and fewer Albertans will be finding themselves in an unsustainable debt spiral and will hopefully be on a path to being more financially sound.

You know, we heard in debate about many different institutions and organizations, credit unions like Servus Credit Union, First Calgary Financial, stepping up and creating microloan programs. That's exactly what I think the intent of this bill is, to create alternatives, lower interest alternatives for short-term lending, microloans. Momentum and others throughout the province have done tremendous, tremendous work.

The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon's sharing his story, I thought, was worth mentioning, and I think that he deserves a lot of praise for his work in the community and for, you know, doing what I think many Albertans will do, and that's to reach out to help their neighbour. You don't need to be the MLA to do that, but that's who we are as Albertans, and I think that says a lot about the character of the individual, but I think it also says a lot about the character of Albertans. We want to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. Very clearly, Bill 15 is the right thing to do, so praise to the government for doing that, to the minister, and to all.

I'm pleased that this sounds like it's going to be a unanimous vote in favour. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Payday lending, like any industry, needs to be responsibly and properly regulated. Without the changes in this bill, the costs associated with borrowing payday loans will stay at their current high levels. These costs are simply outrageous. It's no surprise that these levels of interest can force Albertans into a cycle of debt and push them towards poverty. The individuals taking out payday loans are often financially vulnerable. This government is committed to promoting more responsible lending and to protecting Albertans who can least afford the high costs of these loans.

For these reasons, this bill has my full support. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) comes into effect if anybody has questions or comments at this point.

Are there any other speakers to the bill?

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a third time]

Bill 1 Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act

Ms Ganley: Sorry, Madam Speaker. I was going to move that we go to third reading on Bill 19 if I have unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Cooper: You can just adjourn Bill 1. Just ask to adjourn Bill 1.

Ms Ganley: We'll adjourn debate on Bill 1, then, and move to Bill 19 if we have unanimous consent on that.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 19
Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions
Compensation Act

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to move third reading.

Again, we need this bill so that we can get better information and get a handle on executive compensation in public agencies. It'll authorize me to be able to do that as well as to set up a system of compensation frameworks. All of that will create greater transparency in our agencies, boards, and commissions, and it will address an issue of increasing costs in ABC compensation. I hope that all members of the House can support that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, before we can proceed with third reading on Bill 19, we do need unanimous consent because it passed committee just a little while ago and second reading, so to go to the next stage, we need to have unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers to the bill?
Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate?

Mr. Ceci: It's closed. Thank you very much.

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 20
Climate Leadership Implementation Act

[Debate adjourned May 25: Mr. Cyr speaking]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake was speaking. You still have some time. Go ahead.

Mr. Cyr: Can we move to adjourn debate?

The Deputy Speaker: No. The clock ran out, and you still had some of your time left, and that should have been acknowledged at the beginning or dismissed. Go ahead. You still have I'm not sure how many minutes, about 10.

An Hon. Member: Start from the beginning.

Mr. Cyr: Start from the beginning. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Eight minutes left.

7:50

Mr. Cyr: All right. I left off with the ill-advised carbon tax, or levy, as the government is putting it forward. That is where we left off.

Madam Speaker, the NDP love to talk about how they are world champions of health care and that they would never hurt health care in any shape or form. Well, that's really interesting because the last time I checked, ambulances use diesel, and this raises the costs on

all fuels. We see that this actually is a tax that attacks every part of Alberta and all of our civil services. How is it that we've seen such, I guess, incredible disinterest by the government in studying the actual results of implementing this tax?

Now, the NDP has been clear that there are no rebates for the health care centres, for the hospitals, for the schools, for the charities. These are functions that are integral to Alberta. How is it that when we are bringing in a tax that is going to actually make our civil services worse, they have been forgotten about when it comes down to making sure that this is tax neutral? The big thing here is that they keep talking about tax neutral, but the fact is that they don't understand what tax neutral is. Spending taxes doesn't mean tax neutral. It just means taxes are being spent. Tax neutral actually means that you put the money back towards the places that you're trying to incentivize, which in this case is green.

Now, when we're looking at this, have we actually talked with health care providers? Have we talked with the hospitals? Have we talked with the schools? Have we talked with the trustees? Have we talked with the different boards in Alberta? That answer is no. We all knew that it was coming, but we don't know what the effects are, and that is because of the fact that this government hasn't done its due diligence to ensure that the impacts are being identified so that we can actually make sure that it doesn't affect our front-line workers, which this bill, clearly, is going to affect. We're going to have to ensure that somehow these shortfalls that are being created right now are covered.

Now, Madam Speaker, I've talked about how it's going to impact our local hospitals and our local educators, our local seniors' homes – I talked about those – but let's talk about actual Albertans right now who are hurting. Let's go with the example of long-haul truckers. The fact is that when you look at long-haul truckers, there are some very tight margins right now, and these guys, because we have slowed down with our economy, are no longer working as much or at the same rates as they were before. So now is not the time to be raising the fuel costs for these long-haul truckers because, in the end, we're going to see that they're going to start failing. That means that in order to be able to make up that shortfall of long-haul truckers, we're actually going to have to see price increases.

Now, when we start looking at what this government has done, we're seeing massive increases in the fuel tax. How can we say that that is going to positively affect our most vulnerable? The fact is that it's not.

Now, there are things that are a real concern, and one of the ones that's really popping out for me is that we are imposing a diesel carbon tax. What will the effect on the truck stops selling the diesel be? This is an interesting, I guess, concern that I've got. To be honest with you, I used to do accounting for some of these bulk dealerships. [interjection] I know. They would actually tell me that the higher the cost of the fuel, the less fuel they sell. I know it's stunning to hear that.

An Hon. Member: Stunning.

Mr. Cyr: Stunning to hear that. That's because we're putting businesses out of business. That is what's happening.

Again, we start looking at this. I agree that we are going to see less fuel sold, but we're also going to see businesses fail as well. We're going to see businesses' costs to continue operating go up, so our burgers are going to go up, and our groceries are going to go up, the parts for our vehicles. The fact is that when we start looking at everything that's going to be going up, we are going to be actually making less from this fuel tax because we're selling less fuel. It's just like when we look at the corporate taxes, personal taxes, and minimum wages that are being brought in. The more tax you do,

the less incentive there is to make profits and to hire people. That's what this carbon tax is going to do for fuel consumption in the area.

I agree that Alberta can reduce its carbon footprint by everybody moving out of Alberta. That seems to be a very counterproductive way of dealing with our carbon. A good example is that we are seeing astounding vacancy rates in my riding right now. That is because people cannot move forward without any work in my riding, with the wonderful 10 per cent unemployment rate that we've got right now. They are actually saying: we want to see stability. I brought this up last night when I was talking about Bill 10. I won't go down that road, but I will say that it is unstable government that brings forward the fact that I will continue to see no employment in my riding.

A good example that we need to be looking at, Madam Speaker, is what the actual impacts are. I keep bringing this up because it is astounding. We are studying an incredible number of different things like legal aid. We're putting reviews out consistently across this government . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a). The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to briefly comment on the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake's stirring remarks. I just have a couple of quick questions, and then I'll pass it to him.

I'm just wondering if he would be able to elaborate on some of the impacts with respect to jobs in the constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake as I know that it's something he is passionate about in terms of employment numbers in the region. Then if he wouldn't mind just spending a couple of brief moments speaking about if he has heard from constituents in Bonnyville-Cold Lake that are comfortable with the direction that the government is going on this particular tax given the fact that it wasn't something that the NDP campaigned on, that it wasn't something that was part of the agenda that was laid out for all Albertans during the May 5 election.

8:00

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll start with the first part of my hon. colleague's question here. When we're looking at jobs, going back to that specifically, I am seeing with a lot of the businesses anywhere between 25 and 40 per cent of their staff being laid off right now. This is an astounding number, but you know what? We have an incredible constituency. They want to get through this. They know that they can get through this. Why would we add more burden? That is what we are doing.

Already the businesses are having a hard time making ends meet. They're already keeping more staff because they know that these are mothers, fathers, single mothers, incredible people that they're trying to keep working. But you know what? They're not going to be working because in the end raising their cost to do business is going to mean that they're going to have to not make more jobs but actually lay people off.

I don't see how taxing \$3 billion out of Alberta's economy right now is going to create any jobs. We've heard consistently that when you tax, tax, and tax – why is it that somehow people think that they can make more money out of that? What ends up happening is that you end up eroding your tax base.

Now, let's look at the fact that when we're looking at where our most vulnerable are, depending on the riding, right now they're going to see a wonderful \$500 tax credit from this government. The fact is that the government right now is saying that it's only going

to cost them an extra \$500 or \$600, but that's not reality for northern ridings. People know that it is more expensive to actually live in northern ridings. How is adding more burden to the northern ridings, to my hometown going to help anybody? It's not. The fact is that we're downloading an incredible burden on northern Alberta, on Calgary, and we're not going to see any results, in my opinion, of actually moving Alberta forward, which is something that right now we need to do.

We need to get investment back. That is what we should be focusing on. We should be focusing on, well, getting economic development, which has failed horribly, to actually start generating some interest in investing back in Alberta. We're not seeing any of this stuff moving forward. What we're seeing are steps backwards. We're seeing projects put on hold. We're seeing plants sitting on plant sites. In the end, what we're seeing is that they're just not willing to take a chance because with that money they put into it, they don't know if they're going to get that money back out.

The Deputy Speaker: Any others wishing to speak to this bill?

Mr. Dang: Madam Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 20 at this time.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 1

Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act (continued)

[Adjourned debate May 25: Ms Ganley]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise on third reading here of Bill 1. I'll keep my comments fairly brief. I just want to highlight the fact that numerous members throughout the debate on Bill 1 commented on Bill 1 being a flagship bill, and I want to reiterate the fact that for our government the priority is the economy. The priority is getting Albertans back to work. Through Bill 1 that's one tool that our government will have to be able to respond quite quickly and nimbly to the current economic situation that Alberta is facing and to ensure that we have the tools to adapt and respond not only to the economic climate and conditions but, quite frankly, the economy, promoting diversification, looking for opportunities to leverage our strengths, and for Alberta to continue to be the best place to start and grow a business. It will continue to be one of our strengths, quite frankly.

I will say that I was a little disappointed that all parties in this House did not support the bill, and that makes me question whether the economy and diversification and promoting jobs within our province is a priority of all members within this Assembly. If it is, then I would have expected unanimous support of a bill of this stature and of this significance.

Quite frankly, as well, Madam Speaker, this is a priority of this government as seen through our budget, which we entitled the Alberta jobs budget, again, a significant number of tools that are going to set the right conditions for business and industry to continue to invest in our province, to provide supports to entrepreneurs and small-business owners so that we remain the best province in the country to invest in, to start and grow a business in.

I think it's worth mentioning, Madam Speaker, that Alberta continues to be the lowest taxed jurisdiction in the country. There are a number of factors which set Alberta far apart from every other province, including the fact that we've got the youngest population, one of the most educated populations. We have some of the most affordable real estate in the country when you look at comparisons to some of the other major cities across the country. We also have an incredible quality of life here in Alberta, from the mountains to the rolling hills up in Peace River. Alberta is the most beautiful province in the country.

I am quite proud to be an Albertan, Madam Speaker, quite proud of the work that our government is doing, and I will encourage all members of the Assembly to support third reading of Bill 1. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This Bill 1 was introduced on the 8th of March as a flagship bill. Instead of being a flagship bill, it ended up as a job description for the minister.

I appreciate the minister asking for unanimous support for the bill. In this House probably we debated a lot on this bill, and we were all eagerly waiting to hear from the minister what those tools are that he's looking for from this bill that will help him create jobs. We didn't hear any specific examples. When we looked at the Government Organization Act, it already provided him all the tools he has. We talked about that back and forth so many times. We haven't heard, even today, what those specific tools are that weren't there in the organization act but that he's looking for through Bill 1. So that's why I'm disappointed. He's just asking for unanimous support but not giving us the information on what new powers he will get. He already has the powers, and instead of using them, he just wants to relist them as a new bill in Bill 1.

Madam Speaker, we also talked a lot about the job situation here. A hundred thousand jobs were lost in Alberta. In Calgary-Foothills I got so many phone calls, e-mails, and I've been door-knocking, and I'm hearing from people that their priority is also the economy and jobs. They want to get back to work. I've been asking this minister to tell us how he's going to create those hundred thousand jobs. To create those hundred thousand jobs in three years: he should be in a real hurry to do something about that if Bill 1 is really that important.

8:10

I mean, it was gathering dust for almost three months now. We are at Bill 22 now on the Order Paper, and we're still talking about Bill 1. Hopefully, today we'll get through this. If that's how the government wants to represent it, if just to get this bill approved reflects how long it takes to create jobs, if the government takes so long and still can't figure out what additional powers the minister is going to get after implementing this bill, you know, Albertans really can't wait. They really want this minister to succeed and help create the jobs. We want him to be successful. Irrespective of what they say, that we don't want them to succeed, it's not true. We all have an interest, like my colleague from Bonnyville-Cold Lake. He said that the unemployment rate in his riding is more than 10 per cent now. There are so many Albertans looking for help, and we'll be happy if this government succeeds in creating a hundred thousand jobs in three years. That helps my neighbours, my friends, my colleagues, but even today we haven't heard it from the minister.

As a critic my job is to hold the government to account and also, you know, to help them, whichever way I could, by pointing out the

pros and cons of this bill. That's why we wanted to make this bill better. Because there is nothing in that bill, we proposed amendments to make it better. Those amendments are very reasonable. Had they voted for those amendments, that would have helped to debate on programs by a committee of the Assembly, and that would have helped the minister to report the progress on the number of jobs he created, and that reporting would have been public instead of reporting in secret as per the bill. Most importantly, it would have cut red tape, which would have helped small businesses and big businesses, who would have created the many jobs that the minister wanted to create.

Madam Speaker, that red tape is one subject, you know, that I'm really interested in debating in the House in the future, too. When I worked in oil and gas, I experienced it first-hand. These work processes and all that take so long here to get anything approved. It's a waste of resources, a waste of time. You know, we could have approved that amendment so that this bill would have been better. We're all talking about creating jobs, but had we approved that red tape reduction, many companies would have actually advanced the construction of many projects. When we say to reduce red tape, we're not telling the government to ignore the safety issues or anything. We're talking about removing the roadblocks. Some of the government members made fun of that as if we don't care about safety or anything. We're not talking about that. We're talking about procedural delays and roadblocks which could delay the projects.

Anyway, all our amendments were shut down. Had they approved them, that would have really made this bill something worth while. Although it's not a flagship, it would have been something better than what it is now. That flagship we're talking about: the way it is now, it can be manned by only one person, by one person only. That will send false hope. If the minister is trying to send his resumé and expecting them to hire him as the saviour of the ship, it's not going to happen. This is just like a rubber dinghy that the government insists on describing as a battleship. It deserves to be sunk. Unless they think we are one-eyed pirates that can't see the uselessness of this flagship bill, this bill deserves to walk the plank and swim with the fishes, actually.

None of the arguments presented in defence of the need for this bill hold any water. All those guys heckling today: I didn't see any of them standing in this House and speaking in favour of this bill. I didn't. Today they had the opportunity, if they can, to convince all of us here to support that, which the minister couldn't do. If any of those members heckling can convince us, I look forward to that debate.

If we put this bill in a bottle and sent it out to sea, the message wouldn't make one single difference to whatever poor lost soul found it. There isn't even enough paper in the bill to try and eat it. If this bill was a treasure map, it would lead to the garbage can, where it belongs, and at the bottom of the garbage can you would find the failed jobs plan, which, coincidentally, is now under the same minister. This flagship should be sailed into the Bermuda Triangle and lost forever if it can't sail that well.

For the reasons I explained, Madam Speaker, I can't support this, and I don't want to waste our time and effort on useless legislation like this. Let's put it to bed and move on to focus on finding solutions for real problems and issues. I would prefer to be proven wrong by the hon. minister. I wish that after passing this bill, the minister will be really able to create jobs, real jobs, that are tangible and measurable. I hope he can update the Assembly each quarter on how many jobs he creates after being enabled by this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is in effect if you have a question. Were you going to speak under 29(2)(a), hon. member?

Mr. Gill: Since the flagship bill is about nothing and it's going to create no jobs, I guess I have nothing to say about it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Yes. I really appreciated some of the analogy that you were making here. [interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Through the chair.

Mr. Smith: Through the chair. I'm sorry. Thank you. I always forget that.

I was just wondering if the member could expound a little bit further on how this flagship bill is really running at half mast.

Mr. Panda: Well, we actually asked the hon. minister to withdraw the bill – that was the honourable thing he could have done – but he refused to do that. In our own interest, we tried to make it better. That's why we proposed those amendments, but they were all shot down. I don't know if there is anything we could do better. [interjection] Flagship, yes. Sinking ship. I encourage you guys to jump out of that sinking ship and find a safe haven soon.

We were all elected here to this House to bring bills that actually make sense, that actually help Albertans, that actually create jobs. This Bill 1: just show us, tell us, you know, which way it's going to help the minister. How is that going to help your neighbours, my neighbours, people in your riding, in my riding? How can they get back to work? Tell us one example. You all know. You guys are all smart. You know the math. To create a hundred thousand jobs in three years, that means he has to create 33,000 jobs each year. So 33,000 jobs divided by 12 months – you know the math. You figure it out.

8:20

Let's put this bill to bed today and enable the minister – with these new powers that he's going to get with Bill 1, let's wish him the best so that he can create the jobs, every month 500, 600, 800 jobs – so that he can come back and report to us by department: the Department of Finance, Energy, and all those ministries. He's going to report to us saying: this month in the Ministry of Energy we created 200 jobs; in Infrastructure we created 400 jobs. If he can show us that, we're willing to support the bill, but we haven't heard that. We haven't heard how many jobs he's going to create in Banff-Cochrane or Calgary-Hawkwood. We haven't heard that. If you are interested, you should be asking the minister: by month in each of the ridings how many jobs are going to be created? If he has answers, we'll be happy to support the bill. If not, let's not waste time and energy on this useless bill.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think it's remarkable that this is the best the government could come up with for their flagship bill, Bill 1. There are a lot of things that we need to deal with in this province, and, you know, to waste a flagship opportunity, really, on a bill that does nothing, that gives the minister no powers that he doesn't already have, that gives Executive Council no powers that they don't already have – it is singularly unambitious, and it really is a bill about nothing. It is the *Seinfeld* bill. I've been

frantically trying to come up with a joke about Newman or George or Kramer. I'm afraid that I'm just not creative enough at this point in session to come up with anything quite so good, not nearly as creative as my friend from Calgary-Foothills.

I mean, in all sincerity, we have in this province right now an economic crisis. We have a hundred thousand or more Albertans who are out of work. Many of those people have tremendous skills. They're highly skilled engineers, technical professionals, oil field workers, and many of them have very limited job prospects. That's very serious. That is very serious business.

I think it's worth noting that I have a tremendous amount of respect for the minister, and I know that he's well regarded in the province in the economic development community and amongst chambers of commerce. I know that because I've talked with them, and they do speak highly of the minister. I think that's worth noting. I think it would be better, frankly, if the minister would get on with doing the job rather than passing legislation that does nothing that he can't already do.

It makes me wonder: what else did the government have lined up as Bill 1? When we got this bill, it was printed on eight and a half by 11 paper. It wasn't even a proper bill. Given that it was early on in a session that the government set themselves, surely it wasn't a surprise that you had to come up with a Bill 1? You had time to actually get to Queen's Printer and physically print the bill. I do wonder if at some point there's another shoe to drop here, if there's some other grand idea that this government is going to come up with.

You know, there are problems with the bill itself. The reporting is only from the minister to Executive Council, not to the public, not to the Assembly, not to Albertans, so that reduces transparency. Another thing I have a real concern about with this entire role and the bill is that it creates a risk that the government may get directly involved with investments in business, be that through Crown corporations or direct investment. That may happen not just with this bill. It may happen as a result of the climate bill. It may happen as a result of some other economic diversification strategy. You know, that introduces an entirely new level of risk. We've been down this road before, Madam Speaker. It was in the '80s, when the government of the day decided that that was a great idea, and it ended up costing Albertans hundreds of millions of dollars.

I'm not sure if this word is unparliamentary, but I'm going to give it a go. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. If that is unparliamentary, I will withdraw the term. We're familiar with it. [interjection] I've been informed by my hon. colleague that I'm not allowed to use the words "good intentions" when referring to the government of the day. [interjections] Perfect. I've been beaten to my *Seinfeld* joke.

You know, it's a great concern. Unfortunately, no, I can't support this bill either because I worry: are there other shoes to drop? Is there more to come here? Is this government going to enter into direct investment with Alberta taxpayers' dollars in private business, risking Alberta tax dollars? That's not what government should do. You know, government should create the environment where private business can thrive, where Alberta's entrepreneurial spirit can really, truly thrive. There was tremendous opportunity here. We could have done some great things. Sadly, this government and this bill just don't meet the mark, so I cannot support it, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any further speakers to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak one final time on this great accomplishment, this

significant piece of legislation, not one final time in the House forever, much to the chagrin of many folks on that side of the House and fewer people on this side of the House but not all of them.

You know, Madam Speaker, we have seen many, many Bill 1s come and go, and as my hon. colleague from Calgary-Foothills mentioned, Bill 1 is, generally speaking, a flagship... [interjections] Danger, Will Robinson.

It's generally a flagship piece of legislation that the whole government can be proud of. Generally speaking, in fact almost exclusively, Bill 1s have been sponsored by the Premier of the day, and this particular piece of legislation, with all due respect to my hon. colleague for Economic Development and Trade and responsible for the MGA and a bunch of other things in there, former Minister of Municipal Affairs and former Minister of Service Alberta, not to mention all the other wonderful accomplishments he's had on this side of the House – while it's wonderful that he had the opportunity to sponsor such a bill, generally speaking, a government is so proud of the first piece of legislation that they put the Premier's name on that bill. This is the first time since Premier Lougheed that the government has made a decision to not put the Premier's name on Bill 1. I think it speaks to the quality of the legislation because this piece of legislation is not what Albertans were hoping for.

8:30

Now, while they're hoping that positive things can happen inside our economy, while they're hoping that the government will do its best job to get out of the way of job creators, while they're hoping that the government will play a key partnership role in the future of our province, they aren't just waiting for a piece of legislation that accomplishes nothing. In fact, at no point have I knocked on the door of the good people in the constituency, in the outstanding constituency I might add, of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills when they've said: you know, what I'm hoping for is Bill 1, a bill that allows the minister to do his job. What they are hoping for is a government that truly understands the position that we're in, that truly understands the role of government in not making things worse, and we've seen time in and time out this NDP government making ideological decisions that at the end of the day aren't making things better. I think Bill 1 is a perfect example of it, and I, quite frankly, am glad that this evening is likely to be the last time that we have to talk about Bill 1.

I think it's unfortunate that there isn't more accountability to the Legislature in Bill 1 like this side of the House proposed in committee, a number of amendments that would have actually made the bill less bad. One of the things that those amendments had the opportunity to do was to ensure that this minister was held to account for this piece of legislation both in the form of programs that had to be initiated, that would have had some accountability through the legislative process, and also a requirement of the minister to report back to this Chamber on progress that's being made. While I know the minister has stood in his place on a number of occasions and said, "Trust me; I'll be reporting back; I will be reporting to this House on a regular basis," we have a little bit of a desire for those sorts of statements to be put in legislation so that we can ensure that they will happen because the government has been laying a track record of not being as accountable to the Assembly as they ought to be.

I think a perfect example of that is the lack of desire to have legislation reviewed at committee, the lack of desire to have the appropriate study of legislation. A perfect example of that is the introduction of Bill 20 on one day, a hundred pages of a bill, and expecting the opposition to debate it the following day. This is the sort of rushing through of legislation, the sort of lack of

accountability that this government is building a track record for. Bill 1 is a perfect example of not being accountable to this Chamber and only being accountable to cabinet and to the Premier. That, Madam Speaker, is not the kind of change that Albertans were hoping for.

I hope that we have an opportunity to finally get this bill passed so that the minister can get on with doing his job and can be reporting back to the House, as he has assured us he will do on numerous occasions, even though the legislation says that he only has to report back once to Executive Council. I'll take him at his word that he will be reporting to the House regularly and that we will be able to see some wonderful results from this legislation although I'm highly speculative in this case.

So I certainly won't be supporting the bill – I know it comes as a surprise – but I do look forward to moving forward and seeing the results that may or may not come from it.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other speakers wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 1. This bill does make me nervous. We lived through many decades of governments trying to pick winners and losers within industry and trying to create jobs, losing focus on the real job of government, which is essentially to create an environment for investment in private industry to create those real jobs. Bill 1 has been called lots of things over these last few debates. Most of all Bill 1 reminds a number of us of economic development policies and experiments that have gone awry. Tales of good money chasing after bad, decades come to mind. We don't want to repeat that. We have heard some pretty fascinating stories, stories about magnesium plants in High River and meat-packing businesses in Edmonton.

I have another tale to share. This tale comes from the shores of Nova Scotia. It involves something almost mystical, almost fantastical. This is the tale of heavy water. This is an instance where I did not know much about heavy water, so I went to others to give me an explanation about heavy water. For those who don't know, water is a molecule made from three atoms: one atom of oxygen, two atoms of hydrogen. Hence, you get H₂O or dihydrogen monoxide. A hydrogen atom is made up of one proton, one electron. But sometimes that atom gets an interloper, a third particle called a neutron. A hydrogen atom made up of a proton, a neutron, and an electron is known as deuterium. One in every 6,000 hydrogen atoms is like this. Place deuterium in a water molecule, and suddenly you no longer have H₂O; you have D₂O, better known as heavy water.

By the early '60s Canada had decided that our nuclear reactors would be the CANDU variety, CANada Deuterium Uranium. This meant as uranium would react to produce the heat energy in nuclear reactors, the deuterium of heavy water would be used as the moderator to ensure the reactor wouldn't run out of control and explode. This is quite unlike the Soviet reactors, like those involved at Chernobyl, where flammable graphite was used as the moderator.

If Canada was to have CANDU reactors, Canada was going to need heavy water. Scientist Jerome Spevack arrived in Nova Scotia in 1963 and within six weeks had hammered out a deal with the government. His company, Deuterium of Canada Limited, had to pony up \$18 million and the province's development arm, Industrial Estates Limited, offered up \$12 million to have the \$30 million for the plant in Cape Breton ready to employ out-of-work coal miners in thousands of construction jobs and 200 operating jobs. A make-work project. Sounds good.

But federal politics for the CANDU reactors demanded that in order for the company to get the CANDU contract, it had to be a

Canadian company. DCL was American owned. It did not take long for the Nova Scotia government to make a decision to take on a majority ownership stake in DCL in order to get the jobs and the contract. Mysteriously, the requirement for DCL to raise \$18 million disappeared. Coincidentally, scientist Jerome Spevack was given a 20-year management contract, a scientist given a management contract, but was not a good manager and had to be bought out when construction fell behind schedule and was plagued by cost overruns.

8:40

Bad weather; 24 strikes; late, faulty, and wrong-sized equipment arriving on site plagued construction. Two years after construction was started, the plant was \$16 million over budget. The province's development arm, Industrial Estates Limited, tried to unload the plant to various buyers. When Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, the federal, taxpayer-funded Crown corporation, asked to double the order and thus double the plant size, Industrial Estates Limited foolishly agreed. Bad decision after bad decision after bad decision.

Then something disastrous happened. Someone tried to save \$2 million by pumping salt water into the stainless-steel pipes to make the heavy water. The result: dangerous hydrogen sulphide, H₂S, gas and a rusted-out plant. No one claims responsibility, but it doesn't take a scientist to make the connection between this disaster and government intervention in economic diversification, government intervention of the kind this government wishes to emulate and advocates in Bill 1.

By 1968 130 million taxpayer dollars had been spent on the heavy-water plant. It was costing the government \$179,000 per employee per year. Job creation. The plant was turned over to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, who spent more federal taxpayer dollars, to the tune of \$95 million, to fix the plant and make it run properly. The plant was closed in 1985, and it cost Atomic Energy of Canada another 2 and a half million dollars to clean up the site. To conclude, \$228 million of federal and provincial taxpayers' money was spent on this one industry in Nova Scotia, and they have nothing to show for it.

Nova Scotia had another industry they sunk money into in the name of economic development, Sydney Steel. For close to 35 years Nova Scotia poured \$3.2 billion – yes, \$3.2 billion – into that money-losing Sydney Steel Corporation. I praise former Nova Scotia Premier John Hamm for making the bold promise to sell it or close it, and he did just that. No more bad money after good. He closed it. Madam Speaker, \$3.2 billion over 35 years and nothing to show for it is an incredible waste of taxpayers' dollars. That doesn't count the cleanup costs associated with the site as the place is adjacent to the notorious PCB-laden Sydney tar ponds, that are now covered over as a park.

Now, these stories have a lesson to teach us. Bill 1 raises the spectre of these examples of throwing good money after bad, this time to create jobs in Alberta. Using taxpayers' money for business and job creation is not the role of government, I would suggest. That is the role of private dollars and the private sector. The economic development paradigm as represented by the current NDP government drives much fear and concern among Albertans that the NDP will make similar economic development decisions: taxpayer-owned industry, taxpayer-subsidized business, majority equity stakes in business, unproven technology, bad project management and cost controls. Those who pay no attention to history are doomed to repeat it. The NDP government needs to please pay attention to these tales and not repeat them. To repeat them will be to place a new financial burden on our children, gambling with our children's future and their children's at the expense of creating jobs in the future in Alberta.

For that reason, I cannot support Bill 1, which is little more than the government trying to give itself a mandate to pick winners and losers in our economy and possibly to repeat the economic development mistakes of the past. I believe this government needs to regain its focus on creating an environment to allow business to have the opportunity to move forward with investment and confidence in an environment of business-friendly politics here in Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any further speakers to Bill 1? We'll call on the hon. – the Member for Highwood.

Mr. W. Anderson: I'm not honourable yet, but maybe. You never know.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Connolly: You're honourable when you're in the House.

Mr. W. Anderson: Pardon me?

Mr. Connolly: You're honourable when you're in the House.

Mr. W. Anderson: Yeah. Thank you.

I rise today to speak against Bill 1, Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act. I am unaware of any piece of legislation that contains so little substance. It totals three pages, and the only job it has created thus far is that of the minister. Since the bill was introduced over two months ago, I've had plenty of time to ponder the contents of the bill, and what I'm left with is how utterly lacking in substance this proposed legislation is.

This bill reminds me a lot of an airbag. According to madehow.com an airbag is, quote, an inflatable cushion designed to protect automobile occupants from serious injury in the case of a collision. The airbag is part of an inflatable restraint system, also known as an air cushion restraint system, or an airbag supplemental restraint system. End quote.

Madehow.com goes on to explain – and I'm paraphrasing – that an airbag is primarily comprised of a fabric bag, usually made of nylon, which is housed in a compartment in the steering wheel, dashboard, or door. In the case of an accident the airbag sensor is tripped, which then sets in motion a chemical reaction that results in sodium acetate and potassium nitrate, which produce nitrogen gas, inflating the airbag. In addition to the sodium acetate and potassium nitrate, the airbag also contains a powdery substance, usually cornstarch or talcum powder, which acts as a lubricant while the airbag is deployed in the vehicle.

According to howstuffworks.com the entire process from the airbag sensor being tripped to the airbag being deployed takes about one twenty-fifth of a second, or about the same amount of time it takes to read Bill 1.

Unfortunately, that is where the comparisons end. While airbags have a long and documented history of saving lives, the Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act has yet to produce any quantifiable or measurable uptake in any job creation in Alberta, well, besides the job of the minister.

I would suggest that we dive right into the bill, but it's simply a little too dangerous to dive into something so shallow. Let's not dive into it. I will propose that we wade into the bill instead. Let's jump right to section 2, establishment of programs. This is a very important section since it clearly establishes that the minister could establish all of the different types of programs that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade could already establish without

this ridiculous bill being enacted, things like creating partnerships that support entrepreneurship and focus on innovation or programs that increase access to capital or programs that help businesses grow and succeed. That is an interesting one right there, creating a program that helps businesses grow and succeed, because I've never heard of a small-business tax cut referred to as a program before. I guess, you know, each to their own.

Section 3 establishes that even if the minister really, really wants to establish an investor tax credit program or a capital investment tax program, he must still introduce a bill in the Assembly. I think we can all thank the government for their quick thinking on including this caveat. We wouldn't want the minister going rogue on establishing tax credits outside of this Assembly.

Alberta is facing the worst economic downturn in a generation. Unemployment is higher than it's been in decades. There are over 100,000 Albertans that have lost their jobs. This government could have done so many better things to provide a calming effect on a skittish and anxious economy. Is that the best that they could come up with, Bill 1? This just goes to show how out of touch this government is with the economic reality facing Albertans today.

For these reasons I cannot support this bill, and I expect my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Seeing none, any further speakers to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo?

Mr. Yao: No. I'm fine, actually. Sorry.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to Bill 1?

Seeing none, I will call on the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade to close debate.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and close debate on Bill 1. I have a few comments which may address some of the comments that the Official Opposition made. First, I found that the debate was very interesting. We learned all about airbags and water molecules and different topics, nuclear facilities as well, which are not related so much to the bill.

8:50

I just wanted to clarify for hon. members that when we talk about diversification, I appreciate the fact that the opposition has examples, as have we, of the previous government's failed attempts at diversification by throwing a whole bunch of money at a sector which doesn't exist. This bill does not do that. That is not our definition of diversification, as most members in this House will know. I've spoken on it numerous times.

We're looking at building on our strengths within our sectors, within oil and gas, both value-added but also in other sectors that are very strong in the province of Alberta: our agricultural sector, our forestry sector, our tourism sector. Madam Speaker, I know that the Official Opposition doesn't believe in diversification, but the rest of us do, and quite frankly the rest of the world does.

This piece of legislation is an enabling piece of legislation. I do find some of the hon. members' comments interesting as far as what the bill will do. It gives the government tools, again, to respond.

The one point that I did want to respond to in closing, Madam Speaker, is that, really, to ask how many jobs will be created from a piece of legislation shows that members are naive in how the economy actually works in that a piece of legislation does not produce X number of jobs. The role of the government is to provide and set the right conditions to encourage the private sector, who are the job creators, to invest and grow their businesses or to start a

business here in the province. That is exactly the approach that our government is taking. That's the approach that we've been doing.

The Minister of Finance's budget back in October 2015 had a number of tools, including increasing access to capital through ATB, looking at providing additional funding to the Alberta Enterprise Corporation, which invests in Alberta-based companies through venture capital. It's an equity stake, quite an incredible model, Madam Speaker. Again, asking questions about how many jobs a bill creates in one sector or in one city, to me, unfortunately, shows a little bit of naïveté as far as how setting the right conditions works and the role of the government. I am happy to clarify that for all members.

I do just want to mention, Madam Speaker, that, quite frankly, our government has taken this economic downturn very seriously, not only over the past 12 to 14 months. We recognize the hardship that many Alberta families and workers and communities have faced. That's why our government has taken action both through our budget and through legislation, looking at providing opportunities to get Albertans back to work, to get them working, and, again, looking at leveraging sectors that we are already strong in.

I'm quite proud of the work that the Premier and the government have done, and this bill will continue to build on our strengths and look at providing new opportunities for Albertans and providing the supports for our existing sectors. With that, I encourage all members of the Assembly to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, as Deputy Government House Leader I will request unanimous consent of the House for one-minute bells.

The Deputy Speaker: There's a request for reducing the bells to one minute. Is there anyone opposed?

[Unanimous consent granted]

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 8:54 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.	Goehring	Miller
Babcock	Gray	Phillips
Bilous	Hinkley	Piquette
Carlier	Horne	Renaud
Carson	Kazim	Schreiner
Ceci	Kleinsteuber	Shepherd
Connolly	Littlewood	Sigurdson
Coolahan	Loyola	Sucha
Dach	Luff	Sweet
Dang	Malkinson	Turner
Drever	McCuaig-Boyd	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	McKitrick	Woollard
Ganley		

Against the motion:

Anderson, W.	Ellis	Smith
Cooper	Gill	Strankman
Cooper	Panda	van Dijken
Cyr	Rodney	Yao
Totals:	For – 37	Against – 12

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time]

Bill 9
An Act to Modernize Enforcement
of Provincial Offences

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today and move third reading of Bill 9, An Act to Modernize Enforcement of Provincial Offences.

I would once again like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for a good discussion and for their support of this valuable legislation. We've had the opportunity to thoroughly discuss this legislation in the House, and it's clear from comments made during Committee of the Whole that members of the House are in agreement with the intent of this bill, including the modernization of key pieces of the justice system. The amendment, the proposed civil enforcement measures to enforce tickets for minor infractions and to enable e-ticketing, will do just that. The current system of using warrants to enforce tickets for minor infractions is not effective and hasn't been so for a number of years.

9:00

I'm pleased that many of my colleagues have expressed their shared views that these amendments will help focus law enforcement and court resources where they should be, on more serious crimes. I'm also happy to hear the members opposite support the intent of this bill.

Madam Speaker, almost 97 per cent of Albertans over the age of 16 use motor vehicle registry services, and for those who don't, other enforcement mechanisms will be available such as the filing of writs against property and garnishing of bank accounts, wages, and tax refunds. This will address enforcement in a much more effective way.

The EndPovertyEdmonton task force recently released a poverty reduction strategy that includes a priority aimed at decriminalizing poverty. This priority looks at how the justice system can work against the poor as they're often trapped in a perpetuating cycle. It indicates that fines for minor violations turn into arrest warrants, and there's no means of repayment, so these warrants turn into jail time, that can further dim these individuals' chances of acquiring the necessary resources to bring themselves out of poverty. The proposed amendments will ensure that this government and social agencies are in a better position to work with individuals who are coping with poverty.

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General cannot work in isolation to address social issues in our communities. People who are dealing with mental health issues need a wide range of supports. This is why I'm working closely with my colleagues in Alberta Health, Human Services, and other ministries to build on recommendations in the Valuing Mental Health report.

In February of this year this government released a report that includes 32 recommendations aimed at supporting mental health by strengthening service delivery for Albertans with mental illness and addictions. The Alberta government took quick steps to accept the report and begin addressing six recommendations that were identified as priorities. The recommendations in this report are guiding our government and our partners as we work to build a better system for addictions and mental health. We are continuing to evaluate the remaining recommendations and have been talking to our partners and Albertans who may be affected by them. The legislative amendments we were discussing today are one piece of the puzzle to help people who are in vulnerable positions due to homelessness or mental illness. I'm looking forward to the

implementation of Bill 9 to better meet the needs of Albertans and to support forward thinking and modernization in this province.

Madam Speaker, I'm very excited today to be able to pass this particular bill. It's one step in a number of steps that my ministry is considering to assist in decriminalizing poverty so that individuals who are suffering from mental health challenges and who have fallen into poverty for whatever reason can be supported not just by social services agencies but also by the government. It's critical that we work with our partners going forward on this. I was incredibly pleased to stand up on the day this bill was first introduced with support from both the Edmonton Police Service and from the John Howard Society as we introduced this bill. I think that all Albertans can agree that this reflects our shared values that we should not be criminalizing poverty, and I'm glad to have had the opportunity to take this step.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When we look at this bill, it's about outstanding fines for minor offences, for penalties under \$1,000. We'd no longer be having warrants issued, but we'd be compelled to get payment when it's registry time.

Now, this is something that has been brought to my attention as a shadow minister for Justice. It's good to see that not only was I getting it but that the Minister of Justice was getting that as well. To credit the minister, she moved forward with this, and it's good to see that we're actually putting some legislation through that will actually move Alberta forward in its ability to be able to deal with our homeless and Albertans without health. Giving credit where credit is due I think is important, and good legislation being moved forward is something that we need to acknowledge.

The fact is that I did bring up in Committee of the Whole that I had concerns that we may not be doing enough for those with mental health issues that are being missed now, but the speech by the Minister of Justice saying that she is collaborating with the Minister of Health is good to hear, and it's good to see that, in the end, we're all moving together to make sure that Alberta is helping people that need help.

A good example is that a friend of mine was saying that he got a jaywalking ticket in his early 20s and ended up at the wonderful Edmonton Remand Centre. That was a terrifying experience for my friend, and he said: it's all for a 10-dollar ticket. Now, unfortunately, he didn't have \$10. This could have been easily reconciled, but in the end he needed to call for his family's help. There's always the question that they don't get there in time and that we have somebody that's stuck in a facility that probably shouldn't have been there in the first place because, in the end, we've got a system that was identifying people as criminals, and it maybe should have been using a little bit of foresight.

We needed to end the cycle for those who couldn't afford their tickets or who possibly may not have given the severity of the ticket the consideration it needed to make sure that that ticket was paid. Now, I do like the fact that we are still dealing with tickets because, in the end, there should be some accountability for somebody that has a ticket written for them. So I'm not saying: "Let's just let them all go. Forget about anything under \$1,000." What I am saying is that we need to be moving Alberta forward and making sure that we actually put behind bars the people that belong behind bars.

This is where I believe – and I can support this bill – that this minister has done a very excellent job of answering our questions. I believe that, in the end, we've worked as a group and have been able to move this forward. I believe that the minister has listened to

our concerns. She has done an excellent job, and she just needs to be commended on it.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak to third reading of Bill 9. You know, in my constituency of Edmonton-Centre there are a significant number of residents who for a variety of reasons have limited income. Some of these individuals are homeless, others are precariously housed, and for all of them every dollar counts, so when they lose even just a small amount of their income, that can sometimes mean the difference between feeding themselves and their family. It can mean the difference between having a roof over their head or them being out in the street. As we've discussed, when these individuals receive a fine, often due to circumstances that are directly related to their poverty or due to struggles with mental or physical health or addictions, it can begin a cycle of harm that can be very difficult to break.

Along those lines, I'd like to share a story that was shared with me through my municipal counterpart, Councillor Scott McKeen. He received an e-mail from a young indigenous man who works for a local organization that supports high-risk, marginalized youth. The young man had at some point in time received a transit fine. He wasn't able to both pay the fine and make his rent, so he decided to turn himself in. He didn't know where he was supposed to go or who he was supposed to deal with, so he turned up at the provincial courthouse, where the ticket indicated that the fine could be paid. He waited in line to see an officer. When he got to the officer, he was told: well, no, you're in the wrong place. He was told that he had to go over to another office in another building. So he went to that office in the other building, and then he was told there that that was also the wrong place, and he was redirected to yet another building.

9:10

After being redirected twice, he was questioning whether he really even wanted to go through with this, but he went anyway. When he got there, he found out that, yes, this was, in fact, the right place. He was processed, put in handcuffs, taken into a holding room, and then eventually escorted along with some other people by remand officers to another room to wait to be processed. He described the handling of himself and other individuals as being not the kindest. They were then escorted into another room. They were forced to strip naked in front of remand officers, who according to the young man offered critiques and their opinions of both his body parts and those of the person in front of him. He was then given a blue jumpsuit, placed in a cold room with others who had been through the same process. There they waited for several hours, were given a cold meal. He noted that at no time were they provided with an explanation of the process, what they could expect, or when they would be released. He was then put through the release process, allowed to dress in his own clothes, put in another room to wait, and then was finally released.

In summary, in his own words the young man stated, "My experience dealing with a [traffic] ticket was very degrading and dehumanizing." He also notes that at the organization he works at, he hears of similar encounters and experiences from youth even younger than he was at the time that this occurred. He concludes by stating that there must be a better way, a better process than what he endured for handling a simple transit fine.

Shortly after receiving that e-mail, I had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Justice, and I appreciated that she took the time to listen and consider the situation. I was very pleased at that time when she told me that we would be introducing this bill.

You know, the process that that young man went through didn't have any benefit for anybody. There was no recompense to the transit service for the original infraction. There was no benefit to the police officers who were forced to spend their time processing, incarcerating, and then releasing these young men instead of being able to address more serious offences. There was no benefit to the public, to whom the young man presented no danger and who paid far more to incarcerate him for the day than the value of the fine that he wasn't able to afford to pay. These kinds of experiences, which, as he described, were degrading and dehumanizing, only serve to further alienate the men and women who experience them from the society that they struggle with. This increases their social isolation and the likelihood that they're going to continue to be trapped in these cycles of negative behaviour and the chances that they're again going to get caught up in the criminal justice system.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see this bill come forward and the support that it's gained in this House. It's a practical, pragmatic, and, most importantly, humane step in moving us forward in how we handle minor crimes. Thank you again to the minister for bringing this forward. Thank you to all the members who have spoken in favour and who are going to support this bill. I look forward to passing it tonight in this House.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other speakers to Bill 9?

Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be brief. Just by way of closing comments, I'd like to thank everyone again, on both sides of the House, for the support of this bill, members of the public who have sent in supportive e-mails and other comments, the police services for being willing to work with us on this, and all justice system participants. I'm very excited we're able to move forward with this legislation. I think it will assist a lot of people, not the least of which are people who are victims of crime who are unable to come forward or unwilling to come forward to report the crimes that they have been a victim of because they are concerned that they have these outstanding warrants and don't want to present themselves before police.

I think that everyone is very excited to pass this bill. With that, I will just thank everyone for their support.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 20 Climate Leadership Implementation Act (continued)

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak on Bill 20, the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, because I think it's something that all of us in this House recognize is very important, that all of us in this House recognize is something groundbreaking. It's something that we are going to be able to be proud of. When I talk to my grandchildren – and, if you look at me, that's going to be quite a ways away, I hope – I'm going to be able to tell them that rather than being stuck in the past and in denial,

like members of the opposition were, I made a difference. I did the right thing. We did the right thing. We as Albertans, we as MLAs voted to help the world, to take action today, and to make a difference.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to boil down the climate change plan to three really main themes for us today, three things that I find very important in the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, the first theme being diversifying our economy and how we're supporting Albertan jobs, the second theme being laying the groundwork for our future, and the third theme, finally, being protecting our children.

Let's get right into that first one, which is diversifying our economy and diversifying our job markets, because it's something that the opposition can't seem to wrap their heads around. It's something that they can't seem to understand. By using our Climate Leadership Implementation Act, we're going to be able to invest in programs like the climate change and emissions management fund, and we're going to be able to invest in programs like Energy Efficiency Alberta. What this is going to be able to do is to deliver efficiency programs to homes across the province. It's going to raise awareness about consumption and different ways we can find personal efficiency across the province, Madam Speaker. It's going to develop Alberta's energy efficiency industry.

The climate change report suggests that we will be able to support over 3,000 jobs, Madam Speaker, with these programs, that these investments will support 3,000 good-paying jobs for hard-working Albertans. And when the opposition speaks about picking winners and losers, I want the opposition to look those 3,000 people who have jobs in the eyes and tell them which one of their jobs is a loser, tell them which one of them is a loser for having that job. Those are things that we can do to help our communities. Those are things that we can do to help our economy and our environment today.

We can invest that money, we can use that money, and we can support our economy. Madam Speaker, by reinvesting these funds in renewables, in innovation, we're helping industry get the carbon out of the oil, get the carbon out of the barrel, and we are helping our industry move forward to an energy future that we can be proud of and that we can utilize as a province.

Really, that rolls right into that second theme, Madam Speaker, which is laying the groundwork for our future. I want to use this opportunity to talk about how this plan really is laying the groundwork for Alberta's future, because an Abacus Data poll regarding pipelines and politics in 2016 was released this morning, and over two-thirds of Canadians agree that new pipeline capacity should be built, with a renewables strategy and with a climate change plan attached to them. That's right. If we want to get market access for our pipelines, if we want to get our pipelines to tidewater, we absolutely need a renewables strategy, we absolutely need a climate change strategy, and that's what this government is absolutely presenting.

Madam Speaker, this nation-leading, world-class climate strategy, that has a methane implementation project being copied by the Americans, is now being looked at by the federal government as an implementation plan. These things are how we know that this plan will move Alberta forward, will lay that groundwork for us to be able to get our product to market, to be able to get our product to tidewater because we are laying these steps out today. We are doing the hard work that needs to be done in this House because we recognize that climate change is real and that if we are to remain viable in the future, we must act now as Albertans, as legislators, and as people who simply care about our world.

This is all very important to me because, as I spoke about at the beginning, I can look at my grandchildren years from now –

hopefully, years and years from now I'll be looking at my grandchildren. That's the third theme, protecting our children and protecting our future. This morning the minister of environment received the 2016 leadership in public policy award for work towards air quality. That's right, Madam Speaker. This government received a leadership award because of the health benefits that this climate leadership plan will bring.

9:20

Madam Speaker, not a lot of people know this, but I have asthma, both when I was a child and as I do today because it's a chronic disease. Asthma is one of those things that when you go outside and you try to play in the field and you just want to play soccer with your friends, well, you have to stop. You have to stop and say: "I need to go take my puffer. I'm having a hard time breathing. Things aren't going well." That takes you out of that moment. It takes you away from your friends. It takes you away from your family.

Madam Speaker, what I want to do is to say to my grandchildren – when they ask me however many years from now, I want to be able to tell them: I made a difference in making sure that you would be able to play outside, that you would be able to play with your friends, that you would be able to do all the things you want to do without being inhibited by your health because we took action on something that works. We took action on something that we know is absolutely real. There are adverse health effects to not acting now. We absolutely will be harming our future. We'll be harming our children and our children's children and generations to come if we do not take action now.

Ensuring that this happens, ensuring that we take action on all these three themes – diversifying our economy, making sure that we have good-paying, hard work for Albertans today; laying the groundwork for our future, ensuring that we have an energy market to look forward to, an emissions reduction strategy to look forward to in the future; protecting our children and their health in the future – is something, Madam Speaker, that I must fight for in this House so that I can have a province that I can be proud of. When my grandchildren ask me, "Thomas, what did you do for the province? What did you do in your tenure as an MLA?" I'll have at least one thing I can point to. I can say: "The Climate Leadership Implementation Act made a difference. It helped Albertans. It helped Alberta."

The Climate Leadership Implementation Act does all these things. It diversifies the economy, it lays that groundwork, and it protects our children. I urge all members of this House to support this bill because it absolutely is something that when you are asked about it by your children, when you are asked about it by your grandchildren or your great-grandchildren, you will want to look them in the eye and tell them that you helped and that you made the right choice.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Rodney: This may be a question for you, Madam Speaker, or perhaps for the member. As you can tell by my tone, I am being collegial. The fact of the matter is that there were a number of rather inflammatory comments in the beginning, and aspersions were cast, not on our third party or those to my geographical left but on the Official Opposition. I think the question is simply this: is it fair to attack people or policies? Which one?

The Deputy Speaker: Are you raising a point of order, hon. member?

Mr. Rodney: As you noticed, I didn't want to waste the time of the House by doing that. It's simply a question of respect. I think it's fair that when we disagree, we use diplomacy, and we use information and fact. But to cast aspersions on people rather than saying, "I disagree with your policy," well, I have a big problem with that. I just want the member to know that I appreciate the passion. That's important. We need to balance the heart, though, with the head. Just as a reminder for all of us in this House, we would serve our constituents well if we would just temper some of the passion and use a little bit more compassion once in a while. That's all.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other questions or comments?

Do you wish to respond, hon. member?

Any others under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Bilous: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member was quite passionate in showing his passion for this groundbreaking bill. It really is putting Alberta at the forefront not only of Canada, but quite frankly this has really had an impact and will have an impact worldwide. I can tell you for a fact that our Prime Minister was meeting with the President of the United States and referenced Alberta and Alberta's climate leadership plan as a model and as something that has captured the attention of the world stage and that, quite frankly, was also something that was talked about in Paris.

You know, I appreciate the fact that the Member for Edmonton-South West is quite passionate about his remarks. I think that in his speech he was being respectful, not talking about any individual member, just talking about maybe some comments that have come from different sides of the House as far as trying to argue the impacts of carbon or of burning coal or of climate change. Quite frankly, I think it's a fair comment, and I just was curious if the member had any more comments to add on that topic.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really do appreciate the comments from all members in the House today. I think it is really important to recognize that as we move forward and we are talking about the policy here – and the policy of this government is to absolutely take action on climate change – when the policy of opposition parties is to try to prevent that action on climate change or to not take action on climate change and to wait for it to go away or to sit on your hands and hope that everything is going to be okay, we simply know that doesn't work. We simply know that's not how it's going to happen. We simply know that the Climate Leadership Implementation Act is the best legislation that we have on the table today to move forward on these issues that matter to Albertans everywhere, these issues that matter to Canadians everywhere, these issues that we will need to be able to talk about in this House in a respectful manner going forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms Phillips: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if the hon. member would like to talk a little bit about the consultation that went into this process and the climate leadership plan, which I know he has read. This has been a months-long conversation, of course, on behalf of this government, and I'm wondering if the hon. member would like to share his thoughts on how that process has unfolded.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for her comments. I think it's very important to recognize

that there was quite a comprehensive consultation program and quite a comprehensive panel that was assembled, that created a very lengthy report – I will note that it was very lengthy; I read the thing multiple times – and that in it we saw some citations from people like Cenovus, Suncor, CNRL.

We saw people supporting the climate change plan that you wouldn't necessarily call socialists or that you wouldn't necessarily call people who would traditionally side with this government. Madam Speaker, what we found was that people from across the aisle, people from nonpartisan sectors, people from partisan sectors, people from everywhere were supporting this plan because this plan is one that everybody could get behind, that everybody could be proud of.

Maybe I'll just read a couple of them for you, Madam Speaker. I'll look at this one here, which says:

Smart carbon policy means pricing carbon broadly, and this is exactly what Alberta's new carbon levy does. Carbon pricing is the most . . . effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and Alberta's strengthened policy will help the province support a strong economy and environment into the future.

This was said by Professor Bev Dahlby, distinguished fellow in tax and economic growth at the School of Public Policy and professor of economics at the University of Calgary.

We see other people such as Rob Harlan, the executive director of the Solar Energy Society of Alberta, saying, "The new carbon marketplace will automatically start to move Alberta toward a more sustainable, clean energy economy."

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to Bill 20? The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will have less entertainment value than the previous speaker, but hopefully some level of reality might come into it. You know, we talk about our grandchildren, and the hon. member hopes to someday have grandchildren. The grandchildren, with regard to possibly another policy that's being put forward and plans that this government is doing, might ask Grandpa: "Why did you just sit on your hands and wait for your problems to go away? Why did you continue to just spend money, spend money, and leave us with all this debt that we have to pay?" I think that might be a question that their grandchildren will be asking them also. It's a completely different angle, but the grandchildren do have the right to ask that question also.

9:30

I rise today to speak on Bill 20, the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, which, if passed, will impose a carbon tax on Albertans. Madam Speaker, I understand the logic behind this bill, and like many bills that this government has put forward, it comes from a place of good intention. Climate change is an important issue and should no doubt be addressed. Unfortunately, like many bills that have been put forward by the government, legislation that is aimed at addressing an issue has become skewed by an ideological agenda that is placed above the needs of everyday Albertans, that we represent in this House, everyday Albertans that are struggling to make ends meet at this time.

Is climate change an important issue? Yes. Does it need to be addressed? Yes. Should it be addressed in the manner and format that Bill 20 proposes? Absolutely not.

Alberta is struggling. The days of \$100-a-barrel oil seem to be a distant memory. For us, as we have seen, our once strong economy is now limping along. In the last year we have lost thousands of jobs, not just 3,000 but 100,000. We've lost jobs across the entire province, throughout the private sector employment insurance rates

have skyrocketed, and social service and food bank use is at an all-time high. This is a reality of today. Alberta is facing its greatest challenge as a province in over 30 years.

What has this government done to help return the Alberta advantage? They have raised taxes, driving investment away, crippling businesses; they have moved to expand and then completely erased our province's debt ceiling; they have led us to have our credit downgraded by almost every major credit lender in the country; and now they are seeking to impose a carbon tax, a carbon tax that preys on the limited income that Albertan families are already struggling to get by on.

To date the NDP have not even been able to provide this House with a detailed economic impact study, a detailed study that would show us some of the impacts that are expected from this carbon tax. Yet again we see this government rushing ahead with ideological, untested legislation without any regard for the impact that it will have on Albertans today.

Rather than doing the responsible thing and waiting until our struggling economy has a chance to get back on its feet, the NDP have decided to kick Albertans while they are already down. This carbon tax targets the most vulnerable sectors of our economy, Madam Speaker, at a time when they are already barely scraping by. Families, charities, schools, hospitals will all struggle to offset the costs of this carbon tax.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that I accept the NDP's math. They are estimating that the direct cost, the gasoline and heating costs, of this carbon tax for a family with two adults and two children is approximately \$388 per year. The government will send those who qualify for the rebate a cheque for \$366, which will mean they will be subsidizing some of the indirect costs of the carbon tax by \$22.

But does this government really believe that in a full year of buying groceries, clothing their children, having them bused to school, paying municipal taxes, paying for after school activities – the list goes on and on, Madam Speaker – the average Albertan family will only spend an extra \$22 because of this carbon tax? That is ludicrous and naive. This carbon tax will raise the cost of almost every single good and service made and sold in Alberta. Those costs will be downloaded onto Alberta consumers, that are already having to stretch their budgets to compensate for the lagging economy and limited employment opportunities.

Our caucus has done its own math, and the government's estimations are incredibly low. We estimate that the carbon tax, once implemented, will cost the average Albertan family an extra thousand dollars per year. It won't be the large chain stores and producers that pay the price for this carbon tax. It will be the people, the consumers, that will be paying this tax.

It will be people like Brenda from my constituency that will be paying this carbon tax. Brenda has three little boys that love to play hockey. Like many Albertans, Brenda spends several evenings a week in the car shuttling her kids to and from extracurricular activities. This carbon tax will now mean that the cost of these evenings in the car, driving, will increase substantially. It will mean that the cost of enrolling her kids in hockey will go up to compensate for the arena having to raise its ice rental prices to offset the cost of its heat and power bills and the money it will now take to run the Zamboni to clear the ice. It will mean that the snacks and the Gatorade that she buys her boys in between games to keep them fuelled will be more expensive, and that means Brenda may not have the money to be able to enrol all three boys in hockey next year. This is one of the countless examples of the real-world implications of Bill 20.

Charities are another sector that will suffer as a result of the carbon tax. Charitable organizations play a critical role in our society, Madam Speaker. They support the basic needs of our most vulnerable and are currently swamped trying to attend to the needs of the thousands of Albertans that have lost their jobs in the last year and need some extra help.

These essential services will now face even tighter budgets as they are not exempt from this aggressive tax. Facilities that provide housing for those looking to find a warm bed off the streets will now be paying more to heat their buildings. Charities that engage in community outreach will pay more to run their vehicles to deliver much-needed food and supplies to those that aren't able to be mobile. Facilities that provide meals will now spend more on groceries as the cost of delivery trucks increases and has to be offset by consumers on top of the fact that people who were previously in a position of having disposable income to donate to these charitable organizations will now have much less disposable income to donate or perhaps will not be able to donate at all. How can this government justify increasing the costs to charities when our province needs them now more than ever before?

This is an incredibly long piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, and given the immense impact it will have on all Albertans, I strongly encourage my fellow members of this Assembly to send this bill to committee for further review and debate. What we do know about the implications of this bill is already very concerning, and no substantial economic impact study has been done. I have serious reservations about debating this bill further without adequate time being granted to thoroughly comb through the intricacies of its 100 pages.

I think that in being given time to properly reach out to my school boards, businesses, the constituents in my riding, they could provide some essential insight into the needs of the people who will be living with the repercussions of this legislation. Consultation and outreach are critical components of our democratic system, and while I can respect that the minister has engaged in some consultations, I would request the right to do the same with the citizens of my riding to garner more feedback on the intricacies of this critical bill.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate that this government would like to have Alberta be a leader in the fight against climate change, and there are absolutely opportunities for us to be more environmentally conscious and make changes that will lead to a better, greener future for our children. No one is denying that. I do, however, feel that given the circumstances that we find ourselves in, with our economy in such a delicate state, now is not the time to be leading the charge when we are doing so alone and at the expense of our Alberta families.

9:40

Everything from driving kids to hockey practice to buying groceries to building a home will become more expensive as transportation costs are downloaded onto Alberta consumers. In the end, the carbon tax leaves less money in the pockets of families, schools, hospitals, and charities. It means fewer nurses, bus routes, extracurriculars offered in school, and opportunities for enrichment. It means that families already worried by the current economic climate and how they are going to pay their bills will now be spending more sleepless nights sitting at their kitchen table and wondering how they are going to stretch their funds even further.

I am hearing from constituents that feel like they cannot take much more, Madam Speaker. Albertans are the most hard-working, resilient people that I have ever met, but as of right now many of them are discouraged and disillusioned. Let's take the proper time to do our due diligence on this legislation and ensure that it is truly

in the best interests of Albertans. After the struggles that they have faced in the last year, we owe them that at least.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of environment under 29(2)(a).

Ms Phillips: Certainly, Madam Speaker. I'm curious about a number of things. We've heard this afternoon, this evening that this legislation will, quote, kick Albertans when they're down, close hospitals, that it's an ideological agenda, that it will put seniors in the streets, I believe. I guess my question is whether Alberta's largest employers are being accused by the Official Opposition of putting seniors in the streets, having an ideological agenda leading to more unemployment, and so on. These are companies, certainly oil sands operators and others, that form the backbone of our economy.

Certainly, the downturn in the price of oil has been something that has affected them very much, yet many of them have supported the climate leadership plan. We have Cenovus, Suncor, Total, Statoil, CNRL, Shell, and many others. Are they being accused of having an ideological agenda by the Official Opposition? In fact, they are the largest employers in the Leader of the Official Opposition's riding. Is the Official Opposition actually picking a fight with these corporate leaders and with these job creators in Alberta? I suppose that's my first question.

My second question, Madam Speaker, is: are the authors of the climate leadership plan similarly being accused of proposing policies that will lead to more unemployment, having an ideological agenda, putting seniors in the street, closing hospitals? Of course, the Albertans behind the climate leadership plan – the author, of course, is the distinguished economist Dr. Andrew Leach. Is he being accused of having an ideological agenda, of preying on people with a limited income, of kicking Albertans when they're down? Or perhaps Gord Lambert, who also served on the panel, a former VP of TransAlta and of Suncor? Or a current VP of Enbridge, Linda Coady? Is she being accused of this kind of activity? I guess I have those questions.

In addition, I do have questions around consultations. The hon. member and others have asked: where were the consultations? I'm just wondering if the hon. members could maybe remind us of what they did in their ridings around July, when we released the discussion paper, which, in fact, discussed different ways to price carbon and so on. It was a very thoughtful, very lengthy document. I'm interested in the hon. member's reactions to that document at the time when, of course, he read it.

I am interested also in the lengthy submissions that the Official Opposition made to the climate leadership plan when they had the opportunity to do so because I did not find any, and I read them all. I'm interested in that, Madam Speaker.

I'm interested in whether they at all, you know, took that discussion document to their ridings and held any kind of events. Certainly, we held events, which a thousand Albertans attended. I'm curious as to whether any of the Wildrose opposition reviewed the commentary on those public consultations. I am equally interested in their analysis of the 500 public submissions, including from every aspect of Alberta's industrial endeavour – cement, mining, fertilizer, and so on – and what they think of all of those submissions, which, in fact, supported most of the elements of the climate leadership plan. I am very interested in that.

I am equally interested, Madam Speaker, in consultations, how much they thought about, you know, speaking to all of the groups that participated in the technical engagement sessions – petrochemical companies, cement companies, oil sands companies, small oil and gas, fertilizer companies, innovation and technology

companies, new renewable energy companies – how much they participated in those conversations with all of those groups that engaged thoughtfully and in an evidence-based way with this government on the development of the climate leadership plan. I'm interested in their thoughts.

Finally, I'm interested in the Official Opposition's thoughts on what it means to be middle-of-the-road in the acceptance of or one's understanding of the science of climate change, Madam Speaker. I'm very interested in the hon. members' views on the scientific consensus regarding climate change. There seems to be a bit of a nonconsensus happening here. Perhaps the right is not so united after all. Perhaps this is not an item in which 90 per cent agreement prevails over on that side of the House, because we do have a Progressive Conservative caucus that mostly accepts the science of climate change, but we seem to have rather a patchwork of views prevailing, so I'm interested.

The Deputy Speaker: You won't have an opportunity to respond as 29(2)(a) is done.

Do I have any other speakers to the bill?

Mr. Cooper: Well, Madam Speaker, if there's one thing I'm not going to win tonight it is the words per minute count because we have seen a couple of speakers from that side of the House who have certainly upped the words-per-minute ratio of debate, anyway. I'm not sure if the level of debate has been increased, but the number of words that have been used in a short period of time certainly have been. I had hoped that the government would have additional speakers this evening as we could learn more about this great plan that they have for the province. Unfortunately, there was no one around.

Anyway, I'm happy to rise and speak on a number of issues with respect to the bill. In fact, I'm just doing some math with some of the costs. [interjections] Well, you might think it's funny. I was speaking to a business owner in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills yesterday after this bill was introduced. We were speaking about the cost to this particular individual's business, and certainly he expressed some significant concern.

This particular individual is a small-business owner. He runs a transportation company. I think that the legislation defines his company as an interjurisdictional carrier. He contracts with a number of owner-operators, Madam Speaker, and then he also employs three additional drivers. All total, their small company runs sometimes seven trucks a year, sometimes six trucks a year, depending on what the economy is doing, and they have a number of significant clients in the constituency. They also have a number of smaller clients but predominantly just a couple of larger clients.

9:50

I sent him some information after the bill was released specifically around interjurisdictional carriers as well as the cost of the carbon tax to his organization, and he informed me that last year, Madam Speaker, his small trucking company utilized close to 600,000 litres of diesel fuel. This carbon tax is going to cost him almost \$70,000 a year. I can tell you that \$70,000 a year in a small trucking company makes a big, big, big difference.

I heard the hon. Finance minister yesterday say – and I'm paraphrasing here – with all due respect to the Finance minister: don't worry; businesses will essentially absorb most of the costs. Maybe I took some liberties with some of his comments. But I can tell you that a small business of just six trucks and the owner-operator can't just absorb close to \$70,000 a year, so the business has some decisions to make. Do they employ fewer people? Do they pass the costs on to the consumer? What is the path forward?

I can tell you that he is struggling with what the future holds with respect to the carbon tax because the challenge with this carbon tax is that there is a real, significant pressure on many areas of the costs that get passed down to the end-user, and the end-user, Madam Speaker, is families. It's moms and dads. It's grandmas and grandpas all across the province. When we look at just this one business that has near \$70,000 a year of additional costs that have to be passed on to somebody, that's going to make all of the goods that he ships more expensive. A lot of those goods are things that you and I and other members of this Chamber use. Not only is there the tax while he moves it. He's not the only individual who transports that particular good. There is additional cost from the wholesaler to him and then on to the retailer, and at every stage the cost of the good is increased.

While I've heard the hon. minister of the environment, who's responsible for climate change, or however that goes, say that the indirect costs are only \$70 per year, nothing could be further from the truth because at every turn the costs of things are increasing. We heard the hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock speak about the costs to municipalities in terms of firing the ice plant that cools the slab at the arena. That makes hockey more expensive.

I spoke not that long ago in this place about charities in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills in the form of the Rocky View handibus. The Rocky View handibus: the costs are likely to increase in the neighbourhood of \$6,000 to \$8,000 a year, and all of those costs are absorbed by those individuals who utilize that service. The individuals who utilize that service are predominantly seniors, individuals from the PDD community, low-income individuals, and others who don't have their own form of transportation. So the cost of that service is going to be increased, and while I appreciate the fact that members on the other side have said, "Don't worry; the rebate is going to cover all those costs," at every single turn, Madam Speaker, the costs are increasing. It is putting a significant amount of pressure onto Albertans and particularly on Albertans that live in rural areas that don't have some of the benefits of access to public transportation, that wind up driving extensively around rural Alberta just to provide for their family.

I think of someone like yourself, Madam Speaker, who lives in the north, and in fact in this very Chamber you spoke about the additional costs that are associated with living in the north and travelling around the north. Thinking nothing of driving three or four hours to go to a music concert was, I think, the example that you used. All of those things are now more expensive to the people of the Peace Country because of this carbon tax.

Now, make no mistake, Madam Speaker. It is important that we act on the environment. This file ought not just be pushed aside. This file ought not be abandoned with blinders on our eyes. The environment is of critical importance and should be of critical importance to all Albertans. I can tell you that the people that live in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills care deeply about the environment, but one thing I can assure you is that those good folks in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills are convinced that this carbon tax, the results of this legislation, is not the way forward. I have heard already – and the bill was only introduced yesterday – from many of the people in that constituency about their concerns.

I should just pause momentarily to express one of my concerns. Yesterday in this Chamber Bill 20, the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, was introduced. Madam Speaker, it is 95 pages long, comes with a royal recommendation, and as a result is a money bill that takes a significant amount of time to digest, and what does this government do? It introduces a bill one day and requires individuals in this Chamber to debate it the next.

Mrs. Littlewood: It's your job.

Mr. Cooper: You know what our job is? To cause careful consideration of legislation. I'm reminded on numerous occasions of when the Minister of Economic Development and Trade would rise in this House and express significant displeasure with the then PC government about introducing a bill one day and expecting what he often referred to as a small but mighty caucus to debate that legislation the very next day. What we all should be doing is reaching out to Albertans to thoughtfully consider this piece of legislation, and to expect reasonable debate the following day is not what creates good governance in this province. What creates good governance, Madam Speaker, is thorough review of legislation, not passing it in days but thorough review, which is why I'm pleased to propose an amendment that would allow for that thorough review.

10:00

Shall I continue, or would you like me to wait until the table has the documents?

Madam Speaker, I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 20, Climate Leadership Implementation Act, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 20, Climate Leadership Implementation Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2 and that the committee report back to the Assembly no later than October 31, 2016, if the Assembly is then sitting or, if it is not then sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.

Madam Speaker, we have seen a troubling trend from a government that wants to push through legislation. While I appreciate that the minister of environment spoke specifically about the consultations that the government has done, what hasn't taken place is an opportunity for members or individuals like Dr. Leach to come to a committee of all members of the Assembly. It's not just the government that's important to this province. It is the Assembly that's important.

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

Mr. Smith: Under 29(2)(a)?

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, 29(2)(a) does apply, so go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Smith: You know, I think that the hon. member that was just speaking was just starting to wind up, and I was quite interested in what he had to say, so I wonder if he could continue to let us understand why this amendment is an important piece of legislation to discuss.

Thank you.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you to my hon. colleague. I wasn't just winding up. I was just winding down, actually, and concluding my comments around why this is important. It is critically important.

One of the things that a committee would allow us to do is to provide a thorough review of the legislation. It would allow a venue for the government to table the vast amounts of economic research that they have done, the economic impact studies that they've done, and that committee could fulsomely debate those studies, that they, I'm sure, would be happy to bring to the committee and have a discussion around. It would allow the committee the opportunity to receive from government officials, from experts in the field the information around the indirect costs that the government now refers to, and it would allow the committee to have a much better

grasp of the true costs. The government could come and defend their numbers, and expert witnesses could come and provide testimony on all sides of this. We could have a full and robust discussion.

I remember when the Premier first started speaking about this carbon tax as a carbon tax that would be revenue neutral. Now we understand that nothing could be further from the truth, but that's where they began. It would be a good opportunity for the committee to have a discussion around the merits of a revenue-neutral carbon tax.

Because the conversation has taken place from individuals to the government, it doesn't mean that the conversation has taken place from either individuals or experts to the entire Assembly. This amendment is just as much about respecting all members of the Assembly as it is about the government getting information from individuals. I know that the government believes it's not possible for them to be wrong. I think that an amendment like this is a great opportunity for them to bring the results of that conversation to that committee and have a discussion around those. An amendment like this can provide a vehicle for the best possible solution for all Albertans because so rarely in this Chamber does the best idea actually win. Almost exclusively in this Chamber the government's ideas win.

At committee we have seen a significantly higher level of cooperation, a real opportunity for all members of the Assembly to hear from individuals and provide the information first-hand so that all members of the Assembly can make the best possible decision. The vast majority of decisions that we make here in this Chamber are not just about today but are also about tomorrow. I recognize that the government's desire here in Bill 20 is a decision about tomorrow.

Now, there is a wide variety of opinions on whether it's the best way to get to that decision.

The Deputy Speaker: On the amendment the hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to rise this evening and speak to this amendment. Now, I think it will not surprise this House that I'll be speaking against this motion at this time. The Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills knows that I enjoy committees nearly as much as he does. I think we get a lot of productive work done there.

However, to say that this is a bill that requires more time and more consideration at this juncture, I think, is perhaps inappropriate. The minister outlined earlier some of the engagement and consultation that have happened already with regard to this bill. The climate leadership report to the minister was released last November, and folks in the House have had plenty of time to look at it, to see what was in it, to think about it. Much of what is going on in this bill is actually in the budget, which has been out for two months now, and folks have had time to look at it, to go over it, and to see what it involves.

You know, just for the sake of reiteration, the public engagement and consultation that happened on this bill and on this plan were open to all members of the public, and the members of the Official Opposition were certainly welcome to participate. If you look at it, the climate change panel had over 25,000 responses collected on an online survey. In addition, we had public open houses, which nearly a thousand people attended. It received 535 online submissions. The panel held additional sessions, with 350 different stakeholders representing diverse perspectives. There was aboriginal engagement, with 47 participants representing 30 aboriginal

communities and organizations. There was a lot of consultation that went into this and a lot of thought and a lot of time.

Quite frankly, to say that more discussion is going to lead to a better case at this point is unnecessary. I have been waiting for this bill and I have been waiting for this legislation my whole life. This is something that we need; it's something that we need for our children.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

10:10

An Hon. Member: That's unfortunate. Why didn't you run on it in your election platform, then?

Ms Luff: Well, you know, if we're talking about that, I believe what we said in the election platform was that we will take leadership on the issue of climate change and make sure that Alberta is part of crafting solutions with stakeholders, other provinces, and the federal government, and that's exactly what we're doing.

I would like to just say that I don't think that this is an amendment that is necessary at this time. There will be plenty of time for the Official Opposition to speak to this bill. We are only in second reading. We still have Committee of the Whole; we still have third reading. There will be plenty of time to read in full the 95 pages of the document although since you've been asking us questions about it since last November, I feel like you're all probably pretty familiar with the subject matter by now.

I'd just like to say that I don't want to wait any longer. My kids don't want to wait any longer. Most Albertans don't want to wait any longer. I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to not support this amendment at this time.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, this is another example of the government ramming legislation through as fast as it possibly can. You know, I truly believe that this government finished this bill on Friday and released it yesterday. The fact is that it was still working on consultation, that it says was out there being done by the thousands of hours, but in the end it was all in its budget. That's unbelievable. I really believe that this government is putting forward legislation at the last minute, hoping that we suck it back and don't complain about it or actually try to make it better.

Let's go back to this. The member brought up the wonderful budget and talked about how it was all explained there, so let's take a step back and actually address the fact that in the budget it is under taxes. It is not under levies; it is under taxes. This is clearly a tax, and if you look on page 22, for those that actually want to see it for themselves, instead of being very clear exactly what Bill 20 is going to be – the fact is that they don't even know. They didn't know then. How could we speculate on what Bill 20 was going to be until yesterday, which is when we got it, the whole 95 pages, speed-read it, and be able to come up with a wonderful solution that says: gee, we need to just trust the government because Bill 6 worked out so well for it.

You know, taxes have a horrible habit of being easy to impose and very difficult to remove. The fact is that if this doesn't work out and doesn't go in the direction that the government is hoping – and we've got examples across the world where the wonderful expectations don't meet what the actual results are.

We've got a government right now that's saying: "Well, we're going to give a little bit to these people, and we're going to give a little bit of money to these people, but we're going to take more, so in the end we're going to come out ahead. You know what? Why bother studying it? Why bother moving this forward? Why bother actually talking with actual Albertans? We'll talk to a few of our friends and actually do no real consultation." That is exactly what we are seeing here. We put out a couple of online things, and suddenly we say: "Hey, you know what? We've gone to Albertans. We've gone and consulted with everybody." But that just isn't the truth in all of this. What we need to be looking at is: how do we move forward? How can we make this bill better?

The fact is that we're rushing through it too fast, and it's \$3 billion worth of income. You have demonstrated in the past that you have a record of ramming things through. Why can't you learn from that and take your time? The fact is that we need to go and actually study something this large. We need to bring it to a committee. We need to actually study what the effects are, actually do some real consultation, which, by the way, I don't actually believe that you have completed in its fullest amount. We need to be able to show Albertans that we actually are doing good for Alberta and not harm.

I will wrap this up just by saying that this is a responsible amendment. It is saying: you've waited your whole life, apparently, for this one bill; what are a few more months just so that we can go out to Albertans? I know that it's earth-shattering, that we can't wait a few more months for this just to make sure that we get it right, but – you know what? – in the end Albertans are expecting us to get it right, and I don't believe we're doing it right now.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Anyone wishing to speak on 29(2)(a)? Okay. The hon. member.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just have a quick question for the member. He was talking a lot about an apparent lack of consultation. Maybe it was just because I happened to be sitting beside the Member for Calgary-East, who, just before you spoke, actually outlined what, to me, seemed like an extensive consultation with aboriginal groups and getting input from Albertans and from industry. To me, that sounded a lot like consultation that was brought together for that report. I was wondering. If that is apparently not consultation with all Albertans from all industry sectors, then perhaps he could explain what consultation would then look like.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Consultation actually doesn't look like Bill 6 – that is a fact – and that is exactly where you're going with this bill. You need to make sure that when you bring a bill forward, you do the proper consultation. The fact is that when we don't actually have the bill in front of us, how can we consult with the people that it's going to affect?

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you. Under 29(2)(a). This is the 10-year anniversary of *An Inconvenient Truth*, which won Senator Gore a Nobel prize and is, I think, a landmark. I'm bringing this up because I sense a lack of urgency on the part of the opposition. They don't seem to understand that there is a crisis coming.

Just today in *Scientific American* they published sort of a memorial of these 10 years since *An Inconvenient Truth's*

presentation. They actually are talking about the crisis that's going to happen by 2100 if we don't bend the curve on the emission of CO₂. At the present time the United States has about 404 parts per million of CO₂ in the air, and that will actually cause an environmental catastrophe by the year 2100 if we don't get it under control. It's also interesting that the United States has recognized this along with China, India, and all of the industrialized countries in the world, who have signed on to a protocol to make sure that we're limiting this.

10:20

Alberta is leading Canada's response to this environmental crisis, and I would ask the member who just spoke what the plan would be from his party to make sure that this environmental crisis is averted. We have to be doing something.

We are going to reduce the amount of particulate damage coming from coal plants. This is going to have a remarkable effect on the health of Albertans. It's actually going to save, it's estimated, \$200 million in health care costs in this province, and this will improve the health and the quality of life of all Albertans. It's going to improve the quality of life in my riding of Edmonton-Whitemud. We live under the plume of a coal-fired electricity plant in this city. My colleagues to the south of me have the same problem.

I'm actually, like my colleague from Calgary-East, very proud to have campaigned on a climate change platform, and I'm very proud to be part of a government that is doing it. I would ask the member opposite what his plan would be to bend that CO₂ emission curve.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: No. Sorry. Not under (29)(2)(a). To the referral. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

Mr. Rodney: I'd like to speak.

The Acting Speaker: To the amendment?

Mr. Rodney: Yes. I'd like to have a short speech on the amendment.

The Acting Speaker: Please go ahead, Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you.

Having gotten limited briefing on this, we are still working on what the ultimate outcomes could be with respect to this. However, there is no question that there are a number of very, very important issues at play here that are very, very important to Albertans. What is most important to Albertans, of course, is transparently ensuring the best maximization of our resources to the best interests of all Albertans and ensuring that we develop this resource effectively. Therefore, we need to know that there is more opportunity.

As a result, I'll be making a motion that . . . the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

If these comments sound at all confusing, let me just say that they are from *Hansard*, November 19, 2013, pages 2920 to 2921, by the current Premier.

Another quotation. I think it's very important that all members hear this.

I think that we should refer it to the standing committee, and I further think that it would be great if this bill could be subject to public input. Now, we haven't really mastered that in this Legislature since I've been here. Edmonton city council, if I can refer to another order of government, and, I know, other city and town councils make better use of their committees in terms of canvassing public opinion and allowing the public to speak and have input on decisions that are important to them . . .

Mr. Speaker, that's really the gist of my comments, my reasons for wanting to have this matter referred to the committee.

Who said that? The current House leader. That's from *Hansard*, November 19, 2013.

From May 8, 2013:

I do believe that it represents a good conciliatory opportunity for us to address in a more fulsome way a number of the very significant policy elements that appear in this legislation, and it gives us an opportunity to understand their consequences and to ensure that we don't go bowling forward simply because the Premier wants to have some deliverable that she can talk about on a campaign trail this summer.

You guessed it. That is from the current Premier.

I certainly concur with my colleague . . .

Again, it's this question of conferring with stakeholders that I would like to go back to.

From the current Minister of Education.

Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak in favour of this motion for referral. I'll get into some specifics.

I think, you know, part of the issue and why this motion is very, very appropriate is because our democratic process is really contingent upon ensuring that voices are represented, that opinions are expressed, and that we debate and look at all different sides of an issue . . .

You know, I'd like to remind the Assembly that this bill is no small bill. There are quite a number of changes being proposed. This was only given to the opposition 24 hours ago or in that area, so it's challenging. All members, I believe, of the Legislative Assembly, both on the government side and the opposition side, want to ensure that they're doing their job to the best of their abilities and have the resources and tools available at their disposal to ensure that they can work to the best of their abilities and serve Albertans in the capacity that we were all put here to do.

It's very challenging to first of all go through a piece of hefty legislation in a very short period of time and to do it justice . . .

We need to ensure . . . that we give opposition parties and all MLAs an adequate amount of time to engage with Albertans to get their feedback and their ideas and their comments on legislation before it passes.

The current minister of economic development.

This is a motion to refer Bill 9 to the Standing Committee . . . [It's] very appropriate because this is, in fact, a question of hundreds of thousands of Albertans' economic future. It's important for them and their families and for their own piece of mind, but it's also a significant impact on the economy.

Hansard, April 23, 2014, the current Government House Leader.

You may be disappointed, but this is the last one. It's quite a doozy.

The purpose of this amendment, of course, is to begin by allowing for that actual consultation and negotiation and consideration of this issue that Albertans need to have. I know that a select group there in cabinet have convinced themselves that this is all okely-dokely . . .

That's what it says here. That is right here from *Hansard*, April 23, 2014. It goes on to state:

The fact of the matter is that most of the people who are impacted by this piece of legislation have not had an opportunity to really

fully consider the implications of the changes, nor have they been given the opportunity to really fully communicate to this government, which is accountable to them by way of that trite, old, little institution we call democracy, to listen to what they have to say about this.

Because this has such an incredibly far-reaching set of consequences to the lives of so many Albertans, I would suggest that this not be a bill that we ram through . . . as this government is scrambling to get out of the Legislature so they can run off and slap a whole bunch of ineffective bandages over their broken political vehicle.

That indeed is a direct quotation from the current Premier.

With great respect I have two honest, humble questions. Number one: is it more important to rush this through using a majority, or is it more important to get it right? And the second question, simply: will the government members listen to the words of their own Premier and ministers and take your own advice to utilize the committee? Committees were created for experiences and situations exactly like this. We've learned a lot of things on this side of the House, sometimes the hard way. Just a couple of friendly suggestions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Anyone wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)? The Deputy Government House Leader.

10:30

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that little trip down memory lane that the hon. member took us through. You know, what's interesting, though, is that we need to contextualize some of the comments. Sure, there were bills that the previous government did try to ram through. I would hardly call second reading ramming a bill through when the government has not invoked closure. We have not rushed this through. We have all the hours in the world. In fact, our government is quite prepared to sit in this Chamber until the Calgary Stampede if need be if that would satisfy the opposition.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I do, though, also find it a little rich coming from the third party, Madam Speaker, as far as talking about rushing bills through. I recall as a member of the fourth party, when there would be six or seven or maybe more pieces of legislation on the Order Paper, being given very short notice, where as a very small party there were challenges to working through a bill. We are and will be providing ample time for debate.

I do want to come back to a comment from some other members that spoke to this amendment as far as referring it to committee. First of all, in my time in this House in three years as opposition I don't recall . . .

Mr. Rodney: Madam Speaker, that's not on 29(2)(a). He's referring to other . . .

Mr. Bilous: I'm speaking to his comments. Under 29(2)(a) I can make comments about his speech, or I could ask a question. I may be coming to a question, but at the moment I'm addressing comments that were made by the hon. member.

Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, you know, our climate leadership plan was announced last fall. A number of months have passed. There have been hundreds of submissions to the minister of environment where Albertans, stakeholders, community groups, and, in fact, even opposition MLAs have had the opportunity to provide feedback. There have been technical engagements, and there have been public consultations.

To the member's comments as far as motions that our caucus put forward in the past: quite frankly, it was around a failure to adequately consult the public on a bill which was then being pushed through the Legislature at breakneck speeds. I would argue that we are hardly doing that. We are happy to take the time in this Assembly and debate this bill to the fullest, as long as opposition parties choose. Again, we have consulted. There are a number of groups that have weighed in on our climate leadership plan. This is now the product of many, many months of work and consultation.

My question to the member is that if six months is not long enough for consultation and talking to the public to get feedback from Albertans, then I'd like to know: what is the magic number?

Mr. Rodney: Thanks for the question. There is no magic number, of course.

Let's face it. You said that they had six months. This was received on these tables yesterday. So that's a nonstarter, sir. It's nice that you're happy to be here till the Calgary Stampede. A lot of people think that part of our job is to be here, and that indeed is true. It's also to be in our constituencies as well, talking to people about bills such as this.

Now, we could debate this all day, all night, until the Calgary Stampede. That still would not allow Albertans the opportunity to give all of us the feedback that every one of us needs to have a truly informed conscience.

Mrs. Littlewood: What's the magic number?

Mr. Rodney: I said that there was no magic number, Member, and I'll be happy to address the chair.

The magic number that a lot of people are talking about, though, is \$6 billion. That's been an estimated cost by the admission of this government itself. That was a \$6 billion question that was not even asked during the election. Albertans have been telling me that that is completely unfair, and then the language gets a little bit personal. I don't like to go there, but it happens every day when people say to me that this is really just a wealth transfer, that it's not about the climate and it's not about helping the environment at all.

This is their concern. If you think they're wrong, take the time to talk to them. Take the time to allow them to come to committee to present as organizations and individuals, not just invited guests but all Albertans so that everyone can have a say on a \$6 billion . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to the amendment?

Mr. Bilous: You know what, Madam Speaker, as much as I'm enjoying this debate – and I am enjoying this debate this evening – I think we've made very good progress, so I would move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Seeing the time and, again, the progress that we've made, I would move that we adjourn until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:35 p.m.]

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