



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday morning, November 8, 2016

Day 46

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good morning.

Hon. members, just bow your heads and contemplate or pray as you wish. Today our neighbours to the south of Canada will be exercising their right to determine the future leadership of their nation. Let us commit ourselves to the maintenance of our long tradition of friendship and peace with the American people, with whomever they elect.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 27 Renewable Electricity Act

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to move second reading of Bill 27, the proposed Renewable Electricity Act.

As you know, the climate leadership plan confirms Alberta's place as a progressive world energy leader by reducing emissions, investing in green infrastructure, and promoting innovation. This proposed act would help carry out elements of the climate leadership plan by creating the framework to meet our target for 30 per cent of our electricity supply to come from renewable sources by 2030.

Our government's measures to reach this target through the framework established by this act will bring important benefits for Alberta. It will facilitate \$10.5 billion of new private investment in our economy by 2030, and it will create at least 7,200 jobs for Albertans.

Now, let's be clear about what this means for our electricity system. It means that 30 per cent of our electricity energy will come from renewable resources. This puts Alberta amongst the leading jurisdictions around the world. It also means that the other 70 per cent will come from baseload sources, mostly from natural gas. This is good news for Alberta's gas producers.

How would Bill 27 bring these benefits? First, it would establish a clear understanding of what it means when we say "renewable electricity." Then a key element of the proposed act is that it would create the legislative framework to meet our target of 30 per cent of electricity generated in Alberta from renewable resources by 2030.

We recognize the importance of transparency to Albertans, so the act would require the development of interim targets and mandatory periodic reviews of progress towards meeting them. These steps provide clarity and confidence for investors.

It would also define the process for the Alberta Electric System Operator, or AESO, to develop renewable energy programs that would promote large-scale renewable electricity generation using a competitive process while ensuring reliability of the electricity system. It would enable the minister to set the objectives and criteria for the AESO to develop these renewable electricity programs. Once a program proposal is developed, including details of the

competitive process and costs involved, the AESO would submit the proposal to the minister for approval to proceed.

To ensure this competitive process is transparent and impartial, the legislation would require an external third-party fairness adviser to be appointed to oversee the competition and provide a public report. It would authorize the AESO to run this competitive process and, once complete, to advise the government of competition results. The AESO would also request approval of the quantity of renewables to be supported and the resulting cost. Based on this approval, the AESO would then proceed with awarding the support agreements to the successful projects.

The legislation would include a range of provisions needed to support this process. It would enable the AESO to take security interest in projects that receive support as this is the best way to protect the government's investment of carbon funds in case of generator default or insolvency. It is something like a bank holding a mortgage on a house. If a homeowner lives up to the terms of the agreement, the bank simply holds what is called a security interest. The bank only enforces the interest and takes ownership stake in the property if the agreement terms are breached. Similarly, this proposed act would enable the AESO to register a security interest to ensure a generator's compliance with this agreement. This provides the highest level of confidence that invested funds will have the intended result and puts government in the best position to recover funds in case of default or insolvency. The security interest would be part of the deal when projects successfully compete for support.

We've chosen this approach to protect Alberta's investment, but it is also important that the safeguards in place in the Electric Utilities Act continue to ensure objectiveness and independence of the AESO. This legislation would simply enable the AESO to develop these commercial terms if it deems them necessary. The AESO would then administer the contracts with generators and report the progress to government.

It is essential that renewable project developers and investors have the certainty that programs are supported by the government, in this case through reinvestment of carbon revenues from large-scale emitters. The legislation would make this crystal clear for investors. This would allow project proponents to secure financing rates which, in turn, will produce better program cost outcomes.

In fact, the provisions in this bill are carefully tailored to maximize the benefit and value for Albertans from our carbon levy budget. The investment certainty that will come from legislating our target will bring greater economic benefit to Alberta. It will also draw stronger competition for the program, driving program costs down. With investment certainty come lower project costs, better bids, and the most clean energy for the same amount of investment from the carbon levy funds. This is why we are confident the program will bring the lowest cost renewable energy to Alberta. These provisions would also provide the government with the ability to monitor the program, administration costs, and provide additional direction if needed.

The proposed act would clarify the Market Surveillance Administrator's oversight functions with the program, so it's clear that the MSA's traditional electricity market oversight also extends to participants in this program. The MSA's traditional oversight role is to monitor Alberta's electricity market to ensure it operates in a fair, efficient, and openly competitive manner. The MSA's oversight role will be extended to the AESO's implementation and administration of the renewable electricity program and the behaviour of the program participants and generators. In another measure to ensure transparency and accountability, the AESO would also provide an annual report of the program to the government.

Finally, the act would include amendments to several other pieces of legislation to deliver the policy elements and ensure overall legislative consistency. These acts include the Alberta Utilities Commission Act, the Electric Utilities Act, the Hydro and Electricity Energy Act, and the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. These amendments to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act would enable the government to require an environmental impact assessment or other narrower forms of scrutiny for wind and solar projects of particular environmental concern.

10:10

Mr. Speaker, this proposed act is part of an overall approach to implement the climate leadership plan. By supporting the development of renewable electricity, we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and ensure a greener future for our province, but our commitment goes beyond reducing emissions. We are committed to creating jobs and diversifying our economy. Investment in renewable energy will result in innovation and future economic security by encouraging growth in our green-tech sector. This proposed act would set the groundwork, demonstrating our clear leadership, promoting the generation of clean, renewable energy while ensuring reliable and affordable electricity for Albertans.

I look forward to seeing the support of this House in helping to move this important legislation forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this place today to represent the interests of the hard-working families of Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, to be their voice in response to this new bill before the House, the Renewable Electricity Act, Bill 27. I can honestly tell you that I've been waiting years for an Alberta government to come up with some kind of well-constructed, affordable, multigenerational, environmentally honest, financially sustainable, and technically sensible plan for renewables, and I'm still waiting.

Before us today we have another bill preceding a report from one of this government's hired experts. The members of this Assembly have not seen the Boston report, yet here is Bill 27, déjà vu from Bill 25, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, which this government is currently asking us to pass without hearing from OSAG. It has become a bad habit of this government to ask the elected members of this Assembly to pass a bill without all of the information. It has become apparent that this government likes to give the impression they are consulting by appointing experts and panels to study this and that, Mr. Speaker, but this socialist government is only fooling themselves if they think Albertans are buying it. Here we have another bill before this House before anyone has heard from the experts. It's looking like many of these panels and experts are really nothing more than window dressing to give the appearance of consultation when, in fact, the government has already decided what the outcomes are going to be.

Well, I represent the dear people of Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. These are intelligent people. I cannot support this bill on their behalf without knowing the mechanics, without knowing the cost, without input from the power industry or owners of our coal and natural gas resources, without input from Albertans. They need answers about the impact of this bill and what those impacts will be. Will it be affordable? Will it be affordable multigenerationally, environmentally honest? Will it be financially sustainable? Is it technically sensible? What will the liabilities be today and tomorrow and upon future generations?

Mr. Speaker, this government's contempt for democratic process is astounding. This government has replaced honest consultation with confirmation bias. This act will legislate the government of Alberta's 30 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 as measured on an annual basis. When I read that, I cannot help but think how this forced and arbitrary target will impact Albertan families and business owners. An independent study has found that Alberta's renewable subsidies could hit \$8 billion by 2030. This \$8 billion figure does not include the cost of coal phase-out or the social and economic impact this policy will have on communities like Forestburg, Hanna, and Keephills.

This bill is meant to complement this government's early phase-out of coal. That is clear. What isn't clear is the timeline. Maybe the Energy minister doesn't understand why the timeline plan for coal phase-out matters, but it is massively important, and it must be synchronized perfectly with the bringing on of renewable generation to prevent power shortages, leading to power purchases from the spot market at astronomical prices. It makes me wonder whether the Minister of Energy grasps that.

Alberta is currently in a state of significant oversupply, Mr. Speaker. At present Alberta has 16,261 megawatts of installed generating capacity. Peak demand in the 2015 climactic year, meaning October 2015 to March 2016, was only 10,982 megawatts. That is down, down a whole 247 megawatts from the record high of 11,229 in 2014.

It is recommended that a healthy grid operate with a 7 per cent overcapacity margin but absolutely no more than a 12 per cent margin. Well, in recent years Alberta has been operating with an overcapacity margin of up to 31 per cent.

Now, being 31 per cent over demand is a good thing for Albertan consumers and businesses. It means that power prices are really low, and low power prices provide a significant economic advantage to our industry, our commercial operators, our agricultural sector, and our people. Low power prices have benefited Alberta businesses, with a wonderful result of 78 per cent of our grid being industrial or commercial, and that means tens of thousands of jobs. We are competitive with low power prices.

In most Canadian provinces the industrial sector is much smaller, and power prices for everyone are higher. In provinces like Ontario it's connected to their overly ambitious renewable gamble, and they have been hemorrhaging manufacturing jobs because their power prices are making it impossible for many businesses to compete. That is known as leakage.

Inexpensive and reliable power is a cornerstone of any economic growth in any nation. That is why we see developing economies like India's building 85,000 megawatts of coal-fired power generation, utilizing J-Power's revolutionary clean-coal technology. They're doing so because it produces cheap power for a growing economy that needs to be competitive in a global economy.

Out-of-control electricity prices in Ontario are the result of out-of-control, forced renewable injections into their grid, injections not based on demand, not based on economic reality, not based on technical sensibilities but based solely on unsound ideology.

Make no mistake. Low power prices, a competitive, deregulated market, and energy reliability are all integral parts of what we commonly call the Alberta advantage. Jurisdictions with cheap and reliable power prices attract business.

Albertans keep hearing about jurisdictions that are moving away from artificially incented renewables or market-distorting policies that make everything uncompetitive and cost jobs. For example, France is ending its carbon tax. Australia ended its carbon tax. Germany is moving away from renewables and nuclear and back to coal. Greece is on track to get 1.75 billion euros in free carbon allowances for two massive coal plants, but they're burning lignite,

of all things, emitting seven million tonnes of CO₂, practically gutting Europe's climate action plans. I'm not happy about it when our far cleaner coal industry is being vilified by this Premier during her international junkets. Japan is moving away from nuclear and toward some of the cleanest coal technology yet seen, but we're not. What do all of these jurisdictions have in common? A population that demands jobs in a competitive global market.

This isn't done like Alberta. As a province we are facing one of the most difficult unemployment crises in generations. This policy in particular poses a great risk to Albertans of becoming a retractive economic policy. Instead of aiding in the economic rebound that is desperately needed, this will penalize businesses, homeowners, fixed-income seniors, everyone. This government continues to spin everyone on their diversification of Alberta's economy. Well, diversification requires an enormous injection of capital, ideally private capital, not taxpayer capital. You cannot possibly fund effective, sustainable diversification in a market where costs for energy are rising drastically.

This NDP government likes to follow the ill-advised economic principle of: if it moves, tax it; if it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, subsidize it. But you cannot subsidize your way around high electricity prices. High electricity prices are detrimental to economic growth. Since economic growth is a core requirement of diversification, high electricity prices are detrimental to economic diversification. The problem with renewables, the way this government is bringing them in is that they do not like jurisdictions with low power prices.

As beneficial as these low power prices are to Albertans, the NDP has for ideological reasons introduced this bill, which is designed to force those beneficially low prices to rise. This legislation is needed because renewables cannot get to 30 per cent in a free-market situation. It is the intent of this legislation to drive up costs until prices are at a level where multinational corporations deem our jurisdiction worthy of being taken advantage of by their predatory, subsidy-seeking business practices. The legislation will artificially drive up costs.

10:20

A part of that will be taking coal offline. Mr. Speaker, in 2015 our generation by fuel-share breakdown according to gigawatt hours was 51 per cent coal, 39 per cent natural gas, 2 per cent hydro, 5 per cent wind, and 3 per cent biomass. This bill is asking for significant investment to bring up our renewable targets. By phasing out our coal assets 30 years earlier than expected, this government has done two things. One, they're artificially making room for renewables. Two, they are creating more investor uncertainty in an already rattled market. The phase-out of coal is central to this legislation, so why don't we have the results of the Boston report before we have this bill?

There are a number of economic risks associated with a 30 per cent by 2030 target; in particular, are Albertans paying for it on their tax bill or their power bill? And how much will it likely be? We have yet to have numbers from this government.

A related issue that's very significant is: how do we dial down coal? The significant increase this government made in June 2015 to the SGER levy has resulted in more than just lawsuits. The rash and ideological increase to SGER has compromised this government's ability to control the coal phase-out. Older plants, looking at millions that they will owe in carbon fees, have all the incentives they need to shut down early. Let's face it. You can have a timeline, you can have a calendar, but if these coal plants are hemorrhaging dollars, they will shut down prematurely. Then what? Half our load is powered by coal. Even with our current oversupply of around 31 per cent, the accelerated phase-out of coal

leaves Alberta at risk of serious electricity shortfalls when the wind isn't blowing in southern Alberta.

Alberta is in a precarious position. Due to oversupply our current wholesale rates are too low to support renewables, but if we phase out coal too quickly, Albertans will face skyrocketing power prices and utility debt as well as potential shortages. How will this government manage the variability of renewables? What power source will provide baseload generation? Where is the thorough natural gas strategy to increase investor confidence? When will the Department of Energy reassure our natural gas generators that the assets they hold now are not next on the chopping block? I have been asking the minister for this for over a year now, with no answer.

Instead of a natural gas strategy, there is a bill before this House giving the minister the power to instruct the Alberta electrical commission to put regard for obtaining the goals of the Renewable Electricity Act above regard for whether the generating unit is an economic source of electricity in Alberta or for whether there is even a need for that electricity. Alberta's existing power generation investors, the ones that this province will be dependent upon for additional private capital, are unlikely to find any market confidence in that clause. The legislation is clear. The minister may direct the ISO to purchase, to pursue generation that is both not economical in and of itself and not demanded by the market either.

We are in a dangerous position in Alberta today when it is no longer required to consider the need for electricity before asking the ISO to encourage a project to be built. Without having to regard the economics or the need for an electricity build, Albertans are greatly exposed to an Ontario-style boondoggle of Ontario proportions. When the wind blows, Ontarians are giving power away to the U.S.

This legislation furthermore gives the Energy minister an ability to interfere with the Independent System Operator, unlike what we have seen in this province. The irony of this is not lost on us.

Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, this NDP government doesn't even seem to be interested in working through the legislative process on this bill. The NDP has presupposed a decision of the Assembly by already requesting that the ISO outline the criteria for a 400 megawatt RFI. This government just cannot get the order of governing the right way around. We have not heard back from the coal phase-out committee. At the same time, this government has asked ISO to operate outside of its legislative mandate by asking the ISO to set out the parameters of a 400 megawatt auction of renewable electricity. This bill hasn't even passed. The mandate of developing auctions is outside the current mandate of ISO. That is, for the record, why we are here today passing this bill. A number of amendments need to be considered for this bill, and all the while the ISO has already been required to craft an auction outline for the government.

This government is acting as if the bill has already passed. In doing so, it seems to me, the NDP are once again presupposing a decision of this Assembly. This is the third instance in a matter of weeks where the NDP has demonstrated its disregard for the authority of this House, just another example of the NDP's brazen disregard for democracy . . .

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order.

Point of Order Privilege

Mr. Mason: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, if the hon. member believes that this is a contempt of the Legislature – he needs to sit down, actually, while I'm making my point. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members. The point of order.

Mr. Mason: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member believes that there is another question of privilege related to this, then he needs to make that or he should have made that at the first opportunity. He has not done so. But he shouldn't be just standing there and saying that we're in contempt of the House without standing up in his place and giving his evidence.

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

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear a citation, and, you know, I've been listening quite intently to the conversation. I'd like to hear where the citation is, what the complaint is for the point of order. There has been serious contempt in the House here, and I believe that the member was just stating those or mentioning those specific ones. I don't think he was introducing a new point of privilege.

Thank you.

Mr. Mason: It's section 15 of the standing orders, Mr. Speaker: privilege.

The Speaker: Section . . .

Mr. Mason: Section 15.

The Speaker: You have something new to add?

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. Mr. Speaker, I believe, just to reiterate, that the member was referring to a point of privilege that has already been brought up and delivered to the House.

The Speaker: I'm sorry. I couldn't hear you.

Mr. Hanson: It's already been brought forward. He was speaking about a point of privilege that's already been brought forward and presented to the House and ruled on.

The Speaker: Hon. member, as you know, these point of privilege experiences, point of order experiences seem to have raised their head considerably in the last week on both sides of the House.

Hon. Government House Leader, I think your point was to the comment that – you believe that the comment addressed by the hon. member was with respect to the citation which is currently under review. Is that what you were suggesting?

Mr. Mason: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously, neither of us has *Hansard* or the Blues with regard to that matter, to what exactly was said, but what I heard clearly was that this is yet a third example of contempt of the Legislature. Under privilege, section 15(2), it says:

A Member wishing to raise a question of privilege shall give written notice containing a brief statement . . . to the Speaker and, if practicable, to any [other] person . . . at least 2 hours before the opening of the afternoon sitting . . . before the Orders of the Day are called.

The hon. member has not done that.

10:30

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Government House Leader.

I suggest, hon. member, that there was a matter with respect to this item that, at my best recollection, was discussed yesterday afternoon. I would urge the hon. member to speak to the substantive aspects of the bill and avoid those things that might cause some upheaval in the room. Please proceed with your comments, and if

you would, sir, be conscious of the point being made by the Government House Leader.

Debate Continued

Mr. MacIntyre: I will. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Well, to just wrap things up a little bit here, I think it's very important that when this government, any government, appoints panels, appoints experts to advise the government and this Legislature on matters that come before this House – to introduce a bill such as Bill 27 gives the impression and may even be the reality that there is a presupposed outcome. We have Mr. Boston, who is preparing a report that has a significant impact upon the content of this bill and how this bill is going to roll out and the regulations behind it. We have yet to see that report tabled in this House, yet we are paying a substantial amount of money to have this expert come from the United States to take a look at our electricity industry and devise a plan, and here we are with Bill 27 already rolling out significant – significant – powers to the minister, significant impact to the electricity industry, and we have not heard this report. We have not seen this report. We just don't have enough information for this kind of a bill to come before this House and for us to be expected to pass it. There's a significant amount of work that needs to be done on this.

The mandate of developing auctions, just a side note, as I understand it, is currently outside the mandate of the Alberta Electric System Operator, and here we are passing a bill. That does not make any sense whatsoever. There are a number of amendments that need to be considered for this bill, and all the while the Alberta Electric System Operator has already been required to craft an auction outline. Again, that presupposes that the government has an already determined agenda before we've even seen this bill. They've been giving instructions to the AESO as to how to proceed, but we haven't seen this bill until, you know, just now.

Mr. Speaker, they're getting the cart before the horse again. The government is acting as if this bill has already passed. This is not acceptable. We as legislators need to have information. We need to speak to experts. We need to talk to stakeholders, and frankly I cannot in good conscience support this bill, and I must implore my colleagues on both sides of the House to do the same. There is much more information that is required for this.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak to this bill if I may. It's an honour to rise and speak to the Renewable Electricity Act. Let me be perfectly clear here. The bill, from my perspective, has several issues, and I believe that it is yet another bill that could possibly continue to hurt the people in Alberta.

Where do we begin? Let's start with the government's desire to ensure that at least 30 per cent of the electric energy produced in Alberta will be produced from renewable energy resources by 2030 as well as the central planning committee's ability to set interim targets in the meantime. Bill 27 disseminates zero detail on how exactly this government plans to implement its renewable electricity agenda, which brings me to my point: on what premise was the 30 per cent number mandated? How does the government plan on meeting this goal? How will the proposal increase electricity costs? All of these finer details, Mr. Speaker, are completely ignored and will put Albertans at risk.

Secondly, with respect to power generation how was this legislation co-ordinated with the coal phase-out? We know the

government wants to eradicate coal-generated electricity by 2030. We also know that about half of the power generated in Alberta comes from coal. If 30 per cent of power will come from renewables by 2030 and if we are to lose 50 per cent of our power due to the coal phase-out by 2030, where will the remaining 20 per cent come from by 2030, especially if the population growth and, therefore, demand for electricity continue to rise? We all know that is bound to happen with the government's ever so successful job-creation plan.

Details such as these need to be figured out, especially if the minister plans on mandating interim targets for renewable generation in the meantime. I think it would be a great benefit to Albertans if the government for the sake of transparency laid out its climate plan in full detail, clearly stating its intentions and plans moving forward. If they had nothing to hide, then they would have done so already. This is concerning to me.

With respect to these interim targets it's another problem. Mr. Speaker, they are to be determined by regulation. It seems to be a very common theme. If this government had any semblance of a plan, interim targets would have been clearly stipulated within the legislation. This would in turn at least signal to Albertans that a clear path is in place. Instead, the exact opposite is true, again increasing the need for the government to disseminate in full its climate leadership plan instead of guarding it behind closed doors, away from the public eye. Albertans deserve to see all these details up front and have them debated in the Legislature by their elected representatives.

Bill 27 also gives the minister sweeping power to interfere with Alberta's arm's-length electricity system operator, eroding the independence of this organization. Let me corroborate my point by referencing various sections of this current legislation, beginning with section 3(1) whereby the legislation states:

The Minister may, from time to time or on a periodic basis, direct the ISO to develop a proposal for a program to promote large-scale renewable electricity generation in Alberta.

Section 4 follows by stating:

When directed by the Minister under section 3(1) to develop a proposal, the ISO shall develop a proposal for a renewable electricity program that

(a) promotes large-scale renewable electricity generation in Alberta.

When we flip ahead to section 14(1), the pattern of ministerial meddling continues, whereby

the Minister may provide directions to the ISO for the purposes of enhancing accountability or the control of costs in respect of renewable electricity programs or renewable electricity support agreements under this Act.

Subsection (2) then goes on to state:

The ISO shall comply with any directions provided under subsection (1), subject to the obligations imposed on the ISO by renewable electricity support agreements.

I must say that it's pretty cut and dried, Mr. Speaker. The minister may provide directions, and ISO shall comply. It does not get any clearer than that.

Within this section it also references cost control. In section 14 the minister is able to provide clear direction to ISO on cost management with respect to programs or contracts. This provision apparently will allow the minister to have oversight and authority to make adjustments to costs of the program for the purposes of enhancing cost control. It would appear that the NDP is implicitly insinuating that this plan could in fact increase costs to Albertans. Why else would it include a provision for the minister to interfere with the matters pertaining to expenditures? Is the NDP government already doubting its plan? Albertans need stability in times such as these, not risky gambles, which is what this legislation is.

10:40

Given the aforementioned sections, can someone please delineate how AESO is any different than a government department? I am having trouble seeing the difference. The independence of AESO is questionable, given that the bill will enable cabinet to make arbitrary regulations with respect to renewable electricity in Alberta. The legislation clearly stipulates that in some cases AESO must comply with the direction it receives from a cabinet minister. I cannot help but think that this is another scheme, although less advertised, in the government's plan to centralize arm's-length independent agencies into departments. Who can remember AEMERA? I can.

Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss section 6 of the legislation, that discusses the so-called fairness adviser. It is my understanding that ISO must hire an external fairness adviser who will provide confidence to participants in the program by ensuring third-party oversight. This so-called adviser must be independently selected, not hired or selected by ISO. It must not have any direct connection to the minister's office nor ISO. Doing so would completely undermine the legitimacy of the organization. The preservation of legitimacy is crucial in circumstances such as this, and it is my hope that the government acknowledges this moving forward.

Now, turning our attention to section 13 of the legislation that states that ISO must provide an annual report to the minister respecting the contracts, costs, and other business aspects of this bill. I think the government is leaving out a key component to this report, that is jobs and investments either forgone or attracted by this venture. We hear constantly from the opposite members in the government buzzwords such as economic diversification, job creation, clean energy creation. The list goes on and on. If that is the case, I would hope the government is monitoring what it would laud as successes. Wouldn't this report provide the perfect means to do so within the scope of this project? It may provide feedback to them that their plan is not working. Just a suggestion.

Mr. Speaker, the net effect of Bill 27 will be to keep electricity prices in Alberta artificially low by subsidizing the generation of costly renewable power. Ultimately, this plan will wind up costing Albertans either through taxpayer-funded subsidies or higher power bills. It also undermines the independence of what was once considered an independent, arm's-length organization.

Mr. Speaker, given the litany of reasons I just listed as well as the many others that I have even touched on, I cannot support this bill, and I thank you for your time.

The Speaker: Are there any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for demonstrating a significant grasp of the deregulated market. I would like to ask the hon. member to perhaps illustrate or talk a little further about the value of the independent nature of our deregulated market. Having been in this field for some time, I'm aware that our deregulated market was unique. It is the only one of its kind in all of North America. To have a province with no utility debt is unheard of, and it's as a result of the deregulated market. Could the hon. member perhaps illuminate a little bit further about the value of that and the value of having AESO being independent from political interference?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. Well, thank you to the hon. member for the question. You know, it has given Albertans the lowest power rates

in any jurisdiction that I certainly am aware of. Of course, my colleague from Grande Prairie here has echoed that, of course, with his experience in government. Speaking in regard to AESO specifically, it is very important for organizations such as that, if they are to be effective, in order to have that arm's length from government to be completely perceived as being independent by the people of Alberta – failure to do so will compromise, in my opinion, the confidence that the public will have not only in government but in the services that are provided.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other questions or comments under 29(2)(a) to the Member for Calgary-West?

Having seen and heard none, I would call on the Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. I like renewables. I really do. Renewables are the only way to reduce – or not the only way but just one way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change. The fact that they're renewables means you can actually source that energy often. But they're not the be-all and end-all solution, and I have a serious problem with committing taxpayers and ratepayers to an unknown tab just to meet an arbitrary target of 30 per cent of Alberta's electricity generation from renewable sources.

Let's take a look at the renewables in Alberta. It's a little bit technical, but I just want to understand. We want to understand how this works. Solar power. We take a silicon wafer and use solar radiation, a photon, to knock an electron out of the orbit around the nucleus of the silicon atom, into the power grid. That's solar power, Mr. Speaker, and the price is coming down as new ways of manufacturing the panels come into place. People I talk to in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat are very pro solar but only if the solar panel manufacturers come and set up shop. Those cities don't want to just be the service centres for giant solar farms.

How about those giant turbines to capture the wind energy? Did you know that the average wind turbine is made of 185 tonnes of steel? That steel comes from the iron ore that has been cooked in coke, and the coke is carbon that comes from metallurgical coal, so each wind turbine needs a hundred tonnes of metallurgical coal to be built. If you like your wind farms, stop your war on coal or there won't be enough metal to make them anymore. Alberta coal miners ship our coal, the best in the world, away to make the steel to make the wind turbines.

By the way, people of the Pincher Creek and Crowsnest Pass areas of Alberta are saying: enough is enough. There are too many wind farms down there now, and the turbines and all the power lines and service roads have made a real scar on the landscape and the beautiful scenery there. "Please," they say, "No more wind power in the Oldman River valley."

Wind power has also been known to generate subsonic sound waves, known as harmonic resonance. There have been suggestions that as you get these sound waves acting at the same frequency as different organs in your body, a person can get sick. Headaches and nausea are the first symptoms. Usually the only way to get better is to move away from the wind turbine. Those are some of the side effects of these laws.

Need I mention the killing of birds and bats by wind turbines? Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that there are a whole lot more birds struck and bats killed every year than there are ducks landing on tailings ponds in Fort McMurray, but no one cares about songbirds or golden eagles or insect-eating bats, just ducks in Fort McMurray. It

has become a passion for everyone, a fashion for everyone to criticize Fort Mac and the tailings ponds.

Then there is hydro power. Dams on rivers build reservoirs and pass water through turbines in the dam, turning electromagnets and inducing a current in the wires. It's not much different from the time of Faraday. The problem with dams is that they disrupt the natural migration and spawning patterns of fish, so fish ladders have to be built lest the poor fish get cut up in the turbines.

10:50

Dams also often flood prime agricultural lands, traditional-use lands, and communities. I was at the Dunvegan bridge this past fall, where Glacier Power has proposed a 110-megawatt hydro dam on the Peace River. This project I understand has lost its development rights, but a new group, AHP Development Corporation, backed by Concord Energy, Bowmont Capital and Advisory Ltd., and several individuals, wants to install a 330-megawatt facility 15.2 kilometres upstream from the Dunvegan bridge.

We have very few places to install large quantities of hydro capacity in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Besides the Peace River, some have talked about hydro on the Slave River, south of Pelican Rapids. I have a feeling that the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and the Northwest Territories might have something to say about that project.

There was also a proposal to construct the Meridian dam on the South Saskatchewan River on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border, near Empress. That project was largely an irrigation project. I wonder how much hydro power it could generate.

Biomass energy is also a renewable form of electricity. I was up past Athabasca this fall and visited the Alberta-Pacific pulp and paper mill; Al-Pac, they call it. Al-Pac has the ability to convert biomass into electricity and sell it into the market. Biomass is also renewable. The trees keep growing and keep being replanted.

But enough about the renewables in Alberta. There has been much progress made without Bill 27, many other proposals out there, before it or the rest of the NDP climate plan came along. I see scary things in this bill, Mr. Speaker, things like asking the ISO to "prepare a budget for each fiscal year" where "expenditures for capital assets [are] allocated over the expected useful life of the asset." This sounds like the language of a government going into the power generation, transmission, distribution business. I bet the power companies will have something to say about this.

The minister will now be allowed to interfere in the ISO when there is an interest in a generating unit held by ISO. "Any ownership interest resulting from the enforcement of a security interest, [can] be transferred or assigned in accordance with any direction of the Minister." That sure sounds like government investment and involvement to me. After all, the \$10 billion or so in private investment to bring about the renewable generation will need some kind of government backing now that the PPA contracts debacle is scaring investors away.

If Albertans aren't on the hook through taxes, they will be on their power bills. I suspect both. We have had two decades of private-sector investment in our power system, though not without controversy, Mr. Speaker. Government did not have to spend the money for capital, and prices are pretty low currently other than transmission costs. The target of 30 per cent renewables in this bill is arbitrary, but more important is whether or not the generation is economic or not or needed. If the power is not economic, Albertans will pay and pay dearly on their power bills. If the power is not needed, it will have to be converted to heat and wasted or exported, and that raises the spectre of building a taxpayer-funded export power line.

In response to wikileaks diplomatic cables in 2011, when he was in opposition, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation was on record saying that there is nothing necessarily wrong with exporting surplus power to the United States but that by hiding it, they are proceeding with a policy that will require Albertans, through their electricity bill, to pay for this transmission infrastructure, which is worth billions and billions of dollars. That was the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. He said that in the past.

So how about it? Is this a stealth plan to build an export line on the backs of taxpayers? Maybe the fabled NorthernLights power line to Oregon. Surely, an anonymous NDP backbencher over there knows the full story.

As my colleague from Innisfail-Sylvan Lake said before, Alberta has 16,261 megawatts of installed generating capacity. Peak demand in 2015 was only 10,982 megawatts, down from the record high of 11,229 megawatts in 2014. Alberta already has more power generation than it needs, especially when the wind is blowing in southern Alberta, and this has resulted in low power prices for customers. So the ministry will be interfering with the AESO, which I believe used to be called the Independent System Operator. Fitting, as it no longer is.

The Market Surveillance Administrator, the person meant to watch the system and investigate complaints, will not be allowed to investigate any renewable electricity programs now. The Market Surveillance Administrator is being turned from watchdog into lapdog.

Mr. Speaker, this is dangerous stuff. The NDP is trying to make it unprofitable for the private sector to generate power in Alberta such that government will have to step in and implement a taxpayer funded – and warn renewable power plants to keep the lights on. And people's power bills will be going up soon.

I ask the anonymous backbenchers to turn on their government and vote down this money bill at second reading, before it saddles Alberta taxpayers with liabilities. It is not too soon before an election to see what direction Albertans really want to go on this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any questions or comments under 29(2)(a) to the Member for Calgary-Foothills?

Hearing and seeing none, I would recognize the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak this morning to the House regarding this bill. I'd just like to preface some of my remarks on this matter, because of my presence here today in this House, and that is strictly to ensure that the House is aware of some of the situations that we're facing in southern Alberta regarding this particular subject.

As my associate and colleague from Calgary-Foothills just mentioned a few moments ago, I think it's important for you to realize that my area down south, around the Pincher Creek and lower foothills and eastern slopes area, Lundbreck, Cowley and points beyond, is already fairly saturated with turbines, power lines, substations. It isn't, perhaps, the case that I get complaints every week, but I certainly get many complaints every month about the number of turbines that we have there, the number of power lines that we've recently had to endure the installation of, and the effects they're having on the viewshed in southern Alberta, which seems to contradict the intent of the South Saskatchewan regional plan as it takes a lot of farmland potentially out of production and seems to conflict with the South Saskatchewan regional plan's intent and goals and objectives of trying to preserve viewsheds.

Having spent a considerable amount of effort in the past year and a half on creating a new park in the region, it seems a little bit of a conflict to try to be promoting more turbines, more power lines, more substations, and more harmful impacts to the beautiful area than we've already had to endure.

Mr. Speaker, anyway, to go on further and so on, I want people to keep that in mind, that there are a lot of local residents and local business owners, stakeholders, et cetera, that are not – not – looking forward to having any more of this type of infrastructure created in the area without the proper type of review and the proper type of discussion on the subject.

11:00

Mr. Speaker, this bill, if passed, will legislate the government of Alberta's 30 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, which is tied to the phase-out of coal by 2030, as we've all heard already. The bill grants the minister the power to set interim targets and to become more involved with the formerly independent Electric System Operator. The reason the government gave for the necessity of this bill is that it is hoped that by legislating the target, it will give investors more confidence to invest in our province. At least, that's what they seem to say. I'm flabbergasted, flummoxed, befuddled, and utterly bemused by that claim.

An Hon. Member: Really?

Mr. Stier: Yes.

And I'm mystified because since taking over as government in 2015, the NDP government's relationship with the business community and investors has been more akin to some sort of a war or a warrior's type of direction. If the government was so concerned with building investor confidence in the province, maybe they should have abandoned their risky ideological policies, that have resulted in Alberta's credit being downgraded more times in the last 18 months than this province has had in the last two decades. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, come on.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A province's credit rating is essentially the credit agency's report card on the government's economic policies and a sign to investors of the confidence they have in our province. A credit downgrade is a big fat failure.

With policies like increasing income taxes, a 50 per cent increase in minimum wage, increases on the taxpayer, and the introduction of a carbon dioxide tax, it's no surprise that investors are rapidly losing confidence in this government. I don't think legislating unrealistic targets for renewable energy production is going to do anything to stave off further credit downgrades and investors' continued loss of confidence.

While I admit that the proposal by this government appears on the face of it to be a plan that's perhaps slightly better than the debacle in Ontario, let's not kid ourselves. Albertans will be paying for this. It still results in a whole pile of new capital, whether generation or transmission, and needlessly stranding coal assets at a cost of billions of dollars, which will result in consumers and taxpayers, everyday Albertans, being nailed with higher energy costs and more government debt.

Once again this Legislature is being asked to endorse a piece of government legislation without hearing back from the high-priced expert that was commissioned with the very task of determining the legislation's viability. Just imagine that. They set someone up with a task, yet they're proceeding without that task being completed.

With this quality of decision-making is it really any wonder why investors have lost confidence to invest in our province? I think not.

There are a number of questions I would like to pose to the government when the opportunity comes since the recommendations of the Boston report, advising the government on the cost and the timelines we're facing on coal, have not yet been received. This has been said time and time again this morning, Mr. Speaker. We have to obviously keep repeating that for it to finally sink in, I think.

My first question is with regard to the 30 per cent renewables by 2030. If the expert report this government set up isn't back yet – it's not until the new year, apparently, that it's predicted to come back – I'm very interested to know who determined that 30 per cent was a realistic target. According to a recent *Calgary Sun* article "there is virtually no chance of reaching this 'bold,' 'pioneering' and 'revolutionary' goal, if for no other reason than current technology can't produce that much power from wind, solar and biomass."

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add, getting back to my initial remarks about my area, that there's hardly a week that goes by – and there are frequently times when there's wind. That is true. But there's hardly a week that goes by when most of the time there's no wind at all. How can they decide that it would be worth while to put in wind and solar when we don't always have wind, when we don't have solar? Even though they have the capacity in those turbines to produce a lot of power, how can you get that capacity out of them when they really can't be efficient because there's nothing to turn them?

The same article that I mentioned goes on to say that "despite decades of research, even the latest battery technology cannot even out the ups and downs of renewable energy." And that's what it's talking about, Mr. Speaker, is the ups and downs. These turbines, these solar panels can't produce constant, reliable power.

The hon. minister cannot actually be asking Albertans to believe that this ND government knows how it will get the 30 per cent renewably sourced electricity along with all the backups that that much intermittent renewable would need without putting Albertans on the hook for billions and billions in added costs. I again ask this government to please explain how you arrived at 30 per cent. And what is your plan to get us there? We've been asking this for months.

Another concern I have with this legislation is that Alberta's generation capacity is significantly oversupplied. Much has been said about this this morning in this House. Currently Alberta's generation capacity sits at around 16,200 megawatts, but over the last two years our average peak demand was just over 11,000 megawatts. As I just mentioned, this means that our power grid is already significantly oversupplied. How does this government plan to drastically increase renewable power generation in a market that is simply not open to new production while not causing Albertans to be left with a very, very expensive bill that's not necessary?

Our current power generation grid is set up based on a grid that gets most of its baseload in power from coal-fired plants. Unfortunately, these power plants aren't necessarily located, however, in prime renewable power generation locations. For example, most of the wind power generation is located in my riding, as we've just talked about. Has the government considered the cost of building all of the necessary new infrastructure lines it will need with a completely reorganized grid? Who, by chance, do they think will be paying for all these additional transmission lines? Well, I think we know who will be paying for that in the end, Mr. Speaker. It will be the taxpayer, and it's not necessary.

That leads me to my next point, an issue that has risen in Ontario, where the government rammed through similar legislation, which was described in a recent *Financial Post* article. "Despite warnings

of harmful consequences by distinguished economists and professional engineers [the legislation] was adopted with unusual speed by the legislature, moving from its introduction to passage in just 11 weeks." Well, that sounds suspiciously like what this government is trying to do here, except it will be more like 11 days. Just imagine: 11 days.

While the opposition members are presenting their facts here today, it's well to be noted, I think, Mr. Speaker, that many of the government members are smiling and laughing as I make these comments, and I think that's inappropriate.

The article goes on to say:

There is no business case for all this green energy, as the auditor general has consistently shown, yet the government [has been] so forceful in implementing it that it took away from rural municipalities their planning and zoning powers, denying them any say in whether or not these intrusive projects would be imposed, regardless of local wishes.

This leads to my questions on: how will this government ensure that local municipalities and landowners are respected and ultimately consulted as the plan to increase renewable power generation moves forward? Where will these new wind farms go? Will it take good, productive ag land out of production? Doesn't this directly conflict with the goals and objectives of the South Saskatchewan regional plan? Will they receive proper compensation, or will the government instead enforce expropriation?

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of Bill 27 has made it crystal clear that this government is enamoured with the idea of a centrally controlled economic philosophy. Bill 27 apparently will empower the minister to direct the AESO or ISO to develop large-scale renewable electricity without considering whether there is even a demand for additional production.

Wildrose believes in a realistic renewable energy program driven by private-sector investment, not government subsidies. That respects the Alberta ratepayer and doesn't leave them holding the bag when this risky ideological experiment ultimately fails to deliver. Don't say that we didn't warn you when this happens.

Until this government is able to answer and address the serious questions and concerns we have with this short-sighted proposal, I cannot support this bill, and I encourage all of my hon. colleagues to vote against it here in second reading.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I now move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

11:10

Bill 25 Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act

Mr. Panda moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit 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.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment November 3: Mr. MacIntyre speaking]

The Speaker: Is there anyone who wishes to speak to this matter? The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as I mentioned earlier, we have a bill before us that we believe needs to be referred because it is unacceptable and, actually, irresponsible to ask any

member of this Legislature to support legislation without feedback from the oil sands advisory panel. This government put this panel together, and as flawed as I think it is, it is a panel that is supposed to be deliberating on the best way to roll out this emissions limit. We have not heard back from them.

This bill really does need to be sent to committee. There are other players in the oil sands, Mr. Speaker, that need to be heard from, Albertans that need to be heard from, experts that need to be heard from that have not been consulted by this government. The purpose of this referral is to ensure that the democratic processes that are the strength of our democracy are allowed, to bring in these other people with important things to tell us legislators about this bill. They need to have an opportunity to speak to it. It must be sent to committee.

In addition, we need to hear what OSAG has to tell us. These were the experts this government claimed we needed to have as a panel to advise this Legislature and the government on oil sands emissions limits and how to roll them out. We haven't heard from them, yet we've got this bill.

Again, it presupposes that the government has predetermined the outcome of the OSAG panel. That genuinely undermines not only investor confidence but the confidence of the good people of Alberta in the government's actions. Look, we have a system of democracy in place, and this government seems to continue to disregard the importance of that process in crafting workable legislation for the benefit of all Albertans. We have standing committees whose intention is to be a forum for Albertans and stakeholders to come together and advise on legislation, to improve that legislation directly.

I'm going to just take a moment and talk about confirmation bias. It works like this. You surround yourself with experts and advisers who think just like you do and you don't consider any opposing views. We have a significant amount of confirmation bias being conducted by this government already. The purpose of the legislative committees is to allow opposing views and other views and people who think outside the NDP world view box to come to this Legislature and speak to us legislators about the bills that are before us, to improve them, to bring points that we haven't considered, that the government hasn't considered to improve legislation that benefits all Albertans.

That very wonderful parliamentary process is being shortchanged because this government just wants to push bills through, claiming that they're fine on their first iteration. I remember, Mr. Speaker, when Bill 6 was before this House how they confirmed and reaffirmed and assured us that first iteration was just so perfect – just so perfect – and they were not accepting any amendments to it. But when the farmers in this province rose up and said, "Hold the phone; we have not been consulted," the government ended up issuing, or was forced to issue, six pages of amendments to their previously perfect five-page bill. Well, here we go again with another perfect bill, Bill 25, and we haven't even heard from OSAG. We're getting the cart before the horse has even come out of the barn. It's just an empty cart.

Here again we have something that Albertans deserve far better than. Not only did the NDP not run on these policies in the last election; they continue to make it clear that they're not interested in the feedback from not only elected members of the legislative body but not even feedback from their own oil sands advisory group.

Second point. This bill is very far reaching. We're talking about a 100-megatonne cap. Well, as my colleague from down south just mentioned in his speech on Bill 27, how did that number come to be? Who recommended that number, 100 megatonnes? Was it just pulled out of thin air? When I look at the exemptions that are within this bill, I get the feeling that the 100 megatonnes was pulled out of

thin air, and then there was a very loud: oops, we'd better exempt these guys, and oh, we better exempt these guys, and oh, let's exempt that one, too. Well, if we put this in committee, we may find that there's a significantly long list of exemptions that need to be put into this bill, and that 100 megatonnes may not even be the right number.

The cap is going to prevent current leaseholders from developing. We have already sold those leases up there. We've gotten the money from them. With this 100-megatonne cap it's a little bit deceiving. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe we're already sitting at 68. That leaves us about 30 to 32 in the window. So really what we're talking about now is that the existing leaseholders who have not yet developed up there have to somehow squeeze into a 30- to 32-megatonne window, but we don't have anything in this act spelling out how that remaining window is going to be apportioned. Not at all. There is obviously going to be a bit of a fight for the remaining 32-megatonne window. Is that enough to finish the development of the leases that these companies invested in, in good faith, giving good money for leases to develop these resources, and now this government is changing the game?

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

Sounds a lot like SGER and changing the game on the PPAs and having to pay compensation. Here we are again, changing the rules of the game with sales already done, money already paid, leases not yet developed, Madam Speaker. Those companies, if I was them, I'd be saying: "Well, you know what? If because of this change in law I don't get to develop that lease and I've spent hundreds of millions of my investors' money on it, I'm going after the government of Alberta for compensation." Is that what we're going to be faced with?

These are the kinds of things that should this bill be in committee we can have those leaseholders come to committee, and they can tell us their story and tell us the challenges that this bill is going to force upon them. We need to hear from all the players, not just the big four that stood on the stage with the Premier for a photo op. We need to hear from everybody that's impacted – everybody that's impacted – and we're not being given that opportunity.

Once we pass this, frankly, we are going to be in what's known as an oversold position. It's the same thing that frustrates every one of us when we go to see the doctor, you know, and he's overbooked or when we go to get on a plane, and it's oversold. Well, we have a situation where we've got a 100-megatonne cap, but we have sold leases that far exceed that.

Of course, I can't help but say that I think this would be making a certain Tzeborah Berman exceedingly gleeful because it's going to force some of those leaseholders to leave it in the ground, and that is precisely what ForestEthics and the people that support Ms Berman want to see. They want to see Alberta leave it all in the ground: coal, natural gas, oil. We're a resource province. We are a resource province, and we should not be stranding those resources, stranding those investments, stranding those assets.

11:20

There are billions that have been spent buying these leases on the assumption and in good faith that they could develop those resources responsibly. Although this government has failed again to do their homework, we have an opportunity with this referral to committee for the government and all of us to get the homework right, to listen to what other people, other organizations have to say.

We have some questions that need to be answered. For example, how are we going to decide who gets to develop their leases in that remaining 30- to 32-megatonne window? How is that going to be decided? Is it going to be a lottery? Is it going to be an auction?

They've already paid for the leases. What will these stranded assets for those who lose out cost Albertans? They are going to want compensation. They've invested hundreds of millions of dollars, and now they're stuck. It's patently unfair.

We've not heard any information or analysis on the potential legal risks. I think it would be a very wise and prudent thing for a standing committee to bring in some of the legal experts out of the patch. There are law companies in this province that specialize in the law of the patch.

Mr. Hanson: And some from B.C.

Mr. MacIntyre: And apparently some from B.C., yes.

We need to be hearing from them. We need to bring these experts in. They need to be advising this government and saying: "Whoa, boys. Put the brakes on here. You're putting yourself in a very, very serious position here, subject to enormous liability."

The precedent for payouts has already been set, Madam Speaker. For example, under the lower Athabasca regional plan, under the coal phase-out and Terry Boston we know we're going to be paying compensation in these things. We're dealing with a PPA situation and those pending payouts. There are already – one, two, three – three precedents being set, compensation over stranded assets, and here we go again. Here we go again. Every single time that happens, it is the taxpayer who gets that thrown on his or her back again. It's government mismanagement on an enormous scale, in the billions of dollars. We cannot afford this.

This government has demonstrated an astounding lack of business acumen time and time again, and what we're asking for is to hit the pause button, put this into committee. Let's hear from people who do have business acumen, who have legal acumen, who understand what goes on out there in the oil sands, hear from these experts, hear the challenges that this kind of legislation is going to put upon them. It is vitally important that we get this right.

We're talking about not just money. I know we talk about money and billions like it's just nothing, but you know those billions of dollars we keep talking about: that's tens of thousands of jobs, tens of thousands of jobs for Alberta men and women, good-paying jobs, jobs that pay taxes, jobs that put their children through university, jobs that support local industry. These are primary industry jobs that always spin out into two times and three times the number of jobs by the time you spin it out into an economy, and every time we lose a primary industry job, that's the retraction in the workforce, too. We lose those jobs two times, three times.

When we see a statistic that, you know, such and such a primary resource company just laid off a thousand men and women, we need to immediately think: "Oh, my goodness. By the time two years transpires, that's going to translate into 2,000 or 3,000 lost jobs." That's the impact primary jobs have on secondary and tertiary business. It is vitally important when we're talking about those leases up north that we get this right because we are talking about a substantial number of jobs for workers who are currently unemployed in this province.

This is either – well, let's go here. This bill is going to impact the development of one of the largest job creators in our economy to the tune of \$150 billion to \$250 billion in undeveloped assets. That's \$150 billion to \$250 billion in undeveloped assets. The sheer size of this thing is demanding that it go to committee and have a really good look at this thing, thoroughly. We're talking about the future of a whole generation of workers. Just think of how many generations it's going to actually take to develop those leases up there. It's going to take a couple . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)? The Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I wanted to thank the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake for describing some of the main concerns. There are so many concerns. I do have a question for the member, but I would just like to reiterate a few things with regard to my question.

One of the things I have a hard time understanding and why I think it's so important that we go to committee is that Albertans are actually asking us these questions, and this is extremely complicated information, even for those of us who marinate in this every day. When we're talking to our constituents and the average Albertans that are speaking to us and asking for answers about this, it's very, very difficult for a person in my constituency to be able to say: "Well, I don't understand what the government is doing. I don't understand why the dollar figures that are being put forward aren't important and why there's no information coming to us about the excessive amounts of dollars that could go into absolutely destroying this industry."

The other thing, too, is that if you consider the fact of this need for speed on putting this through without actually having the panel advising us, Madam Speaker, it begs the question as to why would you, first of all, spend taxpayer dollars to have the panel come forward? Then the second question is: why are we not being given the advice from that panel? Whether we agree with who's on that panel or not, the government decided that these were the folks that needed to help make the decisions and advise on it. Now we don't even get the privilege of hearing what that panel says previous to legislation that will come forward from this House and then the regulations that will follow that we are not privy to. You think the average Albertan, just given that small amount of information, would require us as legislators to be able to go to committee to be able to ask those questions so that we can relate to our constituents what this government is actually trying to accomplish here.

I would like to direct my question to the hon. member, please, if he could explain. You were mentioning that we have approximately 32 megatonnes left over. Could you perhaps give the House a description as to who you think those very precious 32 megatonnes may end up going to? Because, quite frankly, we have many leases sold, as you had mentioned, many leases to many, many different companies. Does that mean that those folks who have already paid for those leases now have to lobby the government for access to those leases? Which would beg the question: who's going to win, and who's going to lose? I was wondering if the hon. member would like to maybe give us some opinions on who he thinks those leases might go to.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, it's an excellent question, but unfortunately it's an answer that we do not know. There are some things that we do know. There were four major corporations standing on the stage with the Premier, applauding her climate action plan, and I suppose one might think: well, are they going to be favoured in this? The sorry truth is that we don't know. This act doesn't tell us those kinds of things. There is no mechanism here for a fair, impartial, and honest apportioning of that 32-megatonne window.

We talk about megatonnes, you know, and we talk about billions of dollars. I want to bring this back just for a moment to jobs and people, Albertans. Not very long ago I was in Calgary for meetings – in fact, it was on Friday – consulting with oil sands companies at

their request about this bill. They called me to come down there because they had some very serious concerns. They are deeply worried about this bill and what it doesn't include and some of the things that it does include and the lack of consultation that they feel about this. They were not consulted, the companies that I was visiting.

11:30

You know, as worried as they were – I just want to relate a brief story. When I was driving through downtown Calgary, what really impacted me was coming across dozens of unemployed workers wearing their hard hats and their blue-and-yellow coveralls, hoping beyond hope that somebody would pick them up that morning and give them work even for just one day. This is Alberta. I've never seen anything like that in this country. It does remind me of what I saw in the Middle East.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other speakers wishing to speak to the referral? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to say that it's a pleasure to rise today to speak on this referral motion, but truthfully it's not. As many of my hon. colleagues have already pointed out, essentially what we're looking at with Bill 25 is a cap on our economy. All that this bill is going to do is continue to hamper investment more across Alberta and continue to create further uncertainty in our energy industry.

Now, I represent a very large constituency, as you know, but it really relies on the energy industry as well as agriculture. If you come to Rocky Mountain House – I know that many people on all sides of the aisle in this Assembly have spent some time this summer in Rocky Mountain House doing some of the tourist things that happen in our great backyard. We do have one of the most beautiful backyards in the world. But if they'd had time to just look away from the mountains and the rivers for a little bit and look at the industrial yards in our communities that are full, at all the rigs that are racked up, all the trucks that are sitting there and the equipment that has not worked now in well over a year – for our neighbours to the north, in Drayton Valley, it's even more obvious, as you drive through their community, how much this economic downturn has affected them, has affected the community.

As my hon. colleague from Innisfail-Sylvan Lake said, it's important to recognize that when we're talking about the economy here, it just sounds like big numbers, but back home this is people. This is people and jobs, families that don't know how they're going to make ends meet. They don't see any hope in the future. As we were talking to them at rallies this weekend, it became more and more apparent how much people have lost hope, and that's really troubling.

The other thing is that when you talk to the employers in our community, right now in Rocky Mountain House I can think of many who are actually bidding jobs at a loss just to try to keep their employees working. That's happening all over, and I commend them for that. When you talk to them and you try to find out what is going on, over and over and over they will say to you that the lack of trust in the government, the lack of security in investment is what's stopping us from getting jobs inside our province.

Why would the government want to bring forward Bill 25 at all but particularly at a time when over a hundred thousand people are out of work? We already know that our large employers are having trouble getting work, do not trust the government. They know that investment has been hampered. Why we would bring forward another bill that would hamper investment is troubling.

I think it's one of the reasons why this referral motion makes sense. It's time to bring it to committee because then we could start to hear from our largest employers, from the people that this bill is going to impact, and from the other stakeholders that are associated with it what the costs will be to our community. We might be able to make it better. That's the point of going to committee.

Why the government would continue to try to ram through legislation of this type at lighting speed is troubling. Most of my constituents, when they find out how fast the NDP government is trying to move legislation through the Legislature, are shocked by that.

Madam Speaker, I know that you know that when we do things through committee, we can often make things better. We can hear from the Albertans that it affects. I think it's troubling to think that you would expect – not you, Madam Speaker; you don't expect it, of course – that the government would expect members of the Legislature to automatically know everything and not have a chance or the ability to communicate with the experts in this field, with the constituents that will be impacted by this, with the businesses that will be impacted by this to see other solutions that can make the legislation better.

I know that over the summer there was a lot of work done in the Ethics and Accountability Committee that I think illustrates why this referral is important. As you know, Madam Speaker, throughout the summer government members spent a tremendous amount of time trying to move forward motions on taxpayers paying for politicians' expenses. The opposition was very much against that. The government members on the committee at the time were very much for it.

Now, since then the government has changed their mind, and I commend them for that. I think that that was a great decision. I would like to think that after months and months of argument inside committee, we were able to make the government realize what a silly decision that would have been and how Albertans would not have liked it, how they would have been impacted by it, how they would have been disappointed by it. That's an example of a committee working.

In this case to bring this bill to committee would again allow an opportunity like that. In some ways we may be helping the government from making a terrible mistake, as we did in the Ethics and Accountability Committee, which, I have to point out, Madam Speaker, I've never been thanked for yet. I think the government should thank the opposition for that and give us a chance to help them make their legislation better in the future.

Let's be clear. This policy is likely to result in the stranding of our oil assets – the stranding of our oil assets – but we're going to try and ram it through in a couple of days without talking to the experts and, as has been mentioned by the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake a couple of times when discussing Bill 25, without waiting for the report that the government themselves asked for on this. They're going to move forward without even hearing the report. One has to wonder what they already know about what's coming in that report. What's the need for the speed? Why would we not allow experts to communicate with all members of the Legislature to make sure that we make this legislation better?

You know, experts are estimating that the losses to our economy on this in terms of cumulative value of loss of production will be somewhere between \$153.41 billion and \$254.74 billion. Now, I want to put that into perspective, Madam Speaker. If every pipeline was approved tomorrow, we would expect a bump of about \$30 billion to the Canadian economy. Thirty billion dollars. That would be great. We would appreciate getting our pipelines built, without a doubt. But think about that in comparison to the numbers that are being predicted we will lose in production on our economy from

this bill. That's significant – significant – a significant amount of money.

I know the environment minister right now is heckling me. She obviously, Madam Speaker, through you to her, clearly has no concern about the hundred thousand people plus contractors across our province who have no work, about the thousands of people in the constituency that I represent who have no work. That's not a laughing matter, and that's not something to heckle about. When we go back to our constituencies and we see people losing their homes, losing their businesses, having to take pay cuts at work, it's not funny. It truly is not funny. We've got full shelter systems, food banks that can't keep up with the demand right now.

Outside of Rocky Mountain House and Sundre this summer the forest reserve, which is usually very, very full on the weekends, remained full the entire summer. Nobody had any work, so they went out camping with their families, and they tried to make the best of the summer. It's not funny. It's not funny. Losing all these jobs is not funny. Then the government wants to pile on. This is why people are frustrated. This is why thousands of people across the province protested against this government this week, from all corners of this province. They're frustrated, and they feel that their voices are not being heard.

By referring this to committee, by sending it to committee, we are able to give them an opportunity to have their voices heard. That's not unreasonable. That's not unreasonable. Just like when the government tries to bring in policies or government members on a committee are trying to bring in their policies to line their pockets on campaign expenses, it's important to hear from Albertans. We had great results from that. So I would argue to you, Madam Speaker – and I know you would not have been for that, of course.

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: I argue to you, Madam Speaker, that this would be a fair way to point out . . .

Mr. Mason: Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Point of order. Sorry. The Government House Leader.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Mason: Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j). The hon. member just suggested that the government members were trying to line their own pockets. Perhaps he would like to reconsider his words.

Mr. Nixon: Madam Speaker, that is a matter of debate. Clearly, within the committee . . . [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Members, please, could you just let the member respond.

Mr. Nixon: Clearly, in committee the government members brought motion after motion after motion, attempted to bring forward motions that would get their political expenses paid for. I actually don't even think it's a matter of debate. I think it's a fact. As for a response to the Government House Leader's point of order, it is not a point of order; it is a matter of debate. [interjections]

11:40

The Acting Speaker: Members, please.

Hon. member, I would encourage you to think about how you are talking about some of the issues and return to the bill in front of you

and the referral in front of you instead of speaking about other committee matters and what has happened in the past.

Debate Continued

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will, for sure.

The reason that we are talking about a referral motion to refer this to committee is because of the need to make sure that Albertans and experts can have a chance to speak to this legislation that this government is bringing forward. Let's be clear. This government is in charge right now. They like to spend their time blaming the third party for everything that happened in the past, but they've been in charge for almost two years right now at a time when, again, hundreds of thousands of Albertans are out of work. So if you're going to bring forward a bill that, again, will lower the economy, cap our economy, and make things worse in communities that I represent and you represent, then yes, absolutely, that should go to committee.

There is not one reason that this government has presented for why this should not go to committee. They have not presented any reason at all. They have not. This is just, in my mind, an example of the NDP trying to get their tentacles into our energy industry again. They've already made it so bad, and people are suffering all across this province because of their decisions. Yes, the price of oil is low, but we know that from the very beginning the government has done things along the way, similar to what they're trying to do with Bill 25, which made things worse, which is why we should send this to committee.

They are making things worse for people. They are scaring away investors, they're creating instability in our industry, and they continue to force through legislation, as you know, Madam Speaker, without, in my view, consulting people appropriately. We have many examples of it. The carbon tax: we can tell that Albertans across the province are saying no. Overwhelming numbers don't like what the government is bringing forward. How does the government know that Albertans feel the same way about this bill if they don't take it to committee and give Albertans a chance to speak about how they feel about this bill? That's what committees are for. Why would we not give people a chance to talk about it? I would like to know.

I would like to know how the government came up with the cap number. That hasn't been presented. Did we just invent that? Do we have any expert testimony? Do we have anybody that can present to us that that's the right number? How did we determine that number? It would certainly be nice to know that. I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that that's something that we could find out through committee, which is why we have a committee process.

Again, we are dealing with a situation where our largest industry is in turmoil, and it is having an impact on real people. We should be able to at least agree on that. It is having an impact on families who are trying to make ends meet. It's having an impact on families who are trying to pay their bills. Again, in Rocky Mountain House I can name dozens of companies who are taking work at a loss just to try to keep people at work so they can pay their mortgages. I talk to constituents every month who are losing homes all across my riding, and I know that the government members do, too. What I want to ask the government is why they would not send something like this to committee so we can make sure that we get it right, make sure that we're not damaging our industry anymore, that we're standing up for industry.

Bill 6 was a great example of why this is important. Bill 6 should have gone to committee. There's no doubt, from the opposition's perspective, that that was the right spot for it to go. There was no doubt that the majority of Albertans were against Bill 6 from the

start. There's been nothing but consequences still from the adoption of Bill 6 across the community. We still don't have the panels done. We still don't have any of those things.

Why this is relevant to this, Madam Speaker, is: how do we know that this is not going to happen with this? How do we know the same thing is not going to happen with this. I know the minister is really upset, but let's hear why. Let's hear the answer to why this can't go to committee. We see time and time again that as this government legislates, they force it through too fast. They don't try to talk to the people that the legislation impacts, and they often make mistakes. At the same time we've seen through other committees time and time again that the opposition and the public have been able to bring forward good solutions to make the government's legislation better.

Mrs. Aheer: That's all we're asking.

Mr. Nixon: That's all we're asking.

Now, if this bill is perfect, then it would go through committee pretty quickly, I would suggest, Madam Speaker. If there are problems with this bill that are going to make things worse, then there are probably going to be some great ideas that will come from the industry, from the public, from the opposition parties, and we can make the legislation better.

Instead, we're here talking about forcing through a bill that every expert that we've been able to talk to so far says is going to hurt our economy, is going to lower our economy at a time, again, when over a hundred thousand people are out of work. Think about that number: a hundred thousand people out of work. And it isn't getting any better. I mean, we're almost two years into this economic downturn, and then we're going to bring forward a bill like this that the industry says is going to cap our economic activity, is going to cost more jobs.

We won't even take the time to send it to committee to find out from experts what's going on, if this is right, to find out if the number the government has chosen is appropriate, to find out how they chose or determined that the numbers inside this bill are appropriate. Why? I submit to you, Madam Speaker, why would we not send this to committee?

Now, I suspect that the government is not going to answer that question of why. I surely hope that they do rise and answer the question of why because I think Albertans want to know. I think they want to know why several junior oil and gas producers are worried that this will squeeze them out of the market.

Are we trying, Madam Speaker, to get to the point – I'd like to find this out through committee – where the market isn't determining what's happening in our energy industry anymore and instead the government is determining what's happening in our energy industry? I can tell you that the constituents that I represent want the free market to determine what's going on in our industry, not the government picking winners and losers.

Committees are a valuable thing. It seems to me that every time we talk about committees or referring a bill to committee, the government wants the opposition just to rubber-stamp their legislation. That is not our job. It is not our job to rubber-stamp your legislation, particularly when people that we represent are telling us that this is going to cost more jobs, particularly when people are telling us that this is going to cause more companies to shut down, particularly when people are telling us that it's going to scare away investors from our industry and from our province at the very time that we need more of them. We need to put more people to work.

Again, if you go to committee, Madam Speaker, we can get some answers from the government on those questions. We can also bring in experts who will be impacted by the legislation to speak to why

this matters. I think we can all certainly agree that going to committee makes the most sense. The question, then, becomes why the government would not support this motion to bring this to committee, to hear from all the experts. I mean, I can't imagine that the government would be concerned about what the experts have to say. I think that they would, in my mind, want to hear what the experts have to say to make sure we get this legislation right for Albertans, to make sure we get Albertans back to work.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Well, an interesting speech from the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, and a beautiful town, Sundre. I quite like it.

Madam Speaker, I just want to address some of the points that the hon. member has made. He's talked about stranding resources. He doesn't talk about the situation that the province is facing now and has been facing for some time, where because of international pressure, because of climate change, which is real and human caused, because of the growing awareness of that in the world, and because the government of Alberta previously had not been serious about climate change, nor had it taken any steps to mitigate some of the harmful effects of greenhouse gases, it's very, very difficult and has been impossible up until now to get pipelines.

The problem with this, Madam Speaker, is that it doesn't just strand some of the petroleum resources of the province; it strands all of them. Because we are unable to get our product to tidewater, it places an upset limit on the ability of us . . .

Mrs. Aheer: So you're going to cap ethical production? You're capping ethical production.

Mr. Mason: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. The hon. member is chirping away at me.

Mrs. Aheer: I'm sorry. I didn't realize I wasn't allowed to.

Mr. Mason: Yeah. Thank you.

Mrs. Aheer: I'll keep chirping.

Mr. Mason: The hon. member says that she's going to continue to chirp. Well, let her chirp, Madam Speaker.

The point of the matter is that without new pipelines there cannot be any substantial increase in production of the products that we have, so it strands the entire industry, Madam Speaker. It strands all of the resources, and that is something this opposition can't get its mind around, which is that we have to do something in an international situation . . . [interjections] Oh, she's at it again. She's at it again.

11:50

It strands all of the resources, and we can't increase our production, practically, at all. The international situation is what is moving us in this direction. It's the international situation that means that the opposition to Alberta getting its products to market is almost – we're almost unable to overcome it unless we can convince people, convince the world, convince other governments in Canada and outside Canada that, in fact, we have a serious plan to combat climate change.

We've seen that with this plan, Madam Speaker. Everyone from the President of the United States to the governor of the Bank of England to the government of Canada has seen that Alberta has

been leading the world in terms of a climate change process, a climate change policy that's foremost in the world, which allows expansion of the production of our basic industry in this province, which is, of course, oil and gas. That is the accomplishment of this government.

I ask the hon. members opposite if they want to strand the entire production of this province and permanently landlock this province because of their head-in-the-sand approach to climate change? Is that really what you want, to stand up here and posture as the defenders of unemployed workers around the province? Madam Speaker, we all feel for those people, and we are all working to try and improve the situation so that we can get those people back to work, get those families back on their feet. That's what this government stands for, and we're going to continue to fight for those people.

But we're not going to do it in the way that the opposition would have us do it, by pretending that climate change isn't real. Now, they may or may not believe in climate change, Madam Speaker – I think it depends which member we're talking about – but one of the things that's very clear from all of this is that they don't want us to take any meaningful action about it. That is what they want. They don't want us to take meaningful action even though it means that we will strand all of the petroleum resources that are left in the ground in this province on a permanent basis. That's their plan for this province. That's their plan for those suffering families, for those people that don't have work.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Any other members wishing to speak to the referral? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to point out that recently, when one of the members on this side of the House used the five minutes of 29(2)(a), the Speaker pointed out that that wasn't what it was for. Of course, we just listened to the Government House Leader go on a rant, a five-minute rant under 29(2)(a), where he talked about international pressures that have brought us to this point, where we have to talk about – we have to do all of these things that this government is doing.

Now, he did point out that the previous government wasn't serious and didn't do nothing about climate.

Mr. Mason: Didn't do anything.

Mr. Loewen: Didn't do anything, of course.

What I do remember is that the previous government spent \$6 billion on carbon capture. I'm not sure what kind of benefit we got when it comes to social licence, that this government likes to talk about, from the \$6 billion of taxpayers' money that went into carbon capture, which, of course, this government is continuing.

Now, he mentioned that it was impossible to get pipelines before. Well, that's very surprising that he would bring that up when this very government appoints people and hires people that are antipipeline activists, paid lobbyists for antipipeline organizations. That's what's happened with this government. They're going to sit there and point fingers and say: no, nobody else could get pipelines. But they won't take responsibility for their own actions.

We have the Member for Calgary-East, who stood up in this House and said all sorts of glowing things about this. Well, we've seen the signs, Madam Speaker: no more dirty oil. The Member for Calgary-East: I'm sure her constituents would love to ask her what she was referring to when she had a sign that says: no more dirty oil. What oil was she referring to, and what was she doing that day? What was she protesting? She was protesting pipelines, Alberta pipelines. Right here in Alberta she was protesting.

So can you tell me that this government wants to sit here and say that they support pipelines when they have done nothing but protest pipelines, just sat here and protested pipelines and hired antipipeline activists, paid them big money, Alberta taxpayers' money, to protest – and they're sitting here. We're supposed to expect that they're on Albertans' side, that they all of a sudden support pipelines, that they all of a sudden support the oil sands, that they all of a sudden support the oil and gas industry in Alberta? I don't think Albertans believe it.

Mr. Yao: Not for a second.

Mr. Loewen: Not for a second.

Now, another interesting thing. This is about taking this to committee, where it can be fully investigated. We can hear from experts. We can hear from the public. We can hear from a multitude of people. Now, this very government – in fact, the House leader got up in this very Legislature for years and railed against the previous government about taking things to committee. What is he doing now?

An Hon. Member: Roadblocking.

Mr. Loewen: Roadblocking. Denying that there's any advantage to going to committee. But, of course, when you're in opposition: oh, it was great then. Now, of course, not so great.

He also mentioned that the U.S. government sees us as leading the world. Well, we have a U.S. election coming up today. The two main candidates running for the U.S. presidency: neither of them have spoken for a carbon tax. Neither of them. Governments all over the world are going away from this, and this government is bringing in – so I'm not sure what part of the world they're leading. [interjections]

An Hon. Member: Just build a wall, and hopefully the carbon will stop there.

Mr. Loewen: Now, Madam Speaker, it's funny how the government here – they're laughing right now. The government side is just laughing right now.

I guess they think it's funny that Alberta has lost 100,000 jobs, and that doesn't include contractors that have lost their jobs and are underemployed, that aren't getting near the hours that they used to get. Now, this is the truth: 100,000 jobs. [interjections]

Yeah. It's interesting how the Government House Leader likes to talk about people on this side of the house chirping when obviously there's plenty of chirping going on from the other side, and that's actually from the ministers on the other side. Can you believe it?

The Acting Speaker: I'd just like to encourage you to speak to the referral, please.

Mr. Loewen: Actually, I presume that if the Government House Leader was talking about the referral under 29(2)(a), then I guess I'm still talking about the referral, too.

Now, this Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act is bad for our economy. It'll hamper investment. Companies don't want to invest in a jurisdiction that likes to put caps on things, change regulations in the middle, increase taxes. That doesn't give certainty to people with the amount of money that's needed to bring investment to Alberta to create those jobs. This government has done multiple things to decrease certainty in the energy sector.

Now, this policy is going to end up stranding oil sands assets. There are companies that have bought leases in the oil sands that now – the cap won't allow them to produce them. Because this

government hasn't done any economic study on this – they have provided nothing to us. They've got a committee that's supposed to be working on it, but they're not going to wait till that committee responds before they bring this bill in and try to pass it, so we don't have any idea what this is going to cost.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. member, I'm sorry to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(2.1) the Assembly stands adjourned until 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12 p.m.]

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