



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 23, 2016

Day 51

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
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Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
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Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader	Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
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Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (ND)	Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)	Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)	Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (ND)	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
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Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND), Deputy Government Whip
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)

Party standings:

New Democrat: 55 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 8 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Statement by the Speaker

Mr. Manmeet Singh Bhullar

The Speaker: If I might, hon. members, I would ask that you remain standing. One year ago today we in this House lost one of our colleagues and friends, Manmeet Bhullar, in a tragic auto accident. Mr. Bhullar represented the constituencies of Calgary-Montrose and Calgary-Greenway from 2008 until his untimely passing, on November 23, 2015. For those of us who knew him, we recognized him as a passionate and unwavering member dedicated to public service, and he will long be remembered by Albertans. If we could take a brief pause.

Thank you. Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this House sitting in your gallery the Honourable Valerie Garrido-Lowe, minister within the government of Guyana's Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, and Toshao Gideon John of the Paramakatoi village. Minister Garrido-Lowe and Toshao John are here on a reciprocal visit after two staff members from my ministry had the privilege of joining them at the national Toshaos' conference in Guyana earlier this year. During their visit they will continue their exchange of ideas and dialogues on a range of topics, including indigenous consultation, with staff in my ministry. They both bring a wealth of experience and a passion for strengthening their communities, and we are grateful they could be here. I would ask them to please rise – thank you – and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you, and welcome.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 60 students, staff, and chaperones from the Centre for Learning@Home. The students and chaperones are accompanied today by teachers Brittany Cushion and Daryl Drozda. They join us from many different communities across this province, and I'm grateful that they could be here this afternoon. I know they have all learned a lot already today as earlier they had debated both lowering the voting age and whether or not candy should be banned from schools. I would now ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly

28 students from Dewberry school. Now, Dewberry has distinguished itself as being the home of three generations of winners of the Rangeland Derby at the Calgary Stampede, and based on statistical probability, at least four of these students will someday become chuckwagon drivers. They are accompanied by their teachers Jen Romanchuk and Shalene Zayac along with chaperones Kelly Davies, Melanie Stevenson, and Sheldon Quickstad. They are seated in the public gallery in the corner, which is sort of where I spent most of my school years as well. It is a pleasure to have them here, and I ask my colleagues to join me with the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. Hon. students, at times today this might remind you of chuckwagon racing.

Are there any other school groups to be introduced today?

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to the House two individuals co-ordinating a campaign to urge the federal government to reverse a decision to move the case processing centre out of Vegreville: Marianne Hladun, regional executive vice-president for prairies, here from Winnipeg, a Public Service Alliance of Canada activist and member serving many committees and bargaining teams; and Michelle Henderson, chief shop steward for the Canada Employment and Immigration Union, a component of PSAC, local 30876 rep, and employee of the CPC in Vegreville. I ask that they rise so that we may extend the traditional warm welcome of this House and continued support because it does affect us all.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster, do you have another introduction?

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time it's a great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Anderson family, Curtis and his parents, Karen and Norman, who are visiting us from the Innisfree area in my constituency. In 2002 Curtis was a combatant in the bull riding event at the Ponoka Stampede and suffered a severe brain injury, but never one to be deterred, he cowboied up, and since that time Curtis and his family have conducted the Courage Canada Trail Ride on the last weekend in May and have raised over \$167,000 for brain injury survivors and their families. [some applause] Yes. Thank you. Additional funds have also gone to the Canadian Pro Rodeo Sport Medicine Team and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. I ask that all my colleagues give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some very special people who work in the schools in the Wood Buffalo region. When fire swept through the area in early May, these fine individuals put the safety and well-being of the students first while often not even knowing how their own families and homes had fared. These officials are just a small group out of hundreds who acted very quickly to get students out of harm's way, and their actions deserve to be commended. Joining us today are trustees Nathalie Lachance and Karen Doucet and superintendent Robert Lessard. From Fort McMurray Catholic I have trustee Tracy McKinnon, superintendent George McGuigan, and deputy superintendent Monica Mankowski. From Fort McMurray public I have

board chair Jeff Thompson, vice-chair Linda Mywaart, trustee Tim O'Hara, and superintendent Doug Nicholls. I would ask them all to please rise and receive a very warm greeting from the members of the Assembly here today.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Legislature three guests from Advocis. Advocis works with Albertans to provide financial advice and help ensure the financial well-being of many Alberta families. They're not here specifically to give me guidance; they help all Albertans out. They're in town to have a conference later. Joining us today from Advocis are Greg Pollock, the CEO; Wade Baldwin, the board chair; and Rob McCullagh, a member. I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Ceci: The second group of guests I'd like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the Assembly are two guests from the Alberta credit union system. They are here as we introduce the Credit Union Amendment Act, 2016, later today. Garth Warner is the president and CEO of Alberta's largest credit union, Servus Credit Union, and Steve Friend is the president and CEO of Vision Credit Union. I'd like to ask these guests and others who are here with them that I didn't get an opportunity to introduce but who are with the credit union system to stand up and receive the traditional warm welcome.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three home-schooling families from my constituency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose, strong advocates for parent-directed education and also very successful stories in that area. If they would please rise and remain standing as I call out their names. We have Shane, Robyn, Josh, and Josie Smith; we have Nola, Emma, and Marta Hutchinson; and also Neal, Emily, Joan, and Amy Bishop. Please join me in welcoming these three wonderful families, and let them receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Courtney Hare. Courtney is currently the public policy manager for Momentum, a Calgary-based social enterprise focusing on poverty reduction and economic inclusion. Her work involves designing social and economic policy. Most recently she's worked on payday lending, children's education savings, and local investment funds such as CEDIFs. Courtney also has the distinct honour to have replaced the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board at his job at Momentum. I would like to ask Courtney to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the

Assembly Dr. David Bailey and Dr. John Basarab. Dr. Bailey is the president and CEO of Genome Alberta, a not-for-profit funding agency focused on genomics research. I look forward to speaking about Genome Alberta later today. Dr. John Basarab is one of Alberta's, if not Canada's, leading researchers in beef cattle management and breeding. I would ask that they rise and please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and to the House Kathy Hughes: Calgary schoolteacher, educator, volunteer for the Canadian Mental Health Association, and a passionate member of Forward Action in Mental Health. Kathy has also courageously shared her own lived experiences and expert opinions as government implements the mental health review. She's a strong advocate for timely, patient-centred continuity of care for mental health and addictions and a health system that truly supports these values. I'll ask Kathy to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other visitors to introduce today? The Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this House Oscar Buera Jr. Oscar is a financial adviser, life insurance agent, and associate vice-president of Greatway Financial Inc. He is also a member of Advocis and supporter of YMCA international, and Oscar is a Filipino-Canadian community leader. More importantly, he came all the way from the most beautiful and diverse riding of Calgary-McCall. I ask him to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

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

Mr. Manmeet Singh Bhullar

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was one year ago today that our friend and colleague Manmeet Singh Bhullar headed north on the QE II highway to join his colleagues in this Chamber. As he drove, the weather deteriorated, and he wound up in the middle of the first snowstorm of the season. Seeing multiple vehicles in the ditch, Manmeet pulled over to help a motorist in distress. It was then that the unthinkable happened, and just like that a bright light in all of our lives went out.

In the months since the terrible day we've had no choice but to carry on. Our constituents elected us to bring their voices to this place and to make sure that their views are heard loud and clear by the government. We take the responsibility very seriously.

Manmeet took that responsibility very seriously. Mr. Speaker, never before have I met anyone so selfless in their dedication to serving others, whether it was a constituent, an Albertan in need, or an Afghan family seeking to flee religious persecution in their homeland. He worked tirelessly to achieve a positive outcome for all who came to him for help.

Mr. Speaker, there are reminders of our dear friend everywhere, and his absence, even a year later, is glaring. Whether it's catching a glimpse of his photo on the wall in our caucus office or preparing

a question on an issue that was important to him, Manmeet crosses our minds every day. We miss his big heart and his booming laugh. We miss his compassion for all who suffer and his passion for helping them. We miss his dedication to his family, his constituents, his community, and his province. Most of all, we miss his friendship.

Manmeet died as he lived, helping others and as a hero. As we go about our work, we strive every day to honour him by carrying on that legacy of selfless service, and I hope that we're making him proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Standing ovation]

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

Carbon Levy

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a bizarre situation unravelling here in Alberta. Our government, the one that should be creating an environment that attracts investment and creates real private-sector employment, is doing anything but. The carbon tax will put Alberta business at a distinct disadvantage not only interprovincially but internationally as well. Instead of listening to the thousands of Albertans who rallied against the tax across the province, this government instead is pushing ahead with its job-killing strategy. It's like owning a gas station on a corner, advertising your gas for 20 cents higher than the station across the street, and then wondering why no one will stop at your convenience store.

A perfect example of how bizarre this tax is relates to our greenhouse industry. I spoke to an independent greenhouse that will be facing a \$20,000 increase in operating costs just due to the carbon tax. There is no way they can absorb these costs, so it will be passed on to consumers. Of course, those consumers are also being hit by the tax at home, so they'll have fewer dollars to use for buying vegetables and landscaping. Not only will the greenhouse face unmanageable new costs as a result of the tax; they will also have fewer sales to compensate.

Even more bizarre is the impact on two nurseries in my area that supply seedlings for reforestation. They may be facing insolvency because they can no longer compete with operations in British Columbia and Saskatchewan due to our higher minimum wage and now the carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, reforestation actually increases carbon absorption, yet our government's tax is penalizing the very producers who will reduce our carbon footprint. This government is not only working against Albertans, but this tax is working against the very situation that they are trying to address.

The most recent real poll, the by-election in Medicine Hat, showed that NDP support is at 1 per cent. This is consistent with the cold shoulder they received at the recent AAMD and C conference last week. Albertans clearly are saying: bring on 2019, and let's hope there's something left to salvage.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreements

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, there are real big changes coming in electricity, driven by a government that has demonstrated that it doesn't know what it is doing when it comes to electricity, but I will respect the embargo. So let me ask a question on behalf of the people of Calgary, who have been so poorly served so far by this

government. Actions of this government threaten the profitability of Enmax, and that means no dividend for the city of Calgary, and that means the property taxes of every single home in Calgary could go up by as much as 4.5 per cent a year. Why is the Premier kicking Calgary when it's already hurting so much?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Quite honestly, the foundation of the member opposite's question is not particularly accurate. The issue of the PPAs does not have a direct correlation to property taxes in Calgary, and to suggest otherwise is really not helpful. However, we will continue to stand up for Albertans. We will continue to do everything we can to get the best deal for Albertans and to get the best outcome for all Albertans because we are on the side of consumers. We are on the side of Albertans who are trying to make a go of it here in this province.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

Mr. Jean: Well, Albertans know that there is a disagreement on the facts between what the Premier is saying and what the mayor of Calgary is saying, and I know which one we think is telling the truth. The NDP changed the law relating to power plants and to Enmax, and it exercised its change-in-law provision. Action and consequence: straightforward stuff. But this government sued when they were in the wrong and is now threatening to legislate a change to a 16-year-old contract. Enmax and all of its profits belong to the people of Calgary. Why is the government continuing to punish Calgarians?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only person talking about threats of legislation is the member opposite. It certainly is nobody over here. Quite frankly, that kind of hyperbole, whether coming from there or from other parts in the community, is not helpful to a reasonable, respectful, grown-up, mature discussion focused on coming to pragmatic business outcomes that ultimately will serve Albertans, serve Alberta consumers, serve Alberta homeowners, and serve Calgarians, too.

Mr. Jean: The government rails about big companies making big profits, but these are Alberta companies with Alberta investments creating Alberta jobs. What this is really all about is that the NDP government wanted to raise the carbon tax. It didn't understand the consequences of its action and where we are now, but now we have court cases and threats of banana republic, retroactive legislation, and a wholesale change in electricity, all the result of NDP incompetence. Will the Premier admit that when it comes to this file, her government is simply in way over its head?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, what I will admit is that our government is committed to ensuring that Albertans get off the roller coaster of volatile prices in their electricity brought about by the risky ideological experiment of those folks over there. We are focused on that. We are also focused on moving this province forward into this decade, into the future, by ensuring that we take the appropriate action to protect our climate, to get off coal, and to reposition our economy for the success that we know we can all attain.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Carbon Levy

Mr. Jean: Food bank use in Alberta is up a staggering 136 per cent since 2008. These are moms and dads who are trying desperately to take care of their families as we get closer to Christmas. Demand is

going up while people's ability to give is going down. The NDP's carbon tax will just make things worse. In just 38 days it will add \$21,000 in extra costs to the Calgary Food Bank alone. Why is the Premier taking money away from charities and Alberta's most vulnerable citizens and those most in need at a time when they can simply not afford it?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the member opposite talk about food banks because, quite frankly, we would like people to use them less. That's why this government got rid of a regressive flat tax and brought in a progressive tax. That's why this government brought in the first-ever child tax benefit, to take 350,000 children off the rolls. That is why this government raised the minimum wage, so people working full-time don't have to stop at the food bank on their way home.

Mr. Jean: Well, what this government is not working – and Albertans from every background know the damage the carbon tax will have. School boards across the province are worried. They're the ones who pay for the fuel and gas that run our buses and heat our schools. It's why Wildrose put forward an amendment to exempt school boards from the carbon tax, an amendment, by the way, the NDP voted against. But now the Education minister is saying that school boards will be, quote, first in line for the money. Will the Premier please confirm whether funds taxed from families will be used to compensate school boards, yes or no?

Ms Notley: Well, what the Education minister was talking about was that through our energy efficiency program, something that we clearly talked about, something that is long overdue in this province – we were the only province without an energy efficiency program, if you can imagine that, Mr. Speaker. One of the first announcements through there was for \$9 million to 36 schools to put in solar panels so that they could reduce their emissions. And that is the kind of thing that we will continue to do because we believe in moving this province forward. We believe in increasing renewable energy. We believe in bringing down our emissions because we believe climate change is real.

Mr. Jean: Here's the problem. There are moms and dads in Alberta who will receive zero dollars for paying more to heat their homes and to drive their kids around. There are truck drivers, farmers, construction workers, office assistants who won't be receiving a penny in compensation for paying more to drive to work. Every municipality will be on the hook, and our most vulnerable and our charities will see millions of dollars taken from them to pay for a massive slush fund and corporate handouts. Why is the Premier trying to pick favourites? Just scrap this ridiculous carbon tax that will hurt all Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The favourite that this government is picking is the environment. The favourite that this government is picking is the health of our children. The favourite that this government is picking is our ability to move forward into a 21st-century economy, not staying stuck in the past, pretending that there are no challenges for us to face, because that's what good leadership looks like.

Investigations of Deaths of Children in Care

Mr. Jean: The circumstances surrounding Serenity's death are tragic and deplorable, and she deserved so much more from this government. I am appalled at just how little movement there has

been in investigating her death and how much secrecy continues to surround this file. We now know that the RCMP continued to wait for paperwork related to Serenity's death. It's been two years, and we don't need more excuses; we need action from this government. What steps is the Premier taking to remove backlogs and secrecy in government departments so we can give Serenity the justice she so clearly deserves?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me first begin by saying that it is not appropriate for me or anybody in this government to comment on the course of the RCMP investigation. The RCMP will manage the issue the way they should because that's what's appropriate. As we've already talked about, there are a number of efforts going on within the ministry and will continue to go on within the ministry to improve the support that we give to all children at risk because, quite frankly, I think all people on both sides of this House believe that that is a fundamental priority for all of us.

Mr. Jean: The legislative tools that we have to investigate Serenity's death are broken. In the Kinship Care Handbook, drafted in 2015, it clearly states, "The Enhancement Act provides the [Child and Youth] Advocate with full access to information," but clearly that is not the case. The advocate was unable to receive a copy of Serenity's autopsy report. We don't know if her death has been ruled a homicide, was left as undetermined, or something else. Why was the enhancement act circumvented? And why was the advocate, who is supposed to represent vulnerable children in our province, not receiving full disclosure?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we've already answered this question. The fact of the matter is that the medical examiner gave ongoing reports to the advocate as this matter unfolded. The final official report was not forwarded until later, in part at the request of the police. But the fact of the matter is that the information was shared, and the advocate was able to prepare a report. Most importantly, we continue to be focused on moving forward on the recommendations of the advocate from this report and others because, quite frankly, we want to make sure that the system is better.

2:00

Mr. Jean: A system set up on a foundation of secrecy is always destined to fail. The longer we allow our child services system to operate in the shadows, the greater the chance is that what happened to Serenity will actually happen to another child. I know there are wonderful people on the front lines trying everything they can do, but there is a culture of secrecy that is failing our children. Change needs to start at the top. What specific measures is the Premier taking to end the secrecy that permeates the department related to children in care?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't actually think that the issue of secrecy is at the heart of the challenges that we face today when it comes to keeping children at risk in Alberta safe. What I will say that this government has done is that when we were in opposition, we lobbied relentlessly to have a children's advocate who was independent, and it was as a result of our work that we now have an independent child advocate. The next thing we did was reverse cuts that were made by the previous government, these guys' forthcoming in-laws. We reversed those cuts in order to ensure that the youth advocate had all the tools at his disposal to do the investigation.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Could we please stop the clock for a minute so I can speak to the parliamentary adviser?

The leader of the third party.

Child Intervention System

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, one year ago today our friend and colleague Manmeet Singh Bhullar tragically lost his life on the QE II highway helping a fellow Albertan in need. Among Manmeet's many accomplishments were changes he made to the child intervention and welfare system when he was Human Services minister. After learning the details surrounding the death of little Serenity, it's clear that the system still needs care and we have much more work to do. To the Premier: will you work with all of us, establish an all-party committee to take an in-depth look at the systemic issues plaguing Alberta's child intervention system?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly a very interesting question. We've certainly had forums within which we've been able to have more wide-ranging conversations, and we have a committee that would appropriately consider that matter. It's a question of whether that can be put forward on the agenda through the all-party committee that already exists, but I'll take the request under advisement because I think there's a certain amount of merit to it.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Premier. I know all Albertans that read Paula Simons' column on the tragic death of Serenity were heartbroken. The system failed the little girl, and Albertans want answers. We're halfway there, Premier. Will you commit today to referring this to a committee that could properly deal with this issue? We can all work together on it. This is not partisan.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I certainly, as I said, will take under advisement the suggestion that the member has with respect to the particular matter that the member refers to. Because it's still under investigation by the police, that's not one that we could refer to committee, but actually I suspect that it touches on a number of issues that could still be discussed at a committee and that would be effectively addressing some of the issues that were at play in this particular tragedy. As I say, we'll give it some consideration.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we know that as we speak, there are many children in care who could benefit from immediate action to improve the system. Premier, when will you tell this House which committee this could go to to be dealt with? I appreciate where you've come today with these questions. Thank you for that, but I think Albertans at home will be interested to know when we'll hear back from you about what committee and how that might happen, please.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I can't give you a specific time or date on that one, but I certainly will make my commitment to the member opposite that I will report back to him personally on the matter and on how we can address the matter as soon as possible.

The Speaker: Hon. members, as we move forward with the questions – I've received several notes over the last couple of days – I want to remind all members to address their comments through the chair.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Electric Power Price Cap

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently Albertans are benefiting from historically low electricity rates. However, many of my constituents in Edmonton-Manning have raised concerns about the volatile nature of our province's electricity system. I have heard from families and businesses alike that they feel vulnerable to sudden price increases. To the Minister of Energy: why is the government capping electricity rates for consumers?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. We are standing up for consumers, for families, small businesses, and farmers. That's why we committed in our election to look at smart regulating and why our party has a long tradition of standing up for consumers and families. Yesterday we were proud to announce a cap to protect families so their bills will be fair and affordable. I know that when we had a small business, a cow-calf operation, it would have been nice to be able to predict our bills from month to month.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the capping of electricity rates impacts everyone from distributors to retailers to consumers, to the same minister: how will the government be working with stakeholders to implement the rate cap?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We committed yesterday to a cap, and we also committed that we will work with retailers, distributors, and consumers to come up with the best plan to meet the guarantee. We want to make sure we get it right. We also understand that there are areas such as Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and the REAs that don't fall under this system right now, but we will be consulting with them to make sure they are included.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the current economic climate and the need to diversify Alberta's economy, again to the same minister: will this rate cap apply to small businesses and farms?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Yes. As I mentioned: families, farms, small businesses. They all feel the squeeze of budgets, and as prices skyrocket such as they did in 2013, they want to be able to predict their bills. The opposition sometimes talks about protecting investment, but we need to look at protecting small businesses that suffer from a volatile electric system. As our economy stabilizes, we do know prices will go up, and we need to make sure that things are stable, predictable, and affordable.

Child Intervention System and Indigenous Children

Mr. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, there were 53 reports of serious injury and death to the office of the Child and Youth Advocate in 2015-16, and indigenous children and babies represent 51 per cent of these incidents, yet this government chose to reduce the child intervention budget by more than \$3 million. That just does not make sense. Can the Minister of Indigenous Relations stand here

today and tell Alberta's indigenous communities that his government is doing everything it can to prevent these horrible things happening to indigenous babies and children in care?

The Speaker: The Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that it's a priority for our government to provide children with the right supports and the right resources. I heard the member say that we made cuts in this budget. I disagree. It's incorrect. We have increased the child intervention budget year over year, and I can provide the details. I can submit the estimates. That's not the case. We didn't cut the budget for child intervention. We increased it by \$37 million.

Mr. Hanson: Given that this isn't a new problem and the troubling fact is that many children in care are being neglected and abused and given that the Auditor General found in July that the department does not have a process to follow up with instances where it has identified that services don't meet standards and given that the AG also found that more than 80 per cent of children in care did not receive frequent and enough contact with their caseworker to meet minimum standards, to the Minister of Indigenous Relations: how can there be any assurances that what happened to those 53 babies and children won't happen again? Where are the safeguards in our system?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. There's no question that the death of children in our care or otherwise is a heartbreaking situation, and we do know that our system has fallen tragically short for too long for too many children. That is the reason that we are taking action. We have increased the budget for child intervention. We are providing training to our staff. We are providing foster and kinship care with opportunities for training and the supports they need.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Hanson: Since our system is in particular failing our indigenous youth and given that in the AG's report indigenous children were on average nearly one and a half times as likely not to have face-to-face contact with their caseworker every three months and more than one and a half times likely to have gaps of seven months or more between face-to-face contacts with their caseworker, will the Minister of Indigenous Relations take some responsibility and acknowledge that under his watch his department is failing indigenous children?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. The member correctly points out that there are issues in our indigenous communities. These are the broader discussions that we need to have, and we need to talk about the root causes of these issues. We have seen from a Canadian human rights decision that historically our children on First Nation reserves have been underfunded, and these are the priorities that our government is working on. We are working with indigenous communities, with our federal counterparts to make sure that our indigenous communities . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Calgary-West.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit Legal Counsel

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have offered the government five opportunities to tell us why it snubbed Alberta lawyers by choosing a friend of the NDP counsel in B.C. to handle the PPA court case. We asked if there was a sole-source contract and how much the lawyer was being paid. We received no answers, but we discovered that it is a sole-source contract with a \$500,000 retainer. The only information the government provided is that the B.C. lawyer has a track record of standing up for the public interest. To the Premier: do Alberta lawyers not stand up for the public interest?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of our Alberta lawyers. I think that we have many that are doing excellent work in this area. We also know that Mr. Arvay is the pre-eminent constitutional law expert. I think Alberta lawyers would agree with that. I think his track record is very clear, and he's been recognized by national organizations for his tremendous work in this area. I think that Albertans deserve somebody who has that kind of a track record to stand up for them for this specific case when the party that's asking this question set them up to be taken for billions of dollars of loss. That's not fair. That's why we hired Mr. Arvay.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in his report last week the Auditor General noted that sole-source contracts are acceptable under certain circumstances, for instance if only one qualified service provider exists, and given that based on the sole-source contract Albertans can only assume that the friend of the NDP lawyer in B.C. is the only qualified service provider, again to the Premier: did you even look in Alberta for other qualified lawyers?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We did follow our sole-source contracting guidelines as outlined by the Auditor General. That's why we posted the amount of the retainer in the blue book. I'm glad that the member figured out how to use Google and look up things in the blue book. That's what it's there for, so that you can have information to ensure that you're aware of how the public is spending its money. That is the cost of the retainer. We know what the cost would be if we did nothing, and that's \$2 billion of liabilities passed back to consumers. We deserve the best on the side of Albertans, and that's what they've got in this government and Mr. Arvay.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Given that the Auditor General directed the government to provide thorough rationale for sole-source contracts and given that members of this government while in opposition were highly critical of the previous government's sole-source contracts and given that I am offering the Premier one last chance to outline the process for retaining their NDP world view lawyer before I ask the Auditor General to investigate, again to the Premier: as per the direction of the Auditor General, what

was the process used to retain this out-of-province lawyer? Please tell us now.

Ms Hoffman: We did not break any rules, Mr. Speaker. This was a sole-source contract, with the aim to get the very best counsel to defend the public interest. I know that the members opposite have no interest in defending the public, only in standing up for corporations. Another day, another member: this is not fair. We used the public interest and somebody who's a pre-eminent lawyer in constitutional law, and we're proud of that. We will be happy to disclose everything through the traditional Public Accounts process that the Auditor General has endorsed.

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

Electric Power System

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few minutes ago the NDP announced an ideological antimarket overhaul of Alberta's electricity system, a system currently providing Albertans with plentiful power at low, low prices. The NDP's brilliant plan is to move the burden of risk away from corporations and onto the backs of our taxpayers, all this in support of their misguided policies on carbon. Will the Energy minister just admit that the NDP have created the investment hemorrhage in our province that they are trying now to solve?

The Speaker: The Energy minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. What I will admit is that we have had a broken system for a long time. Continuing to do the same thing and expecting different results is not leadership. We're choosing leadership. We're coming up with a capacity market. We have consulted with investors and industry and the AESO, and they have advised us that this is a good direction to go in.

Mr. MacIntyre: There's nothing broken, Mr. Speaker, about low energy prices.

This government recently clued in to the fact that they are the ones responsible for scaring away \$20 billion needed to make their 30 per cent by 2030 renewables plan a reality. TransAlta and Capital Power were ready to invest billions to build combined-cycle natural gas units, shovel-ready plans that were prepared and would be financed without taxpayer debt. Will this government please explain why they are now shifting the financial risk of future electricity projects onto the backs of our overburdened taxpayers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. I'm surprised at the question about TransAlta and Capital Power since they were the ones standing up with us today and they're the ones we have consulted with, who have also told us that this is a good system to go to. [interjections] They also stood up today and said that this will change their plans to invest in the future and in the near future.

The Speaker: It's getting warm in here.

Mr. MacIntyre: Albertans are getting sick and tired of Whac-A-Mole governments, where the government enacts one crazy policy, then legislates crazier ones to try to deal with the unintended consequences of the first one. Given that the one thing we know for sure is that this change will result in higher prices and given that we know that just seven months ago this government was asking for

electricity-for-dummies briefings, why does the minister think that tampering in a market she doesn't understand is a good idea for Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for that question, Mr. Speaker. Currently we have an outdated market – there's only us and one other jurisdiction in North America – but there are states like Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, 33 states in the United States, and the UK who have systems like this. Industry has told us and investors have told us that they will invest in a system like this. They will not invest in one where we rely on volatility for consumers and for business.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Seniors' Issues

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week it became clear that shareholders have hit a tipping point with their frustration over the lack of co-ordination in the Ministry of Seniors and Housing. This government stands accused of failing to take seriously significant seniors' issues like surgical wait times, transportation, insufficient home care. Minister, this government has been in for 19 months. What are you doing to tackle these issues and protect our seniors community?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to talk about the things that we're doing. We've invested \$1.2 billion in our capital plan over five years in supporting seniors' and affordable housing. We've kept the Alberta seniors' benefit even in these tough economic times. We've put \$1.2 million into supporting groups to make sure that elder abuse doesn't occur in this province. There are many things. I could go on, and I will in the next answer.

Mr. Yao: You've committed a lot of money, but you haven't spent much of it.

You're also supposed to do a review of the Alberta Housing Act, if I recall. Since this review includes a survey with the very same stakeholders that have decried this government's treatment of Alberta's seniors and vulnerable and given that a similar review of the seniors' lodge program has been completed and its results were made public, will the minister commit now in the Assembly to making the results of this survey public?

Ms Sigurdson: We are reviewing the Alberta Housing Act regulations. They come due ahead in March 2017. That consultation is under way, and certainly we will be very happy to talk about that when it is complete. We have been very busy going across the province regarding our affordable housing strategy. Again, in contact with housing management bodies across the province we have gotten very positive feedback about our consultation process. We're very proud. We've appointed a Seniors Advocate in a transparent competition. We're so pleased. We are one of only two provinces. We're really trail blazers in . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, given that this government still does not have a seniors strategy after almost two years into its mandate and since the same government still does not have a plan in place to

replace the ASLI grants, again to the minister: cabinet shuffles aside, what is taking your government so long to make a viable plan for Alberta seniors? When are you going to make it a priority?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. This government is working very hard with stakeholders across Alberta to make sure that we're working on a very great plan for the Alberta affordable housing strategy. We're working with housing management bodies. I've been to many sod-turnings, was at one yesterday. There is a lot of investment across it. We're getting money out the door so that housing management bodies can maintain their units and take care of the deferred maintenance of a billion dollars that we inherited. We're working diligently to support seniors in this province.

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

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has recently established a new membership for the Electoral Boundaries Commission that will recommend changes to electoral boundaries for the next provincial election to reflect Alberta's changing population. This committee will decide for all Albertans what any potential changes will look like. This commission should be set up as fair and effective representation for all areas of Alberta. To the Minister of Justice: why has no one been appointed to this commission that represents rural northern Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The committee contains five members: a chair and then four other members. Two of those members are required to represent rural Albertans, and they do.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many rural ridings are expansive in geography and it has been noted that for many of these, if expanded, it would be impractical for an MLA to travel across their constituency and effectively represent their constituents and be able to meet Albertans face to face on many occasions, to the minister: can you assure northern Albertans that this commission has their best interests in mind when assessing electoral boundaries?

The Speaker: Just a moment. Stop the clock for a second, please. I'll just remind the House that the particular line of questions is with respect to a matter which may not be the direct impact of the government, so I would caution both sides in terms of discussion on this item.

The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for what I think is a very important question. It's important that the Electoral Boundaries Commission represents all Albertans, which is why the legislation puts certain brackets around who can be on that commission and how it's set up. One of the interesting things about this particular act is that while only a certain amount of population variance is allowed, there are certain exceptions allowed for remote or northern ridings to ensure that MLAs are able to effectively represent their population, and those will be respected.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that a majority of the NDP seats are held in urban ridings and given that it would be in the best interests of this government to ensure that urban ridings are increased but that the rural ridings are combined and, as such, will hold fewer seats in the House, to the minister: are you trying to tilt the electoral boundaries in your favour to help you in the next provincial election?

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

I want to remind the House about the comment I made to the member earlier. It seems the last particular question – I'm going to wait to see the Blues on that. I'll address the point of order at the end.

Are there any other comments the minister would like to make on the matter?

Ms Ganley: Mr. Speaker, just that the Electoral Boundaries Commission is set up as an independent commission. We're happy to have them do their work, and we're happy to ensure that all Albertans have effective representation and fair representation.

The Speaker: The Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Rural Transportation Infrastructure

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a challenging time for rural Alberta. Many small towns are struggling, and businesses are being hit by the downturn in the economy. I have heard from my constituents in Wetaskiwin-Camrose that one of the challenges small towns currently face is aging infrastructure. These projects require significant investment that rural municipalities often cannot bear on their own. To the Minister of Transportation: what are you doing to help rural Alberta sustain their local transportation infrastructure?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government has chosen to significantly invest in improving infrastructure throughout the province – urban and rural, north and south – to help stimulate the economy and to keep Albertans working. As part of the Alberta jobs plan I'm happy to share that we're planning to restore funding to the strategic transportation infrastructure program, or STIP, after it was defunded by the previous government. Thirty five million dollars in STIP funding is going to be made available in 2017, if the budget is approved, and I'm looking forward to elaborating in my next question.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that STIP has existed for many years and some municipalities have asked for changes in the way it is delivered, to the same minister: what changes have you implemented to reflect the needs of rural municipalities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, this program will allow local and rural municipalities to invest in local bridges, local resource roads, and community-owned, publicly used airports. We consulted with multiple stakeholders, including my attendance at a workshop of AAMD and C in March. We have increased the eligibility for airports for lighting, and we have increased the eligibility for resource roads.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, to the same minister: can you speak to the timelines for when rural communities like Wetaskiwin and Camrose will be able to apply and access that funding?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We want to get projects under way in 2017. Applications are now open and the application deadline is February 3, 2017. We should see construction on approved projects this coming spring and summer, which means we will be taking advantage of the next construction season. We know these projects are important to rural Alberta to provide the jobs and the infrastructure that make those communities prosper.

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

School Fees

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's actions are frustrating Albertans. This government introduces and passes bills that they never campaigned on and which Albertans do not want, and then they do not fulfill the campaign promises that they actually made. This government campaigned on an education promise to lower school fees by 50 per cent, and then they, quote, consulted with stakeholders in education as to the best way to do this. Now, when they could actually keep a promise, the silence is deafening. When is this minister actually going to fulfill his education promises to the people of Alberta rather than breaking those promises?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question. We know that, certainly, school fees are difficult, and we know that in these economic circumstances there's even more of a burden on families, so we are certainly working hard to rationalize what school fees are being charged around the province, between school fees that might be for field trips and so forth and then base instructional fees. I know that I have, for example, the Fort McMurray trustees up here who very generously waived all school fees for the school year in Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo. I congratulate them for that.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Calgary's unemployment rate is now in double digits and given that the *Calgary Sun* has reported that there is a 58 per cent increase in families receiving school fee waivers because they cannot pay those fees and given that the Calgary board of education says that there has been a steady increase each year in fees waived since 2012, when will this minister recognize that Calgary families are struggling under the economic realities of today and work with the school boards to lower school fees?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the last part of that question is the essence of what we are doing, engaging with

school boards, not just in Calgary but around the province, to look for ways by which we can reduce school fees. Certainly, we have built it into our longer term budget to fulfill this campaign promise.

It's important to note that the choices we did make for this year were to fund for enrolment. If you don't do that, if you follow something like the Wildrose plan, you would be losing teachers and support staff and have an increase in school fees as well.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the carbon tax will increase transportation costs, heating costs, electricity costs, and extracurricular costs for schools and given that the minister has refused to provide an exemption for schools but is now making vague promises to access money from the NDP green slush fund created by the carbon tax, how is the minister actually going to keep his government's promises to reduce school fees that Albertan families can't afford to pay and which are the result of an NDP belief that you can tax people into prosperity?

Mr. Eggen: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, that's such a tangle of questions, but I'll try my best to work through. First of all, I will not apologize to advocate for monies to go to my schools in regard to building carbon leadership, and that's where it belongs. Carbon leadership belongs in the schools, and school boards have told me explicitly that they're happy to participate in that program. We will make sure that we have compensation. You can see already, as a measure of good faith, the 36 schools boards that we're putting in solar panels for. In regard to school fees: yes, we are going to reduce them as part of our campaign commitment.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

AAMDC Fall Convention Attendance by Cabinet

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nearly a week has passed since the AAMD and C fall convention, but I'm still hearing from rural leaders who are upset that only eight cabinet ministers chose to show up for their ministerial forum. Now, I know that the environment minister was off riding on the Marrakesh Express, and the economic development minister was on a non carbon-emitting slow boat to China, but that's left eight other ministers with some explaining to do. To the indigenous affairs minister: what pressing piece of government business kept you from attending AAMD and C?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I was caught in the airport for eight hours in Fort McMurray and missed the event. I am proud to say that I was in Fort McMurray for the oil sands gala honouring the heroes of the fire in the spring. It was a wonderful evening. We honoured many heroes, and I was very proud to spend time in Fort McMurray, unfortunately more in the airport than necessary.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the Leader of the Opposition drove to Edmonton to be there that morning while he sat in the airport, that's a pretty weak excuse for someone who shows so much strength in condemning others.

Let's move on. Now, given that the rural leaders also noted the absence of the Human Services minister and given that this led them to speculate that this minister must feel that there is no need to

answer to the pressing needs of rural Albertans who seek to obtain services from his department, to the minister: what pressing piece of government business kept you from attending AAMD and C?

The Speaker: The Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. I guess when the member was doing the counting, we were doing the real work. We were focused on the relationship that we had with municipalities, and our minister was working with . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: I thought we were going to make some records today and get further down the list, but the last five minutes have been very intense.

Can you finish your answer, and then we go to the second supplemental?

Mr. Sabir: I just wanted to say that we were focused on our relationship. We have a very capable minister who deals with the leaders from rural Alberta, and we are working on the priorities they are sharing.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure rural leaders will be interested to know that this minister doesn't consider consulting with them "real work."

Given that public safety is a major concern in all parts of Alberta and given that many rural leaders wanted to address the issues of mounting crime in their municipalities, the absence of the Solicitor General was also duly noted. Mr. Speaker, would the minister explain her scheduling decisions, or are rural leaders accurate when they say that you and your government must think that criminal activity never happens outside the big cities?

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'll begin by saying that of course we think that crime in every part of this province is important. That's why we invest more in policing than any of the other western provinces. That's why we have the ALERT model. On that particular day I was, in fact, in Red Deer, meeting with the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police to discuss such issues.

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

Rocky View County Roads

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite the best efforts of Alberta Transportation to make improvements to the intersection of highway 1 and highway 791, accidents are still happening. Ultimately this intersection needs to be converted to a proper interchange, and being a federal highway, federal building Canada fund money could be applied. Since I received your letter a week ago, can the Minister of Transportation also share with the Assembly the status of the interchange? How much national infrastructure component of the building Canada fund money will be applied to this project?

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, hon. member. Thank you very much for the question. Well, the safety of Albertans on our highways is of critical importance, and that particular intersection has some particular safety issues. I'm happy to talk to the member, as I have in the past, with respect to steps that we can take to improve safety for Albertans at this intersection and throughout, in fact, our whole system. We're looking at the phase 2 now of the

federal infrastructure program. When we receive details, we'll have a much better answer, and I'll be able to provide her with more information, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Given that the local high school is about a kilometre away from this dangerous intersection and given that young novice drivers are challenged to make a left-hand turn across two lanes of 110 kilometres an hour traffic, can the minister tell me when his department will hold community conversations with the residents of Chestermere on either installing Jersey barriers to convert the intersection to a right in, right out or force traffic on the Trans-Canada to slow down to 70 kilometres an hour for the traffic lights that will need to be installed as an interim measure?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, there are many potential solutions there, and we have implemented some additional lanes to allow for acceleration. We've looked at reducing the speed limit and installing lights. In fact, there's a considerable risk that that could increase the danger if people are expecting traffic to move slowly and it doesn't slow down. We have to be very careful about what that looks like. We're certainly in conversation on an ongoing basis with the city of Chestermere with respect to this matter.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Given that the Glenmore Trail, highways 8, 560, 791, and 797 are all provincial highways serving the commuters of Rocky View county and interfacing with county roads and the hamlet of Langdon and given that Alberta Transportation faces challenges with growing urban and suburban development, what agreements exist between Alberta Transportation and Rocky View county to fix the highways where growing development negatively impacts the highways along the provincial highway that may not fall within the highway rehabilitation timelines?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not quite sure I grasp the full intent of the question, but we're certainly working with all of our rural municipalities with respect to the intersection of provincial highways and local roads with respect to safety, and we're going to continue to do that, including in Rocky View county.

The Speaker: Hon. members, my apology. I skipped a member on the speaking list.

The Member for Calgary-Klein.

Renewable Energy Strategy

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents agree that we all have a stake in ensuring long-term environmental sustainability, but they are also concerned about the current economic challenges we are facing here in Alberta. The Minister of Environment and Parks attended COP22 in Marrakesh last week and met with global leaders and companies looking to invest in clean energy. To the Minister of Environment and Parks: what can Albertans expect from the global renewable energy market?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we heard loud and clear after meetings with the World Bank, international investors, and others is that there is a \$23 trillion private-sector investment opportunity as the world moves towards addressing climate change. What that will mean for Albertans is that we'll be creating good jobs in Calgary, in places to address our methane emissions, for example, in clean tech, in efficiency, both on the engineering side and on the construction side. You know, we're opening the door to those kinds of investments because we're not ideologically opposed to taking action on climate change.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Albertans are eager to get back to work to support their families, to the same minister: how will our government's climate leadership plan bring investment to Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the 30 per cent renewable generation target by 2030 opens the door to a minimum of \$10 billion of investment and a minimum of 7,200 jobs throughout Alberta. I mean, this is a nonideological economic undertaking. That's why people like Iowa Republican Senator Chuck Grassley says that clean electricity creates good-paying jobs for Iowans, boosts farm lease receipts, and grows the revenue base. Kansas Republican Governor Sam Brownback says that Kansas is not just the wheat state; it is the renewables state. I wish that the Wildrose were similarly interested . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what are companies saying about investing in renewable energy in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the VP of Siemens Canada says that Alberta gives the industry something to focus on in Alberta. The VP of a U.S.-based renewable company, Colin Edwards, says that Alberta is a dream place to build, not the least of which because of our skilled labour. Now, I know that the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake just two weeks ago in this House called these companies "hogs [at] the trough," but we call them job creators. We look forward to working with those companies to create good jobs for Albertans.

Members' Statements (continued)

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Indigenous Community Environmental Initiatives

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Treaty 7 Grand Chief Charles Weasel Head recently joined the Minister of Environment and Parks on the mission to Marrakesh to talk about the importance of collaboration among different orders of government in addressing climate change and to speak about indigenous efforts on adaptation and mitigation. A key take away was that indigenous communities around the world face similar challenges of having enough capacity to address the impacts of climate change while having the opportunity to take advantage of economic opportunities and job

creation through renewable energy development. We all understand the serious threat of climate change, not just for our own communities but for the whole planet, Chief Weasel Head said.

First Nations and indigenous communities have an important resource, their traditional knowledge. These traditional systems of adapting to extreme weather like drought and floods are shared and protected among elders. Collaboration and knowledge sharing is key, Chief Weasel Head says, and about also respecting treaty rights and ensuring that indigenous communities are included in decision-making early on. The Kainai First Nation is working with the University of Lethbridge to assess ways to mitigate emissions and adapt agricultural and ranching practices, develop training programs, and find alternative transportation choices. In Marrakesh it was really important to hear what is going on globally, but it's also important to go back to our communities and see what we can do, he said.

The economic benefits for First Nations in Alberta are great, particularly when it comes to jobs and revenue from renewable energy projects like wind and solar. The governments of Canada and especially Alberta have been very co-operative in helping the Kainai nation develop ways to engage with industry on renewable energy projects, and Chief Weasel Head hopes to see some of the projects come to fruition in the coming years.

I'm proud to be part of a government that will collaborate meaningfully with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis so we may all continue to carve a respectful path for all our peoples as we move Alberta forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Genomics Research and Methane Reduction

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Albertans ramp up their efforts to go green and our government takes the lead on climate change, we often talk about what we can all do to meet the challenge. I would like to point out to all members that in addition to our government's latest initiatives, Alberta researchers are working diligently to find new ways to meet the challenges of climate change head-on.

Livestock operations are often cited as a major contributor to methane emissions, but researchers led by Genome Alberta, a not-for-profit research funding agency at the University of Alberta, are using genetics to reduce the emissions from dairy and beef cattle: fewer burps and belches, it is often said, with tongue firmly planted in cheek. With funding from the government of Alberta and matching federal and industry funding, research has been under way since October 2015 to find the genetic markers that will make livestock more feed efficient. On-farm operations such as Sunalta and U of A teams led by researchers Dr. John Basarab and Dr. Paul Stothard are hard at work to increase feed efficiency in cattle, which in turn reduces emissions. Their work has the potential to reduce emissions by 11,000 tonnes per year, which could mean as much as a 26 per cent reduction in agricultural methane emissions in Canada over 10 years.

With the strong support of the government of Alberta, Genome Alberta has been able to take \$7.7 million in provincial core funding and leverage it into \$155 million worth of research over its first 10 years. Most of this funding has stayed in the province to support research jobs, bolster genetics research at our academic institutions, and add to the diversification of the Alberta economy.

In early 2017 Genome Alberta will be part of an \$85 million national funding competition to bring clinical genetics into the health care system through personalized medicine. We wish Alberta

researchers the best of success in this new research funding competition that will be at the forefront of using precision genomics technology to improve the health and well-being of all Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Educational Curriculum Review

Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I held a consultation in my constituency to hear what Albertans want to see in the revised curriculum. I'd like to thank the parents, teachers, and students who attended and told me clearly that they want a 21st-century curriculum that will reflect the current realities of Alberta and the most up-to-date teaching methods.

At my consultation I was happy to hear a wide variety of opinions on education, from parents asking for consent-based sexual education to teachers asking for updated art, drama, and music programming to students asking to not be limited to a certain amount of credits if they choose to take two or more languages. One thing nearly everyone agreed on is the need for more specialized teachers and smaller class sizes, which is why I'm proud to be a part of a government that puts public education and students first. We are committed to consistent and stable funding through tough economic times, in contrast to the opposition, who believes that firing teachers and school staff will somehow invigorate the economy.

With a properly funded education system we are supporting our youth, and we will continue to have the strong, intelligent workforce that Alberta is known for, but there are changes that need to happen. Teaching outdated and oftentimes problematic concepts to our students reflects poorly on our province, which is why revising the curriculum is so important. The revised curriculum and our government's stable funding will give our students the tools they'll need to succeed in the future, whether they choose to go to university, a polytechnic, or head straight right into the workforce.

Thank you.

Conservatism

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, nearly two years ago a majority of the members of the former Official Opposition abandoned their duty to hold the government to account and to stand strong for the conservative values that their constituents elected them to represent. Their shortcut to power and promise of cabinet was short-lived when Albertans overwhelmingly rejected politicians who put themselves and not Albertans first. I believed then that for conservatism itself to be saved, the Wildrose must be saved, and here we are with 22 MLAs and the strongest Official Opposition in a generation. We have stood by our principles, and we have stood for Alberta first.

Putting Alberta first means putting Alberta before ourselves. It means putting Alberta before our parties. It even means putting Alberta before our constituents. It means doing what's right, not necessarily what's popular. It means boldly looking to the future while anchoring our values and moral compass in the greatest achievements of our history.

Alberta is the beating heart of conservatism. From Ernest Manning to Ralph Klein to Stephen Harper, Alberta has been the cornerstone of the conservative movement across Canada that others have looked to for strength.

2:50

As a growing number of us no longer saw ourselves reflected in our government over the last decade, the conservative movement

nationally has suffered. Conservatives across Canada look to us again to show strength and leadership. They are looking to us to demonstrate the vitality of the conservative movement, and here at home they are looking to us to put Alberta first.

Ronald Reagan coined the 11th commandment when he said: thou shalt not speak ill of any fellow conservative. I've been guilty of breaking that commandment. After a year and a half of socialist rule Albertans expect us to be better than that. Our history demands that we aspire to something better. Alberta was built by great men and women who stood by the strength of their convictions. Alberta was built by great men and women who put Alberta first, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I need to remind you again that in Members' Statements there's been a practice – and I think it's a good one for this House – not to make any comments. I heard a few more today. So, again, please practise what the practice has been here in the past.

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to give oral notice of a motion for tomorrow's Order Paper, the motion being as follows:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1), commencing November 28, 2016, the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business for the duration of the Second Session of the 29th Legislature 2016 fall sitting unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motion in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

Bill 32

Credit Union Amendment Act, 2016

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Credit Union Amendment Act, 2016.

Credit unions are an important part of Alberta's finance industry and communities. The proposed bill includes amendments that will modernize and strengthen the credit union system and help them continue to contribute to a growing and vibrant Alberta well into the future. These amendments aim to improve consumer choice, encourage economic growth, and strengthen governance and accountability within the province's credit union system.

I said earlier that there are members of the credit union system who are here to witness this near-historic event because this act hasn't been changed in over 30 years.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the five copies of the article that I referenced yesterday in my member's statement, *The Unbearable Smugness of the Press*.

The Speaker: The Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several documents to table in response to comments from the Minister of Energy that windmills for power generation do not kill birds. I've got some documents, many of them peer-reviewed, to the contrary. The first is Wind Energy Development, which shows that wind power can have a negative impact on both birds and bats through fatalities or displacement or habitat loss.

I have a document titled mitigating wind energy impacts. This paper approaches ways to reduce, although not eliminate, the deaths of birds and bats caused by wind farms.

I have a paper titled research priorities for wind energy. This paper talks about mitigating the damage caused by wind farms to migrating animals.

I have a document titled Bird Communities and Wind Farms. This paper uses an extensive database of bird fatalities at a wind farm in Mexico to examine ways to further reduce bird fatalities.

I have a document titled white-tailed eagles. This paper examines the white-tailed eagle deaths in Norway caused by windmills. They did not show any clear evidence of avoidance flight responses to wind turbines.

I have a document titled estimation of bird fatalities at wind farms. In Japan protected species of birds are examined. They found 52 dead birds in a 17-month period at this particular wind farm.

I have a document titled a collision risk model. This paper predicts avian fatalities, which they say are a leading concern for wind farms.

I have a document titled prioritizing avian species. This paper talks about the decline in population for those species that are long-lived with low rates of reproduction. This examines 428 different avian species located in the United States that are at risk. They point out that the golden eagle was at high risk of population decline.

I have a document titled ABC's bird-smart. This paper examines how poorly proposed and existing wind farms can harm the environment. They list ways to prevent death through preconstruction risk assessment and science-based decision-making.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a document titled Canadian estimate of bird mortality. This paper estimates that eight birds were killed per year per turbine at wind farms in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Energy takes the time to read these documents.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I believe we had a point of order earlier today. I think it was the Government House Leader's.

Point of Order

Allegations against Members

Mr. Mason: It was indeed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Well, I rise under Standing Order 23. I'm going to go with (j), and I'm certainly going to go with 23(i) as well, and I guess (h), too. So we'll go for all three of them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, during question period today the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti asked a number of questions of the Minister of Justice, and his second supplemental question, his final question, contained an allegation or implied an allegation that the government was doing something to prejudice the outcome of the Electoral Boundaries Commission's report in its favour.

I've got the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act here. First of all, the chair is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and it must be someone who's either

- (i) the Ethics Commissioner;

- (ii) the Auditor General;
- (iii) the president of a post-secondary educational institution . . .
- (iv) a judge or retired judge of any court . . .
- (v) a person whose stature and qualifications are, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, similar to those persons referred to in subclauses (i) to (iv).

Mr. Speaker, we have, of course, appointed a respected judge as chair of that commission.

Then the other four members are appointed by yourself, Mr. Speaker, "on the nomination of the Leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition in consultation with the leaders of the other opposition parties represented in the [Legislature]." I'm certain that the Official Opposition fulfilled their duty with regard to that section. So two of the five are appointed by you, Mr. Speaker, on the recommendation of the Official Opposition, and two are appointed by you on the nomination of the President of Executive Council.

3:00

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are other requirements as was referred to, specifically that there must be rural and urban representation amongst the commission and so on. So to suggest with no evidence whatsoever that the government is somehow trying to structure an Electoral Boundaries Commission to provide a biased outcome is an outrageous allegation, and it reflects not just on all members of the Assembly but on yourself as well as the person who makes the final appointments. I think it's very important for the work of that commission that the hon. member apologize and withdraw those comments contained in his second supplemental question because without any evidence whatsoever the hon. member has now called into question not just the government appointees but all appointees, including the Official Opposition's recommendations to yourself as well as the chair, who is a judge.

I don't think we can allow that to pass, and I would urge that you rule in favour of my point of order and that the hon. member withdraw those comments and apologize.

The Speaker: The House leader for the third party.

Mr. Rodney: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it quite baffling that with the wealth of experience of the hon. Government House Leader he has to take the rest of question period until he stands up to flip open his Standing Orders and choose, oh, I don't know, "I'm going to go with (j)" – that is what he said – and to add the others. You know, we need to do our homework before we come to this Legislature, and obviously that was not done in this case.

It's quite obvious from the questions, if you have the opportunity to review the Blues, sir, that the hon. member was simply inquiring about an issue that is directly related to an act passed in this Legislature. He has every right to do that. He was asking a question related to which the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General is responsible.

You know, I can tell you that, again, question 1, he was simply trying to ask why the government had not appointed anyone from rural northern Alberta to the commission. He was also attempting to understand why, in the minds of many people from rural and northern Alberta, they had been ignored in that choice. He wasn't asking about the commission and its work but the choice of this government. That's government policy. It was not directed at any government member, which is directly related to 23(h), (i), and (j). Therefore, it does not apply.

Mr. Speaker, you know this as well as anyone. Rural Albertans matter, and the hon. member was simply asking the exact questions that his rural Alberta constituents are asking. That is his job. It will

be a sad day indeed if a point of order is ever ruled such that the questions that affect Albertans are ruled out of order.

The Speaker: Hon. member, you seem to be . . .

Mr. Rodney: Answering the question.

The Speaker: Hon. member, would you please be seated while I'm standing, with respect.

You seem to be arguing the point that was raised rather than the substance with respect to the standing order. Could you get to the final point in terms of why you believe that I should rule against the point of order that was raised?

Mr. Rodney: It's because the sections he picked don't apply, sir.

I will end with this. Questions are regularly asked about third parties, quasi-judicial bodies, agencies, boards, and commissions, and much more. There is no point of order here, Mr. Speaker, and I trust that you will simply rule as such.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, do you have any comments?

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, you know, if it's your wish for me to apologize, I will do that. I just found it strange that nobody from the whole northern half of this province sits on that commission, and that was my question. The whole northern half of the province isn't represented.

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise. Well, there may have been the opportunity for the Government House Leader to take some objection to the fact that they were asked to answer a question based upon a set of facts that they're really not responsible for on the role of the commission. There may have been a point of order on that. What we're currently discussing because of the citation that the Government House Leader used was clearly a matter of debate. My hon. colleague didn't use abusive or insulting language likely to create disorder. He merely asked a question about it.

As has been said by numerous speakers, sometimes we have to accept two versions of the facts. That is what I would encourage you to do today. This is clearly a matter of debate. If he had raised a point of order about a piece of policy that was beyond the control of the government, perhaps that would be different.

The Speaker: Well, hon. members, if I might, to the last point made by the Official Opposition House Leader, had I not interjected on the first supplemental question, the case might well be made, but I did caution the House. I have read the Blues, which I have. The question in this instance, which was addressed to the government, is: "Are you trying to tilt the electoral boundaries in your favour to help you in the next provincial election?"

In fact, I do recall this matter with some clarity. Under the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act it is very clear – and I quote – that two persons are appointed by the Speaker of the Legislature. Members are appointed, the first two being nominees from the government, the next two by the Official Opposition. In fact, I can recall the discussion with the Official Opposition House Leader to ensure that the third party was consulted in this matter.

With respect, hon. member, I would request in this instance that you consider an apology to the House. It would be appropriate, in my opinion.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I won't apologize for representing the whole northern half of Alberta, but I will apologize to you and this House for my actions.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 30

Investing in a Diversified Alberta Economy Act

[Debate adjourned November 22]

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any members who wish to speak to Bill 30? The Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, please proceed.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to stand and . . .

The Speaker: Could we just pause a second while the members exit? Stop the clock. Thank you.

Proceed.

Mr. Hunter: Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to stand and speak on Bill 30, Investing in a Diversified Alberta Economy Act. I'd like to start off by saying what I like about this bill. I think it is an opportunity that we as the Official Opposition offer positive remarks when warranted. Alberta is facing a jobs and economic crisis, so I view this bill as an attempt to take a step to address this crisis.

While I don't support attacking our oil and gas industry, I do support positive initiatives to diversify our economy. I'm pleased that this bill targets developing industries more generally and isn't simply another exercise of corporate welfare where the government singles out a specific company for benefits here and there.

I appreciate that this bill calls for tax credits to be issued rather than grants. Grants would imply more taxpayer dollars being spent, which need to come from the private sector in the first place, and that private sector is struggling. This province also has a debt problem and needs to watch its spending. Grants can be important for some nonprofit organizations, but here we are talking about businesses that do make a profit if they are successful.

3:10

A loan is another alternative to a grant, and I'm glad the government isn't expecting businesses to take out government loans and then pay them back. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that this bill provides tax credits and lets businesses keep money they've fairly earned.

To the members opposite I'd like to say thank you for their work on putting together this bill. However, I do hope that they will listen to me offer some concerns and suggestions that I have. While the bill targets industries more generally, the AITC aspect seems to be narrowly targeted at specific industries. I would appreciate some explanation as to why specific industries were targeted over others. I hope that there are no conflicts of interest involved here, Mr. Speaker. Why is an agribusiness eligible, for example?

An issue that I'm personally interested in, Mr. Speaker, is red tape. Paperwork can get very onerous for businesses. This bill is lengthy, and we don't have the regulations yet, so I'm worried that this act will be too complicated to be useful to Albertans. I also think that awarding these credits on a first-come, first-served basis will increase the chances of businesses making errors because they might be acting with haste. While we want to create jobs now, we also want sustainable job creation.

I'm also concerned about all the hoops that companies have to jump through and then make a deal before they even get confirmation that they will get a credit. They have to go through registration, receive approval from the minister to change a share structure, and receive approval from the minister to raise capital. The minister may impose conditions such as how many employees the business has or what their wages are before an investment is permitted. This seems a bit like bureaucratic micromanagement, but I look forward to the minister illuminating this House as to why they are necessary.

I hope that as the regulations associated with this bill get crafted, the government will put themselves in the shoes of business owners. The eligibility requirements for this tax credit should be clear and transparent. I also hope that the registration process and the process to obtain those credits will be clear and uncomplicated. It seems to me that the minister is more involved than should be necessary. My fear is that there is still too much discretion to select the actual businesses that will receive the credits. Who gets the credits should be established with objective criteria.

In the bill there is a clause giving the minister the discretion to refund the excess amount of the tax credit over the Alberta tax otherwise payable. I hate to say it, Mr. Speaker, but that does sound like cronyism. I think that all governments should be mindful when they pass legislation that they won't always be the government in power. So while in power it might be nice for oneself to have more power and discretion, but do you really want the subsequent government, that may be formed by members of a political party that you don't support, to have that same broad power and discretion to pick winners and losers? I think not.

I think the focus needs to be on ensuring that this legislation actually leads to more investment in the economy. If investors are too skeptical about whether they'll end up receiving the tax credit or not, they might not take the risk.

British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and some states in the United States have similar investment tax credit programs. Has the government taken a look at those and done comparisons to see what works and what doesn't? If so, will they share this research with the public? If not, why not?

In addition to a cross-jurisdictional comparison, is there an economic analysis that has been done? If so, can we see it? If not, why can't we see it?

Finally, are there any measures in place to evaluate the success after the first year to see if we are actually creating jobs and investments or just giving tax dollars away?

While I think the government took a step in the right direction by introducing this bill, I hope they will take another step that I can support, which would be to listen in good faith to the amendments proposed by the opposition as we debate this bill. That could lead to helpful amendments and, I think, lead to a good piece of legislation that will benefit all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any questions of the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing no one, the Member for Edmonton-Centre to speak to the motion.

Mr. Shepherd: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and have the opportunity to speak to Bill 30. You know, recently I had the opportunity to attend the Startup Canada awards, which were held here in Edmonton. While I was there, I had the opportunity to speak to Dr. Randy Yatscoff, who is the executive vice-president in business development with TEC Edmonton, TEC Edmonton being a group that supports entrepreneurs and innovators here in our city.

As I was talking with Dr. Yatscoff, I asked him his thoughts on the bill as proposed and on the work of our Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As I spoke with him, he had very high praise for the minister. He said that this was a minister who finally gets it. He spoke of how proud he was of the work that the minister had been doing in meeting with stakeholders and discussing the parameters of this legislation, conversations that I know he's been having quite a few of since we first discussed the possibility of these credits in our budget earlier this year.

I know that the minister has been working hard to consult with stakeholders. In fact, I can assure all members of this House that we worked especially closely with stakeholders here in Alberta, in particular the Calgary Chamber and other chambers across the province, to create the Alberta investor tax credit, a credit that they have been asking for and, as Dr. Yatscoff noted to me when I spoke with him, that they have been asking for for years in this province and that other provinces have been enjoying for decades.

It's our intention that this legislation be as broad as possible to provide the greatest benefit to investors, job creators, and their employees. Our proposed Alberta investor tax credit would be applicable across sectors and would offer a 30 per cent tax credit to investors who provide capital to Alberta companies doing research, development, or commercialization of new technology, new products, or new processes in sectors including but not limited to renewable energy, manufacturing or processing, agriculture, agribusiness and agrifood, transportation and logistics, financial services, and the creative industries.

To put it simply, this legislation will keep eligibility criteria as broad as possible and allow investment and business leaders to make the best decisions to help diversify our economy and create good jobs for Alberta's families. In fact, based on conservative calculations, we know that this credit would support up to 4,400 new jobs over three years and contribute up to \$500 million to the province's GDP. We will be sharing the outcomes of this tax credit in future years pending the passage of this legislation.

I want Alberta business leaders and investors to know that they can be confident that Alberta will continue to be an investment leader because we are listening and working together to build an economy for the future. I also want them to know that their views matter and that we are open to finding the best way to ensure this tax credit works for them. Despite the stubbornly low oil prices Alberta's GDP remains the highest per capita among provinces, and we are still attracting the highest level of private investment in Canada. In fact, per capita investment in Alberta today is more than double the national average, and we are on track to hit record levels of investment in a variety of sectors. We want Alberta to continue to be Canada's best place to invest in business growth, and that's why we are listening to Alberta workers, economic experts, and business leaders to support even more investment in the province.

I look forward to having the opportunity to speak some more to this credit as we move forward with this bill. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud under 29(2)(a)?

Dr. Turner: Yes, sir. And Edmonton-Whitemud is the most beautiful riding in the city.

The Speaker: I know. I'm told that very often.

Dr. Turner: Thank you for the opportunity to ask some questions of the MLA for Edmonton-Centre. Dr. Randy Yatscoff is a constituent of mine, and I wanted to provide a little bit of background on Dr. Yatscoff. Dr. Yatscoff is the president of TEC Edmonton, but prior to that he was the CEO and chief research

pharmaceutical company that was successfully developing a substitute immunosuppressant that would replace a drug called cyclosporin, which has a lot of toxicities that make doing things like kidney transplants very difficult.

3:20

It's interesting that another physician here in Edmonton just received the Prix Galien, which is the top lifetime research award from the Canadian pharmaceutical association, for the work that he did on this same drug. Dr. Yatscoff is a very good witness to what we need in this province for developing new opportunities and supporting our entrepreneurs. I'd like to hear a bit more about what Dr. Yatscoff had to say about this bill.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud for the question. As I said, when I spoke with Dr. Yatscoff, he was quite open with his praise for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, noting that the minister had spent quite a bit of time consulting with the community and talking with people in the technology field, innovators, investors here in Edmonton and across the province. He spoke of a trip they had taken to California to have the opportunity to see the tech sector there, the kind of investments that were being made, and to discuss the kinds of opportunities that are available here in our province as well. Certainly, it was an excellent evening that I had the chance to spend with him there.

The Startup Canada awards for the prairie region did celebrate and recognize several businesses here in Edmonton and around Alberta who are, as the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud discussed, innovating particularly in the field of health services with some very innovative, I think, products that are being distributed around the world and have great opportunity for us to continue to grow that sector of our economy. This credit is something that's going to help build on that by encouraging further investment, providing the start-ups – these innovators, these people who represent the real spirit of Alberta – with more opportunity to be able to develop their ideas, to innovate their products, and to share those with markets around the world.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other questions for the Member for Edmonton-Centre under 29(2)(a)?

Are there any other members who would wish to speak to second reading of Bill 30?

[Motion carried; Bill 30 read a second time]

Bill 25 Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act

Mr. Drysdale moved on behalf of Mr. Rodney 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 it be read a second time this day six months hence.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment November 23: Mrs. Aheer speaking]

The Speaker: Is there any member who wishes to speak to the amendment to second reading of Bill 25? The Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the amendment, an amendment that would give the opportunity for the government to do the right thing, an amendment that would provide the government an opportunity to heed their own advice in many respects.

You know, we saw this government propose what they are talking about, being a very important multistakeholder consultation group in the form of OSAG. I'm sure that there are literally dozens of people watching at home, and for their sake OSAG is the oil sands advisory group. I know that sometimes we in this House have our own sort of language around different abbreviations.

This particular group, OSAG, has been identified and put into place to try and provide some feedback and information on ways to proceed in the oil sands industry. We've seen all sorts of extremists appointed to this organization, many of which we certainly have some concerns around, those who have lobbied and actively campaigned against Alberta's resource industry. So, obviously, we have some reservations about this particular advisory group.

But that being said, Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face is that the government is legislating on something prior to hearing from this group, on which they have placed a lot of weight. They've spoken at length about the need to hear from all stakeholders, and they've made excuses for those who have campaigned actively against our resource industry, saying that these are important stakeholders to hear from and that that's why they've been appointed to this particular advisory group. While I fully accept that that is the case, then why not actually listen to them?

What this amendment does is provide an opportunity for the government to do just that. It provides them an additional six months for the oil sands advisory group to report back. There has been significant investment in this organization, significant investment in terms of resources that they're going to need to be able to provide information to the government, yet the government seems a hundred per cent committed to charging forward on this piece of legislation.

Now, I wouldn't want to presuppose the recommendation of OSAG, but it's my guess that even the recommendations that come back, given that they've appointed many of their friends and closest allies – my guess is that the information is going to come back and report something very similar, that the government has done an incredible job of capping emissions. Some would say that that's capping our future. I will say that in just a couple of minutes. You know, my guess is that when the report comes back, it will support their position, but that doesn't mean that we should not allow them to report back in a timely manner that can influence this very, very important piece of legislation, that in many respects will curb Alberta's future, that will guide the policy in the oil sands over the next number of years until, hopefully, there's a new government and the cap can be removed.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the very best thing about this piece of legislation is the ease with which it can be undone. Just as they are placing a cap, a cap can be removed. But the real risk is in the period of time between the implementation of the cap and as we see capital flee to other jurisdictions because of the uncertainty that this legislation creates with respect to what may happen in the future around the ability for additional investment in the region.

Now, I know that there are a number of organizations who have spoken quite highly about a cap on emissions, but, Mr. Speaker, most of those organizations, particularly the industry side of those organizations, stand to receive the most benefit from driving away competition in their marketplace from a cap just like this. If the government is going to legislate in a manner that provides certainty to – I don't know – let's just say, four big companies, why wouldn't they want to support this? It provides a disincentive to new investment in their market share. We often hear the government

speak about that. I'd like to know how much consultation they did with other relatively significant industry players but not the big four, the ones they like to speak the most highly about.

3:30

I know I've spoken in the House, Mr. Speaker, about some of what very well could be the unintended consequences of legislation like this, when you've guaranteed certain players a significant ability to grow and really not have to be as innovative as they may have otherwise been to try and be more competitive because they're going to get the lion's share of the growth in emissions. It's quite possible, as my colleague and friend from Drumheller-Stettler says when speaking about legislation, that there can be unintended consequences of legislation. I'm curious to know if the government has really taken any time to consider just that.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that the oil sands advisory group might be able to provide some feedback to the government on is just that, the unintended consequences of this legislation and whether or not there's a possibility that innovation will actually decrease because of lack of competition in the marketplace, less requirement to be competitive, because the lion's share of the emissions are going to be made available to the four companies that are already the largest players in the region. It presents a real challenge to other players in the industry. It presents a real challenge to Alberta, frankly.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday you were able to meet a young lady who's concerned about just this. Well, it may not be her specific concern, the emissions cap. Her concern is around the economy and what's happening here in Alberta. A bill like this does not help the economy grow. A bill like this does not help the economy grow; it will do the opposite. We see people like Jorja Fisher expressing their concern about the direction that the government is taking with respect to our economy, with respect to our energy industry and the impact that the energy industry has on our province.

This government is steadfast in their commitment to cap these industries' opportunity. Mr. Speaker, Alberta has long been a haven of free enterprisers, a haven of the entrepreneurial spirit, with the freedom to create, the freedom to grow industry. Alberta has long been a haven that has created a desire amongst its people to expand. The whole time that we've done that, we've done that in one of the most environmentally responsible ways in all of our neighbouring jurisdictions and, frankly, the world. That doesn't mean that there are no improvements that need to or could be made, because we can always do more.

Mr. Speaker, you've heard me say this before in this House: at the heart of being a conservative is the need to conserve. The very first environmentalists were the ranchers, the farmers across our province, that knew we needed to take care of the land this year so that we would have the land to be able to provide next year. That in many ways has been the foundation of resource extraction in our province.

Now, that doesn't mean it's perfect, but putting a cap on our ability is not the path forward to creating balance between economic reality and responsible energy development. We have this significant overreach by this government trying to put their hand on every aspect of our economy, trying to engage in industry in the way that should be left to entrepreneurs and to the innovators, and creating a circumstance that really limits Alberta's potential to grow.

So I encourage the government to take a pause on this. I know that the government often – I almost said “always,” but that might not be true – believes that the opposition is only out to get them, that the opposition is only here to sabre-rattle and try and score political points, but, Mr. Speaker, I can point to a whole bunch of points where the opposition's goal and desire is to create a better Alberta. The problem is that when we bring things to the House, the government

– you know, their immediate reaction is: well, the opposition has said it; it can't be a good thing. But there are lots of examples where we have provided meaningful ideas, and to the government's credit I think that maybe twice they've listened.

But here is an opportunity. Some would say that three times is a charm. Here is a charm that is an opportunity, a place where the government can make a difference. They can go out to Albertans – I know, Mr. Speaker, that during the last provincial election I knocked on doors and said: “Hi. I'm Nathan Cooper. I'm running to be your MLA in the next provincial election.” There wasn't one person who said: “You know what we need, Nathan? We need a cap on oil sands emissions.” It didn't happen. It didn't happen. The people of Alberta are not asking the government to create a cap on emissions.

The Speaker: Hon. member, as an individual with so much experience in this House, the use of your own name is really inappropriate in the House.

Mr. Cooper: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure. I didn't see you rise, so I wasn't sure if you were speaking to me or heckling me. But, with that said, I would never want to use the name of any member of this House, including that of myself, so for that, to you, sir, I withdraw the use of the words “Nathan Cooper” and apologize unreservedly.

Mr. Speaker, a cap on our future is not what the outstanding constituents of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills were asking for when the now current Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills was knocking on their door.

The Speaker: Are there any questions for the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills under 29(2)(a)? Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm curious to know from the hon. member for the outstanding riding of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills: what exactly were people concerned about when you were knocking on their door?

Mr. Cooper: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'll definitely make sure that this is relevant to the debate because rarely were they chatting – I might just add that I'm glad that other members of the House are beginning to understand just how outstanding the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills is. You know what? They were talking to me about good government. They recognized that the prices of our commodities weren't the government's fault, just as they are not this government's fault today, but they were asking about things like not making our economic situation worse. They were concerned about jobs and the economy.

3:40

They were concerned about our energy industry. They wanted to know that they would have a government that had their backs, not a government that would in the first days of their reign be attacking industry, not a government that would be implementing a carbon tax that they didn't campaign on, not a government that would be taking runs at all different types of sectors in this province. They wanted a government that knew that Alberta's primary economic driver was the energy industry and that we ought to do what we can to assist that industry. So far the constituents of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills have been very disappointed. I'm sure there are a few that haven't been, but the vast majority – I want to try and represent everyone, so I recognize that there are a few of them, like, at least half a dozen, that are pleased with the government's role.

An Hon. Member: About 1 per cent.

Mr. Cooper: About 1 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

The vast majority of them are expressing to me disappointment about the way that the government has gone and attacked our industry. Here's an opportunity for the government to take a step back, put a pause on the cap, and really re-evaluate the best path forward for our province.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask the member how many constituents are in the constituency . . .

An Hon. Member: The outstanding constituency.

Ms McLean: Yes, the outstanding constituency, you know, which I certainly agree with.

. . . of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, as that was his poll, potentially, and whether or not he has had the opportunity, I suppose, to door-knock in some other fine constituencies. His door-knocking seems to suggest that he has only done that in the run-up to the election, which is interesting, in fact, given that, you know, the issues of the day at the time were significant, certainly. However, some of the issues of today were not perhaps fodder at the door at the time. Really, I'd like to know the size of his poll, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cooper: Obviously, some polls are bigger than others.

Let me tell you, hon. minister, that I have spent a lot of time . . . [interjections] Easy, easy. I have spent a lot of time knocking on doors since the election . . .

Ms McLean: How many?

Mr. Cooper: Thousands.

Ms McLean: How many? You don't know the number . . .

The Speaker: Hon. minister.

Mr. Cooper: There are well over 30,000 constituents in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. I have spent a lot of time since the election knocking on a lot of doors, holding town halls, and speaking to people about the economic damage that this government is doing. I can tell you that a cap is not what they're asking for, and larger polls is also not what they're asking for.

The Speaker: Not sure where the rest of the story was going to go. The hon. leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was highly entertained when the minister, as my old English teacher would say, left her participle dangling.

Mr. Speaker, on to the amendment before us. I rise to speak in favour, and there have been some good points here that I've heard in the last few minutes. Really, what needs to be seriously considered is: how will this affect the future of Alberta? When you consider the cap, it's been noted before that 100 is a pretty round number, which does really speak to the fact that when the government came up with the number, it doesn't seem to be – and it's not indicated in the bill – actually based on anything. It doesn't seem to be based on any need or want. It's more, I think, checking a box of some promise somebody made, but the work hasn't been put into it to actually know. I'm not sure a cap is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, but even if there was one, you would hope that it would be based on some thought and some science and some research, and

with the round number like 100, with none of the research included in the bill nor presented in this House by any of the government members, one can only assume that it hasn't been done. That alone is a good enough reason to support this amendment.

You know, Mr. Speaker, 100 megatonnes is one and a half times the emissions right now. You can see, really, why the current large oil sands companies would be in favour of that, because it essentially locks out other large projects. Here's what I believe that we all know about this. The oil sands are probably the world's largest environmental cleanup in history in the fact that the industry is doing that. But the projects are very large, Mr. Speaker. In fact, just to give some context to that, the projects that get built in the oil sands are so large that the government of Alberta has actually created pieces of legislation to make it possible for them to get built. What I mean by that is that I can say from my time as labour minister once upon a time, I made I think it's section 30 in the labour code. Even if I don't have the section number right – and I apologize if I don't have it right – I can explain what it is. It's something quite unique in the labour code because most of the businesses in Alberta make a choice whether they use a non-union shop, or in some cases that would be a Merit Contractors model, or a fully unionized shop with the building trades or work with the progressive contractors in CLAC.

Well, in the oil sands projects, Mr. Speaker, we've actually got legislation where to get the projects built, all three of these groups are allowed to work on the same site together, and they've all signed off on each other working there. Why? Because the sites are so big. There is so much work. Each of the groups, each of the labour groups recognizes that no one is going to invest that amount of money, that number of billions of dollars, into a project unless they can be sure that they're not going to have labour stoppages. In case any of the labour groups can't provide all the labour, they don't want to make it impossible for those projects to get built because each of their groups gets so much labour and so much work that none of them wants to take that away from themselves or each other. I say that just to explain just how massive the projects in the oil sands are.

Consequently, when someone has to sink that many billions of dollars into a project with, you know, the companies up there tell me, a payback of 50 or 60 years, I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, who's going to do that in an environment where the emissions are capped on day one and when they don't know how much of those emissions the people that are already there are going to use up. Who's going to put \$8 billion or \$6 billion or \$10 billion into a project that you are not even guaranteed that you can run at full capacity for a number of years to get your money back, to get your investment back? That really highlights for me just what a bad idea this cap is and how much thought has not gone into it by this government.

Further, right now we're talking about blocking future development, future jobs for Alberta families. We're talking about blocking future revenue for the Alberta government, which, if they're wise, will put it to good use. That is actually limiting the potential of Alberta, where Alberta's government should actually be expanding the potential of Alberta, actually reaching for the sky and challenging Albertans, and, oh, getting out of the way so that they can actually build a bigger, brighter, better Alberta with more opportunities for their children and grandchildren. This seems to do exactly the opposite.

3:50

That's why this amendment should be supported in the long term but even in the shorter term, Mr. Speaker. There was an election south of the border recently where a soon-to-be President of the United States has said quite clearly and openly that he supports the

Keystone XL pipeline. Again, there is another opportunity for Alberta families for jobs, for opportunity to create futures for children and grandchildren, and another opportunity for the government to have more revenue, again, only if they do their job right, to spend on things that are good for Alberta or maybe even spend on paying down the debt that they're accumulating at a superfast rate. So there are more reasons why the government shouldn't lock down and limit the opportunities, because we don't know how much of those remaining emissions will be used to put product in the Keystone XL pipeline.

Now, the Premier and the government have been pretty inconsistent, but lately, I will say, to their credit, the Premier has been saying that she is in favour of pipelines to Canadian tidewater. I thank her for saying that. I sincerely hope that she means what she's saying, and today I'll take her at face value. I'll just say: good; thank you. Even that, Mr. Speaker, talks about how much product it's going to take to fill those pipelines to the east coast, to the west coast, to the north coast. When you start artificially putting caps on emissions, limiting the future of Albertans, the unintended consequence might be that if a pipeline gets approved by the federal government, it will limit our ability to take maximum advantage of that. Again, the legislation doesn't make mention of that. It doesn't make mention of any plans, any contingencies. It doesn't make any mention of having maximum opportunities for Alberta families and even the government's revenues under this arbitrary number that the government has put on the legislation.

It tells me that the amendment should be passed so that the government can take some time, talk to not just the oil sands energy companies but the other energy companies across Alberta, too; to really think about if indeed a cap, any cap, is a good idea; but also to think about: if you are going to put one on, what is a reasoned set of logic that you could support that with? Clearly, that work hasn't been done yet. Further to that, it even matters, Mr. Speaker, if the government and industry are able to work together and get further processing done here in Alberta. I know the North West upgrader is under construction for upgraded petroleum products. There are other projects coming forward to take the liquids out of gas and make all manners of plastics and polyethylene and polypropylene and butane and all the other elements that are available and ways to ship them. To have done the work to know whether the good results of those projects would be shipped on train or truck or pipeline and actually have a logical set of conclusions adding up to some cap, if the government was indeed to put one on: clearly, that work hasn't been done.

Again, by putting the cap on without the work being done, it actually puts the government at risk of artificially limiting the opportunities of Alberta families, limiting the opportunity for the government to pick up revenue to pay some of the debt that they're taking on, limits the opportunity for Albertans to have the best quality of life they can have and the jobs in these different industries in these different places around Alberta. Mr. Speaker, it actually by extension limits the opportunity of Albertans for all the diversified ways to make a living in a province with a good economy that is underpinned with energy, agriculture, tourism, and forestry, the big four. It limits those opportunities, too, by extension.

When you add all of that up, I think it's pretty clear that this amendment actually improves the arbitrary legislation with a round number, which gives somebody the ability to check a box and say: I said I was going to do this, and I do it. It actually is going to offer the government an opportunity to check the box and say: I did it with good reason, I did it with good research, I did it with good background, and that is why you should support it.

This is a very good amendment. I intend to support it. I encourage all members of this House to do the same for the reasons that I have

outlined just now and for the reasons that other members of this House have given here ever so recently.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know . . .

The Speaker: Excuse me. I'm sorry. Are we under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Fraser: No, on the amendment.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Klein. Under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Coolahan: Correct.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to ask a clarifying question to the member. First of all, I'm just blown away at his lack of knowledge of the labour code, and that was the labour minister. Anyhow, I'm glad we have a change in government. My question I'm asking the member is: did he suggest that unionized environments are less efficient than non-unionized environments and that unionized environments are keeping investment out of Alberta?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't even say anything remotely similar to what the member is asking, so, no, I didn't say that. I would correct the member that actually there is a section that allows on the big oil sands projects for CLAC, Merit, and Building Trades to be on the same site. That co-operation is actually helpful. It's actually helpful to get big projects built. All three of the groups have signed on to it. I know that when I was minister, I signed off on at least one order to make that possible on a project. I appreciate that the hon. member across tried to take a cheap shot, but he, frankly, didn't really do his homework before he went down that road. That's unfortunate. What I was saying was that all these groups are important. They all have something to offer. Why? Because they put Albertans to work in Alberta. When they co-operate, they're even more valuable together than they are separately although they are valuable separately, too, Mr. Speaker. Each one is very valuable separately, and they each contribute a great deal to the economy of this province and the future of Alberta families. I would thank them all for that.

I don't think I talked about efficiency at all, but I am talking about opportunities for Alberta families, for Alberta's economy, opportunities for the government, that the hon. member supports, to achieve more revenue to meet their goals. Now, I know their goals may not always be the same as ours because we're more business friendly and really more in touch with what Alberta families need and what is actually good for the economy and good for the future of this province. I think that we're hearing that every day from Albertans from across this province, how much better they were served about – what? – 19 months ago than they are today, and that's been a consistent message. Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm counselling this government to actually start thinking about what is better for Alberta families. Putting an artificial cap on is going to take away jobs from Alberta's children and grandchildren in the future and Alberta families today, that need those jobs to support themselves, to be self-sufficient, and to create a quality of life that they and their kids and grandkids look forward to.

I would encourage the hon. member and all members of this House to support this amendment because this amendment really supports improving this piece of legislation, that, frankly, needs

improving. That's why I've chosen to get up and speak to it. I sincerely hope that members of the House will see the wisdom in improving not only this but any other piece of legislation that they can. I would say to hon. members that the amendment brought forth by my colleague here from Grande Prairie-Wapiti – and I think my colleague from Calgary-South East is looking forward to speaking to it – makes it better.

I think that's one of the key things that we want to do here as members of this House, to look at how we can make the future better for Albertans. The 100-megatonne cap actually makes it worse. It actually limits the potential for Alberta's economy to grow and the jobs and the opportunities. That truly is a shame.

Again, that's why I'll be supporting the amendment, and that's why I encourage members of this House to do the same, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

4:00

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

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't come from an oil and gas background, and predominantly that's why I wanted to take the role of the Energy critic, the Environment critic, because I have no ties to big oil and gas and I have no ties to any junior oil and gas companies or environmentalists. I really wanted to approach this position from a perspective of new learning, eyes wide open, and try to understand all the issues. I think that in terms of speaking to other members and some of the work I've done in this House, people can see that I take an approach of collaboration and, really, not just wanting to oppose to oppose but really trying to articulate an argument that makes sense.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, I think is pragmatic. I think it's one that certainly I'll support because it gives us an opportunity to take a second look, to really understand what this bill will be doing. It gives the government some time to consult, to look at the environment around us.

Mr. Speaker, I can only think of a couple of things – I look at my medical background, and, you know, just historically there was a time when it was immoral, wrong to use a cadaver, to study it for medicine. After somebody had passed, it was a sacred thing, and people thought of the body and the spirit all in one. Certainly, imagine if they had limited that exploration around medical science because it didn't match with the Church or it didn't match with certain spiritual practices and traditions.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

What I'm saying, I guess, is that when you look at this, there are so many things – and the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays had mentioned it, the North West upgrader. I think what we're seeing around the world, particularly from the Paris convention, which this government attended on our behalf – there is an opportunity. We are seeing countries more and more – as the technology becomes stronger, particularly around wind and solar and other renewables, it is now more affordable. It is easier to tie those things into the grid. I certainly admit that, and I would say that in Alberta, because we have those resources, wind and solar, we should be using them. Biomass: we should be using it. Full stop. But we should not limit our ability around certain technologies with other resources.

I'll use coal, for example. Yes, I understand the government wants to phase out coal, but we have coal-fired plants in this province that burn as clean as natural gas. When I look at some of the infographics that the government has given, they want 30 per cent renewable energy and 70 per cent natural gas. I guess my question is: why would you limit the coal piece of it if it's burning

as clean as natural gas? To me, that's an equal, and let those coal-fired plants phase out in the time that was originally allotted.

When we think about the oil sands, one of our greatest resources, that has employed millions of Albertans, given them good-paying jobs, supported families, supported numerous charitable groups, made life better here in Alberta, not to mention the technology that has come along with it – there have been great advancements because of the work done in the oil sands and other parts of the oil industry in Alberta – why would we want to limit that? The reason why I say that is because I think what you're seeing, going back to the other countries that are coming along and certainly with the new government – and this is something they can be proud of – is that they have certainly pushed people into a space of uncomfortableness, and that's not necessarily a bad thing, but you've got to give them time to adapt.

We don't know that right around the corner there is a technology that improves the way that we pull the bitumen out, the way we process it. There is huge opportunity. I don't see why it's so hard for the government – and maybe they will. I'm not sure, Madam Speaker. We're talking about six months, a six-month reprieve, then maybe send it to committee. Maybe there's a piece of technology that allows us to produce more. Maybe there's a breakthrough in terms of pipelines to tidewater. I can tell you that there are some excellent things out there. Again, I'm approaching it as a wide-eyed paramedic, never in the oil and gas industry, taking courses at SAIT with my colleagues, talking to oil and gas industries, visiting new technologies that are amazing, Alberta technologies by Albertans that one day, I guarantee you, will resonate around the world. People will go again, "There's Alberta, a leader," like we always have been.

So I think it is prudent to step back, take a little time. Government members, I know you're so busy with the work as you stare at your computers, but think: if we could take six months, take a look at it, hopefully there's some technology that helps. We're talking six months. We're not saying, "Don't do it," but if there's a technology piece there within six months, isn't that a benefit to Albertans? Isn't that what we should be trying to do here?

I think every member in this House – and we've heard a lot of it, you know, particularly from the Member for Calgary-North West. There is nobody in this Chamber, I believe, that is here to do harm to Albertans. We're all here for the common goal to make sure that Albertans succeed and, hence, our children. That's my stake in the game: my kids, my parents. So you want to try to make the best decisions. They don't always come easy, and that's why we need to work at it.

Madam Speaker, I'll be supporting this amendment. I hope other people just take a minute, look at it, maybe talk to the people in their departments, particularly around the energy file, and talk to their members and say: what's six months? It gives them time to consult. It's a win-win for both sides. We're not saying, "Don't do it"; we're just saying at this point: "Take six months. Take a step back."

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments for the previous speaker under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Last we spoke here, I think we ran out of time. Not everyone got to hear the poetry that was flowing from my mouth, so I'm just going to continue on that a little bit here.

The Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act limits growth of our own industries at a time when we need to create jobs, increase the ranks of the employed, initiate and dictate the conversations with other Premiers and provinces, and get pipelines built to tidewater. We need more time to evaluate this act; thus, we need this amendment passed.

This environmental initiative of limiting emissions in order to get social licence from other provinces and countries is noble, but it's naive. Every province in this country has benefited from the oil revenues that come from Alberta. Every other country that is condemning Canada for our natural resources is a hypocrite. Whatever happened to ethical oil, ethical energy? Everyone jumped off that bandwagon when they realized the implications of limiting their access to energy, but they did find a nice target to direct their hypocritical ethics towards. They feigned concern about our energy industry using tactics to their own benefit. It gives our own citizens a perception that their governments are environmentally ethical, and they all have good feelings the next time they vote for their hypocritical governments.

To the members of the government side: our NDP comrades understand how they have benefited from our oil riches. Would the minister of environment understand that she couldn't sit and sip lattes with her professor and debate the finer points of a green Earth policy if it weren't for the industry that funded the very schools and universities that she hung out at while others worked hard in our northern communities, paying taxes on their hard-earned money? This government speaks of the environment like they own it. Truth be told, I've never met anyone that doesn't believe in clean air, clean earth, clean water.

4:10

The point is that I feel that we as Canadians are feeling the brunt of environmentalism, and it is unnecessarily impairing us from succeeding as an economy and, more importantly, as an influencer. You see that when we are at our finest and our economic engine is humming along, Albertans and Canadians put their kids through higher education. They invest in their future. It's because we want our children to have a better life than we did. We want our children to work in prestigious professions and industries that ensure their financial viability. They can learn the finer points of life and listen to their idealistic professors with tenure who can preach about the most virtuous aspects of our society, the most idealistic desires of mankind. That is where we can be most effective.

We are worldly people with a good reputation throughout this world. Canadians volunteer across the world. We work in orphanages, communal farms, rescue and respite operations in environmentally challenged areas. We have Canadians that volunteer to teach people about language, clean water, and sustainable families. This is where Canadians are most effective.

It's countries in Central America, South America, Africa, Asia, and so many other areas where there is far greater pollution and contributions to global warming and climate change. They still burn their garbage. They use so much plastic. They do not recycle. We need to educate people in these countries and ensure that they do their part in contributing to a low carbon intensive world.

We understand climate change. We understand your concerns and the intent of this bill. We just feel that we should be targeting the real problems in our global environment, and that is every other country out there but not Canada because we already are the highest standard. The minister of environment recently came back from overseas, Marrakesh, I believe, where she attended an international environmental conference. I would ask this minister if she were here: did she propose any changes . . .

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

Mr. Yao: Oh, sorry. I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: I won't hear the point of order, but just a reminder that we don't refer to the presence or absence of members in the House.

Mr. Yao: Right.

I wonder if we had any representatives that proposed any changes to measuring the environmental impacts of man. Carbon limitation by itself is only one part of the solution. Did the conference consider any other measures to make the overall measures be more accurate? You see, they're clear-cutting rainforests in Central and South America that are large carbon sinks. Instead, they're expanding housing divisions, cattle ranges, and coffee farms. Land is key. Virgin land, untainted by man, is even better. We need to promote undeveloped, undisturbed land all over the world. In Canada we have an abundance of that. There needs to be a certain amount of weight, a certain value for countries that promote nature and reward conservation.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Population. You know, Mr. Speaker, from the minute that man lit his first fire, he was contributing to carbon pollution. Every man needs a fire to keep warm, to cook our food, to heat water into steam that starts a process of harnessing energy. Quite frankly, if it weren't for immigration, Canada wouldn't be growing because our first-world lives have led to an educated people, people who focus on the finer things in life that are inherent in our culture. We are having fewer children. In some cases people aren't even choosing to have any at all. We are following our intellectual pursuits, our higher education, our careers.

But not so in so many other countries of the world that continue to grow at an exponential rate. Our population is currently 7.4 billion and is expected to grow to 11.2 billion by 2100. Sir, that is a lot of people. Keeping it simple, that's a growth of 50 per cent from current numbers. Where we see two people, there will be three right across this world. If you recognize the impacts that man has, we need to add this to the measurement when determining this environmental pricing scheme that is currently in place.

To summarize, the current measuring tools don't fairly weigh all the aspects of mankind's impacts. If this province's ministers are going to support their home and protect their environment, they have to do more than tout how they're impairing their own economy. They have the ability to influence the world to more accurately measure man's impacts and then pressure the world to be more responsible, because only when the world changes its habits will we see our planet's health improve.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Anyone under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake under 29(2)(a)? Please proceed.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak in support of this amendment to put a pause in a process that's been quite hurried. We have seen repeatedly from this government a pattern of legislation coming out before all the facts are in, legislation coming out before a full analysis has been conducted, legislation coming out even before a fulsome consultation has taken place with the people of Alberta. Repeatedly, repeatedly, bill upon bill upon bill, in this way: legislate first, and then stay tuned for the details. Unfortunately, when the details start coming forward, when Albertans start realizing the nature of a particular piece of legislation, the people of Alberta rise up in alarm.

I remember Bill 6 very clearly, like it was yesterday, and now we have a bill that is before this House when we still have not heard from OSAG. Yet we were told, when OSAG was first commissioned, that this was going to be the body that was going to have the experts and consult with the experts to craft the details surrounding oil sands emissions. But for some strange reason – and I personally was very surprised to one day find Bill 25 being introduced in this House when we had not heard so much as a peep from OSAG.

It just seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this pattern of legislate first and then find out there's a problem is like what one of the people in the press told me the other day. It's like playing Whac-A-Mole. It's like: the government comes up with a policy, and then up pops an unintended consequence, so they whack that one down with another policy, only to see another unintended consequence pop up, and they try to whack that one down. It's bill after bill, policy after policy like this.

All we're asking with this particular hoist is to pause for a minute and have an opportunity to get things the right way around here and to listen to everybody – and I mean everybody – that's going to be impacted by limiting development like this. I realize that there were a handful of oil sands companies that the government consulted on the drafting of this bill that they have talked about, but that is confirmation bias, Mr. Speaker, to surround yourself with people that will shake their heads and agree with you and never hear the dissenting side of things.

There are other investors out there who have leases that they've paid good money for, and now somehow this government is legislating their investment to be nothing, to be worthless because those leases now – and they're massive – have to try to squeeze into the remaining 32-megatonne window. So although we talk about this Bill 25 as an Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, it is really an oil sands development limit act. That's really what it is. Unfortunately, the government of Alberta has already been paid for the leases that have been sold, and to limit the development without hearing from those companies that invested substantial amounts of money, were prepared to invest substantial amounts of money into Alberta jobs for our people, taxes to be paid to our government, royalties to be received, to just shut them out like that is highly offensive and very irresponsible action on the part of a government.

4:20

What needs to happen, really, is for everyone to just chill for a bit, park this thing for six months, have an opportunity to talk to everybody that's impacted by this limit. Is this limit actually reasonable? Does this limit not in fact favour a few and disfavour a lot? Having that confirmation bias by having just a handful of major players influencing the construction of a bill like this leaves some Albertans questioning whether this, in fact, isn't just the choreographing of an exclusive club, creating an environment up in the oil sands that's going to favour just a handful of companies who've had their hands in the crafting of this and to disfavour or cause to be at a competitive disadvantage a bunch of other players up there who have innovation, have innovative ideas, can employ a lot of Albertans, could pay a lot of revenue for taxes and royalties. These companies are scrambling now. They're at a significant disadvantage because of this development limit act, which is what it really is.

Although it has been asked for a number of times by persons on this side of the House, we still have not seen the methodology used to calculate or to come up with 100 megatonnes as a limit. Let's see the analysis. Where is it? We've asked. Numbers of people over here have asked. I mean, if this is the right number, then fine. Justify it. That's not an unreasonable request. Albertans ought to have

confidence that their government actually took the time to do some kind of scientific analysis to determine that this 100 megatonnes is the right number, but we haven't seen that. We've asked, and it has not been forthcoming.

Some things that have been calculated are that we have a cumulative lost opportunity cost here of somewhere between \$150 billion and \$250 billion in lost economic activity.

Mr. Yao: How much?

Mr. MacIntyre: Between \$150 billion and \$250 billion.

I don't know what that translates to in jobs, but, you know, just as a good old guess I suspect it would put most Albertans back to work again. But it's not going to because there's this arbitrary figure that's been determined, 100 megatonnes. Now, if there isn't an economic impact assessment that's been done or some sort of technical analysis that's been done, then how was that number developed? Was it just a dart thrown at a wall full of numbers and it happened to hit 100 that day? Albertans need something that is much more scientific in its origins than that.

I think it behooves the government, especially this government, that has, as I've said, this track record of legislating first and then finding out, oops, and then having to backtrack and come up with Band-Aids to fix something that could have been avoided if they just would have slowed down and taken some good old objectivity and listened to Albertans, the experts that we have, and we've got a lot of experts here in this province.

I would dare to suggest to this House that there is no other jurisdiction in the world with the level of expertise in oil and gas development that we've got right here in this province. That expertise needs to be brought to the table and listened to. Let's be really clear about one thing: this act that we're looking at here was crafted by politicians. Politicians made this thing, and this province is full of experts in the field, thousands of them, tens of thousands of them, and they have not been heard from. It's incumbent upon the politicians that craft legislation, regardless of whichever government is in power, and it's incumbent upon us all as legislators to listen to the people that actually know way more than we know.

Now, we have a couple of people that have been elected to positions here who are experts in their field. We have, you know, an hon. member over here that's an expert in the world of EMT. We have another one here in EMT and firefighting. We have different expertise represented around this room, but when it comes to this kind of stuff, when we're talking about oil sands development to the tune of \$250 billion, it really behooves us all as legislators to just put it in neutral for six months, and let's listen to what those experts have to tell us.

Let's have a look at the analytics that were done to determine the 100-megatonne cap to begin with. As I've said before in this House, it's a little bit deceptive because we're not really talking about 100 megatonnes. We're talking about a 32-megatonne remaining window and a massive amount of oil sands development that's going to have to squeeze into those 32 megatonnes.

I would like it very much if everyone in this House would support this amendment right now, this hoist amendment, just to put this thing on hold for a while. Let's take a really good look at this so that we can avoid having to try to come back later and fix this bill.

I remember the Bill 6 situation. The government brought in Bill 6 and threw it down on the table here, and it was advertised as being perfect as it was. Perfect. "Let's just run this thing through the House: first, second, third readings. Let's get it proclaimed, and let's rock 'n' roll. We've got farming solved in the province of Alberta." You remember that? It was all perfect. Well, that five-

page bill that was so perfect caused such a furor within the field of experts that were out there, the farmers themselves. If there was such a thing as a PhD in farming, they'd each have one. Those experts did not feel like they were consulted whatsoever. They rallied here, they rallied all over this province, and we had a massive petition because they weren't consulted, because the government was rushing through a piece of legislation. Eventually, thanks to the farmers and the uproar that they caused, we saw six pages of amendments to what was touted as being a perfectly fine piece of legislation. Obviously, it was not so perfect.

So here we are again. We have a bill coming before us in a hurried manner when the very body commissioned to advise the government on this thing has yet to report. It's absurd in the extreme, just absurd, because we're talking about, really, the future of our province. This is definitely impacting the future of our province. When you look at that price tag of the lost opportunity cost of \$250 billion, we're talking about a significant chunk of Alberta's future. That's your children and mine, our grandchildren, and the future employment opportunities they have. This is going to impact the revenue stream coming to the provincial coffers to fund education and health care and seniors and all of that. When you consider the enormous economic impact that limiting this development poses to our province, how important it is, therefore, that this is done right and not in a haphazard way.

I submit to this Assembly that by pushing this thing through based on its first iteration, without amendment, this government is looking for trouble. They really are. They're looking for trouble. This is going to be another catastrophe looking for a place to happen. It's going to be another Whac-A-Mole policy, where a bunch of unintended consequences are going to pop up, and this government is going to have to try to whack them down, just like we're seeing in the electricity sector, where the government came into power and without even thinking about it increased the carbon levy under SGER by 50 per cent, and, oops, it triggered section 4.3(j), an unintended consequence. So let's whack that down. We'll just go to court and sue Enmax and stop them from complaining about what we've gone and done to them through SGER.

4:30

Well, that court challenge was a sham, and obviously they were going to lose. So, okay; whap, now we have got to come up with a solution. Well, we'll legislate. We'll have retroactive legislation. That will solve the problem. Well, does it? It absolutely destroys any credibility the government has as a partner in a contract.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky under 29(2)(a).

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening, of course, to the member speak and talk about "do it right" and how maybe taking a little time and maybe, for instance, waiting for the report from OSAG might be something that could happen in that six-month period while there's going to be some more consultation. Of course, there's always been some concern over the members that have been appointed to OSAG. Of course, there are some people there that seem to have some pretty radical views and views that don't line up with Albertans' and don't line up with support for the industry that they're representing in that committee.

I just wanted to know if the member would like to comment a little bit more on some of those things. He's brought up some really good points, and I'd be interested in hearing some more, too, if he had any other points that he'd like to bring forward. Obviously, he's somebody that has a pretty good handle on this file, both with the energy issues and the oil sands and that sort of thing but also with

the electricity market and some of the changes that this government has brought forward there. So if this member would like to expand on some of those things and about consultation, about waiting for a report and how much of a benefit it would be to put this off and have some time to consult and find out what the report is going to say and what Albertans want to say about this.

Thanks.

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

Mr. MacIntyre: Well, thank you to the hon. member for his request. I'll just talk a little bit about OSAG and the potential value that isn't going to happen. You know, the people of Alberta look to government for good governance. The government put in place the oil sands advisory group to advise them on this very subject right here. Now here we are with this bill before us, before we've even seen the OSAG report. If this bill passes before the OSAG report comes out, it's going to send a signal to Albertans that's really very clear. First of all, the OSAG was a complete waste of their tax dollars, an absolute waste of tax dollars. It was nothing more than an attempt of window dressing on a government's already predetermined plan – already predetermined – and there was no reason for OSAG to be commissioned in the first place because the government already had signed, sealed, and delivered what they wanted to do.

Having this bill actually before the House in this form, as it is right now, already confirms the suspicions of many Albertans that the government simply had this thing already ironed out as to what they wanted to accomplish and that we never needed OSAG in the first place, that it was already mapped out. So even from just, you know, a basic imaging look on this thing, this looks really, really bad. It looks tacky as can be. The government had a predetermined plan here. It is: oops, we forgot we hadn't heard from OSAG yet. There wasn't even a pretense. It's just terrible.

So OSAG is going to issue a report. Well, I have a prediction. OSAG's report is going to look an awful lot like Bill 25. Won't that be a surprise? Surprise. Won't we be shocked? Frankly, Mr. Speaker, they've already let the horse out here. You know, the OSAG now is just a sham. It's just a sham. It's just window dressing. It has no credibility left.

Mr. Cyr: It's like the consultation with the farmers.

Mr. MacIntyre: Yeah. Just like Bill 6 and the supposed consultation with farmers that never happened.

We have here a bill that is going to be impacting hundreds of thousands of potential jobs in this province, and it behooves this government just to put it on pause for a while. Let's listen to the juniors that are out there, listen to every single stakeholder in the oil sands, every company that's invested up there and is looking at that 32-megatonne window and saying: how are we going to squeeze in there? They need to come and talk to us. We need to hear what they have to say rather than have just a small group of very large corporations determining the outcome of oil sands emissions.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Members wishing to speak to the amended motion? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm here today to speak to Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act.

The Speaker: Hon. member, are you speaking to the amendment?

Mr. Loewen: Yes, I'll be speaking to the amendment to Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act.

Mr. Speaker, while the government continues to defend this ill-advised bill, we have to continue to point out some highly relevant facts that Albertans do not know. We now know that an independent estimate predicts that this cap could cost us in production 3.3 billion barrels of oil by 2040. Three point three billion barrels of oil. Reports have determined that we could have a cumulative loss of between \$150 billion to \$250 billion in lost production. That isn't just money; that's jobs. It's people's livelihoods that this impacts. Further to that, this policy is likely to result in the stranding of oil sands assets. This government just doesn't learn.

With its carbon tax, its accelerated phase-out of coal, and the tampering with PPAs that's causing alarm in the investment world, this bill will surely not help. This bill's emissions cap is entirely arbitrary. There has been no rationale given for this from a government that clearly hasn't thought this out. Did it not occur to them at any time that we are already in a position that if the present leases were fully developed, we will have already exceeded the 100-megatonne cap?

This is where stranded assets come in. How is this government going to deal with producers that want to develop their oil interest but the cap will prevent this? Are the taxpayers going to be on the hook for compensation to these producers? Who is going to decide which companies get to develop their interests and who doesn't? The government once again put itself in a position of picking resource winners and losers. Why can't the government get out of the way and let the market decide? Why must they insert themselves into every market? It's a story we are seeing over and over again with this government. Once is bad enough, but this is a pattern developing over many different business sectors.

This government seems to be embarrassed by our resources rather than to take a position to celebrate them. This could not be more obvious than by the numerous examples of government members actively protesting our natural resources. They gave speeches. They helped write books. They appoint radical environmentalists to the very panel that has been tasked to oversee this law's viability. Seriously, you can't make this stuff up. It's so ludicrous. These radicals even in the last month have been protesting against projects that would help our resource industry. In the Premier's leap of logic this provides balance to the panel, she says. Mr. Speaker, if balance is appointing fundamental opposition based on ideology, then the members opposite need to put down the manifesto and listen to Albertans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the minister's own words she says, "We are seeking to find specific, credible solutions that will ensure that the world looks at Alberta differently." You know what? That's true. The world is looking at Alberta differently. This government's policies are driving investors out and keeping investment out of Alberta, investment that creates jobs, investment that has left Alberta, that has cost jobs. That's the message that people are getting from Alberta. Every time we turn around, this government comes up with a new policy, a new bill, a new regulation that destroys investment. Now, the minister went on to say, "By doing nothing, Conservatives at both the federal and provincial levels led Albertans to an economic dead end and a boom-and-bust economy." Well, this government: there's no boom; there's only bust. Only bust.

4:40

She goes on to say that they've gained recognition from U.S. President Obama during his address to Parliament earlier this year. Mr. Speaker, President Obama didn't put a carbon tax in in the U.S. Hillary Clinton said that she wasn't going to either. President-elect

Donald Trump is not going to do it either. So our largest trading partner is not doing a carbon tax, but this government is. So when we sit here and we ask this government to take six months so that they can receive the report that their appointed people are supposed to prepare and to have a chance to listen to Albertans, to study the effects of what this bill could do, that's not unreasonable. It actually is only common sense.

Now, the minister also said that we need growth in oil sands. I'm trying to figure out the discrepancy here. We need growth in oil sands, but we're going to put a cap on it. That's a contradiction. "We have Albertans from all parts of the energy industry who have taken great pride" – this is the minister speaking again – "in telling the world for decades just how good Alberta is at energy development." Well, I would hope that this government is telling the world how good we are here at energy development.

Now, this government doesn't like to conduct or release economic impact studies. Over and over again they have come up with bills and ideas and regulations. No economic impact study. In fact, when we did find one through FOIP, we realized it had been hidden for a good reason, because it didn't stand the test of what Albertans would have liked to see.

Mr. Speaker, I think it only makes sense that this amendment pass, that this government take the time it takes to figure out exactly what this is going to cost Albertans. That's what we're here to do. We're here to represent Albertans. We're here to do what's best for Albertans. We've had over 100,000 job losses in the last year and a half, since this government has taken over, not including the contractors that have lost their jobs, that won't show up in the figures, or that have lost contracts and are only working a small percentage of the time. Wouldn't it make sense to step back and say: "Okay. What's really happening here? What are the full ramifications of this bill?"

Now, Mr. Speaker, every day I have struggling Albertans desperate for help and work. They come into my constituency office, they call, they e-mail, and they text. Job loss: they're suffering. They're desperate for help. But we don't see the help coming from this government. We just see bill after bill that sends messages to the investment community that Alberta isn't a place to invest, and that's sad. They suggest that this bill is going to provide certainty. This bill provides nothing but uncertainty along with everything else that this government has been doing.

Of course, they like blaming the low price of oil for all the problems. The low price of oil this government has no control over, but these bills that they have passed that have created the uncertainty in the investment community are the government's doing. They have to take responsibility for those actions. Those actions have cost jobs and will continue to cost jobs into the future. There are other jurisdictions around us that are doing a lot better than us that used to never do as well as us, but since this government has come in and started passing these bills and doing these things that create uncertainty in the market, the jobs aren't coming back. The jobs are going.

Now, the NDP doesn't like to keep track of what impact their policies will have on greenhouse gas reductions either. They don't seem to want to keep track of anything. What are the effects economically? What are the effects environmentally? Where is it? There's nothing. Now, there is a report that's supposed to come within a couple of months from OSAG, but we're going to be passing this bill before it shows up. That's what the government wants, anyways.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Now, we have to realize that Alberta is an extremely environmentally responsible jurisdiction. The oil that we produce here is better than anywhere else in the world. If we look at some of the other jurisdictions where oil is produced, they don't have the standards that we have. Now, as other countries move forward in their development and increase their energy consumption, our global energy demand will only grow. The needs of the new, emerging markets for energy products will be met. The question, Madam Speaker, is: will they be met by us, or will they be met by some of these other jurisdictions that don't have the environmental standards that we have, that don't treat their citizens like we treat them here? So that's a choice we have.

With respect to emissions, it does not matter whether Canadian or Iranian supplies meet this growing global demand. As long as there is a demand for energy, that demand will be met, so we need to be the ones to produce this energy and do it in an environmentally responsible way. Can we improve? We're always improving here in Alberta, always. Oil sands is a classic example. The way it started and the way it is now are totally different: far better environmental standards now, far less impact on the environment.

It's not just the environmental policies that we have here in Alberta that make it better to produce the oil here rather than in these other jurisdictions. Socially we have a far better record than a lot of these other jurisdictions.

Now, this government doesn't seem to like the idea of carbon leakage. They don't seem to want to recognize that that's a real phenomenon. But if this government truly wants to do something to help the global fight against climate change, then Alberta's economy should be producing more because this is where it's done in a most responsible manner. There is no more environmentally responsible jurisdiction than Alberta. We're doing better than we were before and will continue to do better. We'll continue to improve. Albertans have always taken that stewardship seriously. We've always demanded that polluters do better to reduce their impact, and that will continue.

Madam Speaker, we need to understand that taking the time to review this bill, taking the six months, hearing what the committee has to say – I mean, we have no idea what they're going to say. We can presume, based on who's been appointed to it, what they're going to say.

4:50

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to thank the hon. member for bringing up some very important reasons as to why we need to give a pause to this particular bill and give some time to put some ideas, too. I just have a few comments, and then I have a question for the hon. member.

One of the things that you were talking about that is really, really important is the impact that this is having, not only on Alberta, and that other jurisdictions are going to produce when we're not doing that. There is absolutely no slowdown here. It's a matter of where this production is going to happen.

If you're willing to do an economic impact study – and there are very, very good pieces of information out there that give some very good direction as to what that may look like, and I highly recommend that the government take a look at this because the roller coaster that Albertans are on due to, as the government has said, the volatility of the market cannot also sustain volatile policies. It's one thing to have to be able to bend and change due to the volatility of the market, that the government has no control over.

It's a whole other thing to be creating policies that are volatile, that actually contribute to the demise of this market.

So if the government is going to hamper the ability of the sector to produce properly and environmentally and ethically in this province – again, to bring up what the member had said, there are reasonable forecasts of prohibited production, that Canadians will lose billions of barrels of prosperity, and this is not a win for us. There's no way that we can even conclude that that's a possibility.

Also, the member had brought up some very important things about stewardship. That is something that is not mentioned in this at all by the government, the stewardship that is actually happening here in this province, the unbelievable environmental regulations, and what this industry already does that is so right, that given the opportunity, given the economic opportunities to do so, we'll continue to do better. It has to do with efficiencies. Efficiencies are created by doing things better, by doing them faster and spending less money and reducing energy costs all around. This suits the industry, to be able to do this given the appropriate economic environment to do that.

He also mentioned something about emerging markets. How is it that we're supposed to bring in emerging markets when we're capping the very prosperity that is driving this province forward?

My question is to the member. You were going on to explain about the small and junior companies, and I was curious. I'm sure that like probably every member in here you've had people reach out to you, potentially talking about investments or what they would have liked to invest. The government members seem to think that there's a need to rush this legislation through. Would you be able to comment or discuss why it is that you feel that this government is in such an absolute hurry to get this legislation passed before the panel has a chance to respond back to us?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the member for the questions and comments. Obviously, this bill will have impacts on other jurisdictions, not just ours here. It will have repercussions around the world because, as we've already stated, this demand for energy is going to come from somewhere. The question is where. Do we want it to come from here? Do we want it to come from some of these other countries that don't have the standards that we have? That's definitely a concern.

Now, one thing we should be doing: if we want to really make a difference on climate change, we need to spread our technology around the world, our clean-burning coal. There are coal plants being built all over the world right now that don't burn as clean as our clean-burning coal here. We should be getting that technology to those countries because that would actually make a difference on climate change.

Now, when we drive investment away from Alberta, it's not just Albertans that lose. It's Canadians that lose because this is a major part of the Canadian GDP. We've seen that with the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's no secret that I'm not a huge fan of adding arbitrary caps to anything, and we've already had the experience, as I've mentioned before, of the debt cap. We've seen what happens when government starts to go down the road of just pulling numbers out of the air.

Now what I'm looking to say is: let's take a different direction. I went with the direction last time of trying to explain it through past legislation that had been pushed through the House. Let's bring this

down to a different level. I was thinking about Christmas and my youngest daughter, Charlotte, the pride of my life. Both my daughters are the pride of my life.

Ms Hoffman: Good catch.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you. The Minister of Health said, “Good catch,” and I have to agree with her.

My daughter is at the point where she’s picking toys out, right? Of course, she’s got to pick that toy that every other child in Canada or probably North America wants. I’ve never heard of this toy before, so when she came to me with it, I was, like: “Wow. Can you tell me all about this new toy?”

An Hon. Member: Is it a Hatchimal?

Mr. Cyr: It is a Hatchimal. Thank you very much. Apparently, the government has also run into this difficulty.

It’s called a Hatchimal. Now, these little toys are furry, birdlike creatures. I had to look this up because I didn’t know. I really didn’t. All I heard from my daughter was: it’s a toy you cuddle with, and it hatches. That’s essentially what I knew about it. It’s a furry creature that is inside of an eggshell. What happens is that the child needs to cuddle with this little toy for about half an hour, and it’ll hatch. It comes in various colours, and it’s quite the amazing little toy.

Now, in the case of this little toy, it’s about \$70, which . . .

Ms McLean: Did you get one?

Mr. Cyr: I don’t want to ruin my daughter’s Christmas gift – I’ve got a question from the minister – but she’s going to probably be very happy.

This Hatchimal is about \$70. Coincidentally, it is – and I’m going to go into it – very close to our current megatonnes, which is 68 megatonnes. I’m going to slowly work into how exactly this toy has relevance to this amendment. What we’ve got here is a dynamic company in Toronto that came up with an incredible idea that our children are really engaged with, and they really, really, really want to have this new toy. Now, it’s meant for and its target is little girls between six and eight. My daughter is seven, so it kind of makes sense that my daughter would be the target for this.

5:00

Now, the problem, as we all know, with these toys is that they are always sold out, and this toy specifically – and I need to go slowly with this. NPD marketing, not NDP but NPD, says that it holds five of the top 10 spots: first, second, sixth, ninth, and 10th. This toy actually holds five of the top 10 spots. So when we look at this toy, it is in an insane demand right now, and we’re looking at this toy possibly selling for thousands of dollars when it comes to eBay.

What we’re looking at here is going back to the debt cap. I told you I’d get back here. Now, my concern is that when you’ve got a debt cap, you’ve got a commodity suddenly that has value, that 30 megatonnes. In this case, with this toy, would it be reasonable for us to allow a company to start selling these toys for a thousand dollars? Well, that doesn’t seem to be a thing that we would allow in Alberta. I do understand free enterprise – we need to go there – but we also need to understand that there’s gouging involved in this as well.

The problem here is that by setting an arbitrary debt cap, we are creating a market that would never have been there, and this market is worth, as my colleague from Innisfail-Sylvan Lake has stated . . .

Mr. MacIntyre: Magnificent Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Magnificent Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you.

Mr. Cooper: It should be “incredible.”

Mr. Cyr: I’m getting a lot of feedback. I will say that when it comes to ridings, though, Bonnyville-Cold Lake is the most beautiful.

But let’s get back to this. Now, what we’re looking at here is that we’ve got a commodity suddenly that we’ve created with this 30 megatonnes. To hear my colleague, he says: “You know what? There is a ton of value with our oil, and there is an incentive for us to have people say that they want all of that profit.” This is the important thing – and this is something that he’s mentioned as well – that when you use very few people to create an arbitrary cap, a lot of times what happens is that they may take advantage of the opportunity of being the only ones being heard. That is why it is important that we go and we start hearing what the oil sands advisory group has got to say even though – and this is important – it is stacked with people that are not for extracting oil sands, because I would like to know where they are going with this 100-megatonne cap.

My concern is that when we get to this report, we’re going to see a one-page document, and that one-page document is going to tell us that it’s good for us. There’s not going to be any economic study done, but it’s going to talk about our social licence, the social licence that we’re purchasing with this, a social licence that has been rejected by our closest trading partner.

Now, with this hoist that we are moving forward, it is reasonable to say that we don’t know what the President-elect is going to do because he’s not in office until January. It is reasonable to say that we should at least know the direction of our closest trading partner. This is distressing, that we are setting arbitrary amounts without talking with any advisory groups, without any experts. But we do have a 100-megatonne cap – well, that’s great – and we do have a carbon tax. Well, that’s great, too. What we don’t have is the fact that this was not something that the NDP campaigned on. Shutting down our oil sands, which potentially could happen here, is not something that was campaigned on.

I will tell you that when it comes to Bonnyville-Cold Lake, we are seeing incredible unemployment right now. We have people coming into my office saying: Scott, what can I do? [interjection] I apologize. I withdraw using my name. I will say that when it comes to my constituency, they are coming to my office and saying: “What is the outlook? Where do you think you’re going to go?” You know, I do have to say that it has slowed down for the layoffs when it comes to the oil sands in my riding, and I have also heard that this new drilling program that’s being brought forward is possibly going to bring a few more wells into my riding.

The thing that distresses me about this is that I’ve had, actually, a couple of constituents come to me and say that they put out job requests for these drilling rigs that they are planning on starting, but they can’t get the people to run them. How can that happen? The reason is that people right now are struggling to find jobs, but they know it’s only temporary. They know that this is going to be a six-month window maybe for work, and the job that they’ve got right now they need to hold on to, or the job that they’ve got in another province, which is, unfortunately – Saskatchewan is my closest neighbour. We’re right on the border with Saskatchewan, and they’re booming right now. They’ve got all of my tradespeople moving across the border and putting their houses on the market to buy in the province next door. I get distressed when I hear that, when we’ve had such a strong investment in my riding.

I also have to say that right now, when I hear that somehow we are getting a skilled labour shortage because we are only seeing short-term investment, this distresses me as well. This was never a problem in my riding before, but here we are today. Now, in my riding, unfortunately, when it comes to jobs – and this is serious. I just need to say that when it comes to my riding, we do need to consider the fact that this cap that is about to be put onto my constituents without any consultation is going to affect them further. I'm going to see more layoffs, and I'm going to see more houses vacant in my riding, and that is tragic.

Madam Speaker, I will be encouraging everyone to please hold off on this bill, at least until we can find out where the current President-elect is going and when our advisory committee can get back to us on exactly what the intent of this cap is going to be.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), questions or comments?

Seeing none, are there any further speakers to the amendment?
The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

5:10

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to speak in favour of this motion. One of the things that I wanted to first of all say is that I was living in a community – and I won't say which community it is – and there was a desire by that community to put a cap on growth of the community. A lot of the people in the community were thinking: oh, actually, this is fantastic, because what's going to happen is that it's going to put a higher value on the homes and the rest of the lots that they have available. In reality, that was the outcome. The housing prices skyrocketed.

But the problem with it was that this was a community that a lot of young people wanted to move to. The price of those homes got to the point where they were priced out of these young families' price range, and they were no longer able to move to this community, that they were moving to prior to when this cap on its development was implemented. So this was an unintended response to this policy that they had made. Unfortunately, in my opinion, it was ill thought out, ill planned, and because of that, there were a lot of problems that were created.

It turns out – hindsight is always 20/20 vision, Madam Speaker – that what happened in this situation was that there was still such a desire to be able to move to this community that the then mayor and council ended up getting rejected by the people of the community because it was just such a shemuzzle. They were elected out, new people were elected in, and they removed the cap.

Now, I say that because this bill seems to be ill conceived. It really is something that I've been thinking a lot about. I thought: here is an industry that we have, being blessed to have the kind of natural resources that we have in this area, yet the strategy of this government is to actually keep it in the ground. I know they don't like us to say that they're trying to keep it in the ground, but this is, in effect, the same thing. There's no difference with this.

They just don't like what happened the last time, when the Leap Manifesto group said, "Let's keep it in the ground," and you know the outcome. We know what the outcome was. Down in Medicine Hat we saw what the outcome was. The Leap Manifesto federal NDP got 1 per cent of the popular vote. The reason why that happened is because people here in Alberta are very grateful for that resource that we have, very grateful for it. So to put a cap on that, in my opinion, is absolute folly.

But here's the other point that I wanted to make on this. The federal government comes to us, and their climate leadership plan is that you'd either have a cap and trade plan or a carbon tax. Now, I know that in Alberta we love to give equalization payments galore,

so we've decided that what we're going to do here is that we're going to do both. We're going to provide Albertans with a double whammy, a double gift, cap and trade and a carbon tax.

This is a government that keeps on giving. I'm pretty sure, seeing as we have Christmas coming up, that Albertans will consider this simply coal in their stockings. It's not something that I think they're going to be grateful for, and in 2019 I think that they're going to tell this type of Santa what they really think of those gifts.

Mr. Cooper: They're getting rid of coal, so you won't get any of that in your stocking.

Mr. Hunter: That's true. They're getting rid of coal as well. Maybe they're just trying to get rid of any of the evidence there.

Madam Speaker, in reality, what this bill is doing to Albertans is that it is saying: "We want to abandon the resources that we have. We want to abandon those assets." I think we've already heard ample evidence here today that those leases have already been oversold. We've gotten again into another situation where an ill-advised decision has been made, and the unintended consequences are going to be that there are probably going to be lawsuits from these companies. All of a sudden now a bill or a policy has been made, and we're in a situation where these guys are going to have to sue them. They're going to have to sue the Alberta government again, and who's going to have to pay for that? The people of Alberta are going to have to pay for that, just like they're going to have to pay for the outcome of the lawsuits against Enmax and the other ill-advised lawsuits that are going on right now.

I think that it would be wise for this government to take a look, go back to the drawing board, look at this over the next six months, consult, consult, consult with as many of the stakeholders and as many Albertans as they can so that they have the opportunity to be able to get it right this time. That will allow this government to be able to step back and say: "What are those unintended consequences? Are we actually going to be in a situation where in 2019 Albertans cast their judgment on us and say that we didn't do right in multiple situations but especially in this situation?" You know, I think that by stepping back, they could put a feather in their cap versus capping the emissions, and I would highly recommend that they do that.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, are there any further speakers to the amendment?
Are we ready for the question?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on the amendment lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:17 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Hunter	McIver
Cooper	Loewen	Panda
Cyr	MacIntyre	Stier
Fraser		

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Hinkley	McPherson
Carlier	Hoffman	Payne
Carson	Horne	Phillips
Ceci	Jansen	Piquette
Connolly	Kazim	Renaud

Coolahan	Kleinsteuber	Rosendahl
Cortes-Vargas	Larivee	Sabir
Dach	Littlewood	Shepherd
Dang	Loyola	Sucha
Eggen	Luff	Sweet
Feehan	Malkinson	Turner
Fitzpatrick	McCuaig-Boyd	Westhead
Ganley	McLean	Woollard
Totals:	For – 10	Against – 39

[Motion on amendment to second reading of Bill 25 lost]

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm rising to seek unanimous consent to go to one-minute bells for any subsequent votes this evening.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:35 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:		
Anderson, S.	Hoffman	McPherson
Carlier	Horne	Payne
Carson	Jabbour	Phillips
Ceci	Kazim	Piquette
Connolly	Kleinsteuber	Renaud
Coolahan	Larivee	Rosendahl
Cortes-Vargas	Littlewood	Sabir
Dach	Loyola	Shepherd
Dang	Luff	Sucha
Eggen	Malkinson	Sweet
Feehan	Mason	Turner
Fitzpatrick	McCuaig-Boyd	Westhead
Ganley	McLean	Woollard
Hinkley		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Hunter	McIver
Cooper	Loewen	Panda
Cyr	MacIntyre	Stier
Fraser		

Totals:	For – 40	Against – 10
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[Motion carried; Bill 25 read a second time]

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we had some really good progress today. I would like to move that we adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:40 p.m.]

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