



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, November 29, 2016

Day 54

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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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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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.

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Hon. members, I would just ask, once again, that we take a moment to extend our sincerest and deepest sympathies and prayers to the family and friends of Captain Tom McQueen, the pilot of the CF-18 jet who tragically lost his life yesterday. If we could just take a moment.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I've got the pride and joy of being able to announce one of my local schools to you and through you to this Assembly, the Holy Cross elementary school. This school that I'm announcing today is a school that both of my children, Amelia and Charlotte, go to.

I also would like to make a special announcement. We have a young man up in the gallery whose birthday it is today, Luke Boisvert.

I would like the parents to stand first. I will name you by the first name. We've got Leanne, Matthew, Clint, Bev, Joy, Tyra, Joleen, David, Teresa, Julia, and Gerald.

If you could all please stand – and I'll have the students stand as well right now – and we'll acknowledge you to the Assembly. Thank you for coming today.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I have two groups that I'd like to introduce at your pleasure. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly the members of the Alberta Home Education Association. The association provides assistance for home-educating students and families and advocates for the authority of home-educating parents. Paul van den Bosch is the president of the association. Paul has degrees in journalism and in education, and he and wife, Mary, have seven children. The oldest two have gone on to postsecondary success. His daughter will be receiving her master's degree this spring from the Franciscan University of Ohio, and his oldest son has his BA from Concordia University here in Edmonton.

Patty Marler is the government liaison for the Home Education Association and has been advocating for home education for over five years. First and foremost, she is the home-educating mother of four children, two of whom have graduated from their home education programs and then graduated from the university and from NAIT. Patty believes that parents are the best decision-makers for their children. She has two of her children, Brianne and Qiu, here with her today.

We had an exciting rally this morning in celebration of home education. Parents from across the province came to bring attention to the successes and the challenges that home education families are experiencing. Could I ask this group to rise and that we give the customary warm welcome of the House to Paul and to Patty.

The Speaker: The second one.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this Legislature the staff and students of

Aurora elementary school. In a small town like Drayton Valley you get to know your neighbours, and when you teach in a small town, you get to know just about everyone. Some of the teachers today were my colleagues two years ago, and one teacher in particular was a former student of mine. I think that as I talked to the students today, for probably about a third of them I taught their parents. It is a great pleasure for me today to have Aurora elementary school please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any additional school groups?

Seeing and hearing none, the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Edmonton Salutes Committee, who are seated in your gallery. The mandate for the committee is to promote and recognize our local military community contributions both at home and abroad. Please welcome Tammy Pidner, community member; Alex Tsang, Major (Retired) and president of the Edmonton United Services Institute; Ferd Caron, councillor for Sturgeon county; Marvin Neuman, director of real estate for Canada Lands Company; Kaetlyn Corbould, military and protocol liaison for the city of Edmonton; and in our Chamber Brian Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms and director of visitor, ceremonial, and security services for the Legislative Assembly. I would ask the committee to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of hard-working civil servants who work for the economics and competitiveness division of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. They are Ann Boyda, Shukun Guan, Emmanuel Laate, Olubukola Oyewumi, Philippa Rodrigues, and Rawlin Thangaraj. They represent the many women and men who work hard to ensure that our farm families are equipped with information on how they can do better in the competitive market of agriculture. I would like to ask that all of them now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly an addition to our constituency team in Edmonton-Glenora. Lowell Walls is keenly interested in helping others and has a deep commitment to supporting people looking for assistance. That's why he is a social work student who is completing his practicum in my constituency office. I ask that Lowell please rise along with Tonya and Dylan, who've been introduced previously, to receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Greg Tabak, a proud Albertan and a good friend. Greg is a senior manager with Enterprise car rental system, a big supporter of Alberta's tourism industry, and one of the nicest people I know. I ask Greg now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two women who work tirelessly to support constituents in Calgary-Acadia. Carla Lloyd works full-time in our office, and she's a compassionate advocate for people in our riding, with a commitment to equity and a knack for keeping us organized and on track. Heather Erlen works both in Calgary-Acadia and Calgary-Bow, and she does an amazing job supporting our constituents with casework and referrals and is a super-strong voice for our community. I'm honoured to have them both working with me, and I couldn't do what I do if not for them. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If you'll indulge me, I have two introductions today. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a fantastic group of Alberta students and mentors from Mindfuel who recently shared their urban tundra science research project on a global stage. The team is made up of students from Edmonton high schools and has the support of research advisers and a mentor from the U of A.

1:40

The students are here today with their mentors in the members' gallery. I ask them to rise as I call their names, and I will apologize in advance for mispronouncing their name: Mindfuel CEO Cassy Weber, Tammy Yamkowsky, Lizzie MacNeill, Mike Ellison, Yassir Mohamed, David Herczeg, Sushil Kumar Senthil Kumar, Rafael Rigon, Teresa Nguyen-Pham, Lujia Cai, Ethan Agena, Karoline Nguyen, Seymour Dadashov, Joshua Cruz, Ejovan Agena, Kelly Shi, Catherine Paet-Pondanera, Farynna Loubich Facundo, Kim Hang, Jacob Xiang, Emman Nnamani, and Rochelin Dalangin. I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

My second introduction, Mr. Speaker, is a young man named Jordan Latter. He's a social work student at MacEwan University, and he's currently fulfilling his practicum in the incredible Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview constituency office. Before starting school, he worked as a community support worker and a child and youth care worker for several years. He's entered the social work program so that he can be an advocate for those in need and increase his capacity to positively impact human services in Alberta. I see that he's risen. I would ask my colleagues to join me in giving him the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a person that spends each day tirelessly advancing workers' rights. Not only is Mike Scott a constituent from the outstanding riding of Edmonton-Decore, but he's also a supporter, and more importantly he's the president of CUPE local 30. Mike, thank you for all you do for all of your members, and I would now ask that you please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to rise and introduce to you and through you a group of local self-advocates from the capital region who tirelessly advocate for full inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Self Advocacy Federation is an integral organization, and they continuously remind us: Nothing about Us without Us. I'd like to ask each person to rise as I say their name: Amy Park, Emily Rypstra, Daisy Stacey, and Keri McEachern. Please join me in welcoming this group.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House Brendan Miller of Walsh LLP of Calgary. Brendan is a constitutional lawyer and a strong civil rights advocate, and I am proud to call him a friend. My guest is seated in the members' gallery, and I ask him to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other guests for introductions today? The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Maurice Brunelle. Maurice is an IT specialist in the Ministry of Human Services. Twenty years ago I collected bone marrow fluid from Maurice at the Cross Cancer Institute. Maurice had volunteered his stem cells to the unrelated bone marrow registry, and his stem cells were transported to Ontario, where they were transplanted successfully to a police officer there. Maurice, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

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

Rabi al-Awwal

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rabi al-Awwal is the third month in the Islamic calendar, a calendar that depends on moonsighting. The word "Rabi" means "spring," and "al-Awwal" means "the first" in Arabic. This year the first day of Rabi al-Awwal is expected to be December 1. The name of the month implies celebration and happiness as it is followed by the months of mourning and grieving known as Muharram and Safar.

Rabi al-Awwal is one of the very important and significant months for Muslims. It is a month when two special occasions are celebrated: Eid Milad-un-Nabi, the birth of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the Eid-e-Zahra, the festival of Fatima's family. Fatima was the daughter of Prophet Muhammad and the mother of Imam Hussain, alaihi salaam; therefore, she is celebrated on Eid-e-Zahra. On this day the happiness of Prophet Muhammad's family was restored after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and the announcement of his present successor, Imam Mahdi, alaihi salaam, was made.

The festival of Fatima's family is celebrated on the ninth day of Rabi al-Awwal, and Prophet Muhammad's birthday is celebrated on either the 12th or 17th day of the month. Therefore, the entire week is declared the week of unity amongst Muslims to spread peace and justice all over the world.

In this month both occasions are celebrated world-wide with lighting, decorations, Quran recitals, prayers, parades, communal meals, feasts, charities, and donations along with lectures and poems on Islam. On these days the mosques, homes, and streets are liveliest and the joy of celebration is at its peak.

This year the celebrations of Rabi al-Awwal coincide with the holiday celebrations, uniting all of us together in sharing the joys of the season. Thank you.

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

Parliamentary Debate

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The word “respect” is thrown around a lot in this House. I love robust debate and have been subjected to many loud and passionate heckles from all members opposite at some time or another, and I’ve participated. Without passion we wouldn’t come up with the best solutions for our province, but there’s a double standard that is palpable that comes from the NDP members of this House. There is heckling that is part of debate, but there are jabs and low blows, and that is what I experienced last night.

All members of this House are more than capable of standing up for themselves, including the amazing female members on all sides. I was astounded to see the Minister of Advanced Education, of all people, stand up and try to belittle the opposition for sharing our opinions. I happen to think that all of us have our own voice. Yes, even conservative women. I’m not asking for chivalry; I’m asking for respect for my opinions. Words in this House are being twisted to suit the government’s side. I regularly have my motives questioned as I fight for a better province.

It was laid out in black and white for me last night that this minister does not respect me, my caucus, or the Legislature. I have never had to defend myself so much or be afraid to say what I think in this House. A weak apology was offered by the Advanced Education minister last night, and I’ll accept that weak apology and move on, but since you also felt the need to interrupt a debate with attacks on my caucus, my resolve has only deepened. I know that the members of my caucus, that I stand beside each and every day, are going to continue to defend Albertans across this province who are depending on us.

Minister, would you please give me the courtesy of listening to my words rather than judging my tone, gesture, and facial expressions? I will offer you the same.

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

Paramedics

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The role of the opposition is to hold the government accountable, and it is not necessarily to oppose everything the government proposes. I’m extremely proud to represent the constituents of Calgary-South East as their elected member in this House. In fact, before being elected, I served Alberta communities and my constituents as an advanced care paramedic. In that pride I’m also very humbled that Albertans have allowed me to serve them.

Alberta paramedics and EMTs have been historically recognized as some of the best in the world, and now there is a future where they can build on that success thanks to this government, the hon. Minister of Health, the Department of Health, and Alberta Health Services. Earlier this year the government proclaimed paramedicine and the College of Paramedics under the Health Professions Act. Since then we’ve seen positive changes at the College of Paramedics. There’s been a new president and council elected, a

well-attended AGM, and greater engagement from the members it governs. Make no mistake. Former administrations and staff from the College of Paramedics have been strong champions in making this change as well.

With paramedics now under the Health Professions Act, it opens the door to better health care for all Albertans. The possibility for more treat-and-release and treat-and-refer protocols allows for less wait time and more community care based practice. We can now also realize the opportunity for a paramedic practitioner degree program, again, which would combine the best of both skill sets in emergency medicine and community paramedicine. Under the Health Professions Act paramedics can have a greater latitude to work in other health care settings. Again, this will enhance collaborative practice in our health care system. This act also increases the accountability amongst registered members of the college.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, while I disagree with this government on several issues, on this particular issue the government has done a good thing not just for paramedics and their profession but for Albertans. I believe that this is going to provide better health care for all communities, and the government should be commended.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Her Majesty’s Leader of the Official Opposition.

Federal Equalization and Transfer Payments

Mr. Jean: Last night the NDP voted unanimously against fighting for a better deal for Albertans on equalization. I would suggest that the NDP occasionally get out from under the dome so that they can actually speak with Albertans across the province. This is a serious issue. Albertans send at least \$20 billion or more every year to Ottawa than we get back in either transfers or services. We are compassionate, but we are also getting a raw deal under the current system. Why would the Premier refuse to at least form a position on equalization rather than just ignoring it and voting against it altogether?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to fighting for Alberta’s interests, they’ve got a government that’s on their side. The Leader of the Official Opposition has a record that isn’t worth writing home about when it comes to this file. In his decade in Ottawa he did nothing on the equalization file. In those 10 years he mentioned equalization once in the House and only twice in committees and not with anywhere near the result that I think Albertans would have hoped for if he was going to pretend that he was fighting for this file today. He had an opportunity to do so as a member of the government caucus in Ottawa.

Mr. Jean: I know that the Premier thinks that getting a thumbs-up from Ottawa to shut down coal jobs and bring in a carbon tax is her idea of getting a good deal for Albertans, but Albertans do think differently. They see a system where their taxes subsidize Quebec for cheaper tuition, whose politicians then turn around and attack our pipelines and our way of life. They see neighbours and family members lose their jobs and struggle to qualify for EI payments even under this system. Albertans have been getting a raw deal from Ottawa on transfers, on EI, and on equalization. Why won’t the Premier stick up for Albertans and stick up for all of us and work harder for us?

Ms Hoffman: Well, in his decade in Ottawa he had about as much success as he did on getting pipelines built, Mr. Speaker. When he

talks about success, the very thing he's asking about, let's remind ourselves what we have done in working with Ottawa for Alberta's interests. We have new federal infrastructure funding for projects that'll create jobs here in Alberta. We're working with the federal government to improve eligibility for employment insurance with great respect, and we're fighting for Alberta's interests on improving federal transfers to Alberta, not just equalization.

Mr. Jean: And let's not forget a hundred thousand Albertans out of work because of this government.

We all work for Albertans. It's our job to actually stick up for them and fight for them. The NDP had a real opportunity last night to be on the side of the people of Alberta and set the record straight. They had a chance to show Canada that Alberta is serious about getting a better deal for those who pay taxes in this province. Those are Albertans. Saskatchewan has said clearly that they want to negotiate reforms but need partners. Why does the Premier refuse to even work with Saskatchewan's Premier to fight for a fair equalization system for Albertans?

Ms Hoffman: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition thinks that the way to get things done at the national level is by poking a stick in the eye of our potential allies. We believe in diplomacy. We believe in working co-operatively with our partners. That's why at my FPT meeting and at many of the others we're willing to talk about how fulfilling the federal platform can help to get better results for Albertans. We're going to keep doing that every opportunity we can, with diplomacy and respect, not by cheap headlines, that the Official Opposition is proposing, and Twitter wars.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Energy Policies

Mr. Jean: Here's another example of the NDP failing Albertans. Ottawa is showing the same enthusiasm for killing jobs in our coal industry as the Alberta NDP. The NDP is going to spend \$1.4 billion of Alberta taxpayers' money to do it and leave our system in need of billions of dollars more in generation to be subsidized by Alberta taxpayers. Instead of shutting down high-efficiency coal generation across Alberta, why doesn't the Premier just negotiate a deal with Ottawa to keep these plants in Alberta online?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be a part of a government that isn't afraid to take action and be leaders right here in Alberta. Because our government took action, we are ready for the federal accelerated coal phase-out with a made-in-Alberta plan. Under our Alberta plan companies will be compensated \$1.1 billion so they can keep investing in Alberta companies. That's leadership. When there's a tough issue that needs to be tackled, our government isn't afraid to do it. We're not just going to look to Ottawa to solve our problems.

Mr. Jean: Here's the problem. Both Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have negotiated deals to keep their coal plants running past 2030. The NDP has had an opportunity to cut the same kind of deal for the 10,000 men and women in Alberta who work in our coal industry, but instead they're putting ideology above Alberta's job creation. As one of Canada's major money managers of Canoe Financial put it yesterday: there's an insane amount of naiveté with this government. Why won't this government acknowledge this,

change course, and start to stand up for good-paying Alberta jobs for Albertans?

Ms Hoffman: We are very proud to stand up for Albertans and for their jobs, Mr. Speaker. That's why we came to the federal government with a plan, and that's why our coal units will be converted to natural gas generation and will have an extra 15 years of operation before they are phased out. Dawn Farrell, CEO of TransAlta, said: we've been very public about the benefits of these conversions; these are low-cost investments that can lengthen the average life of our coal fleet by up to 15 years. They're going to keep mortgage-paying jobs in local communities.

Mr. Jean: Unemployment in Alberta is near record levels, but in just 33 days the NDP's carbon tax comes into effect. That means that in 33 days charities will see millions of dollars taken from them. It means restaurants, farmers, engineers, construction workers, entrepreneurs, and Alberta's families will all have less money to help finance billions of dollars in green slush funds under the NDP. It's a tax that has a full thumbs-up from Ottawa. Why should Alberta have to pay this tax, that will only hurt Alberta jobs, our economy, and our most vulnerable citizens at a time they can't afford it?

Ms Hoffman: Well, it sure sounds like the Leader of the Official Opposition is proposing that we spend 10 times the cost of doing the proper phase-out of these coal units to instead invest in risky technology. Instead, what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is that we're diversifying our economy. We're creating many different areas so that people can have good long-term employment. We can protect our environment, our air, and our water while protecting jobs, and that's exactly what our government is doing.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Parental Choice in Education

Mr. Jean: Since taking office, the NDP have steadily eroded parental rights and choice in education in Alberta. It shouldn't be a surprise seeing as, before the NDP was elected, the NDP repeatedly took shots against our current education model, that acknowledges the importance of diversity and parental rights. Today on the steps of the Legislature concerned parents voiced valid concerns about the NDP slowly taking away parental choice in education. To the Premier: do you continue to believe, as you stated while in opposition, that you are steadfastly opposed to all nonpublic school options? Yes or no?

Ms Hoffman: No, Mr. Speaker. We stand on our record, which is showing that good education is fundamental to a good society, and that's why we are working diligently with parents to ensure that the payments that they are entitled to do in fact go towards those parents. As a steward of public dollars we owe that assurance to the public and to the parents who are entitled to those payments. We are working to make sure that we support public, Catholic, and our record will stand. We are also standing alongside parents who choose home education, private, or charter education.

Mr. Jean: Recognizing choice in our education system is incredibly important to families all across our province. The Education minister plans death by a thousand cuts when it comes to choice in education in Alberta. He has denied new charter school applications tailored specifically for special-needs students and has made sudden changes that have disrupted education delivery for students and failed to consult about those changes. Will the Premier

admit that under her leadership the NDP is seeking to do away with choice in education in Alberta?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our record points to the fact that that couldn't be further from the truth. I'm very proud of the experience I had as chair of the Edmonton public school board, which has a variety of choice programs within a public education model as well, including supports for home-schooling families. If we want to talk about what the Official Opposition is proposing for education, they proposed significant cuts in the last budget. The third party proposed not funding any of the new student growth. Instead, Albertans elected a government that stands by our children and our future, and that's why we're investing in education.

2:00

Mr. Jean: It's clear that the NDP is attempting to move parents from the driver's seat as the central decision-makers for their children to the back of the bus. Parents today have the choice to choose from public, Catholic, francophone, public charter, private, or home-schooling. Good choice in education. This diversity has actually strengthened our education system as a whole while saving millions of dollars for Alberta taxpayers. Will the Premier please confirm that all of the choices in education that she has mentioned, that I have mentioned will continue to be options for families all across our province and that they'll stop the attacks on these choices in education and that parents will continue to always be in the driver's seat of their children's education?

Ms Hoffman: The only ones attacking education are the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker. That's why our government was proud to stand by increases to the Education budget to provide stable, predictable funding so that children can have the very best education. That's why we are working with parents to make sure that the funds that they're owed – those parents who choose home-schooling – are indeed theirs, and we're providing some clarity and stability because we know that we waited for more than four decades under the third party. Today we have a government that's going to stand up for children and for their rights.

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

Provincial Fiscal Policies

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier stood there and bragged that her government would, quote, never download costs onto Alberta families during these difficult economic times, yet we see them racking up debt and taxes at an unprecedented rate. The government is incapable of making difficult decisions that Alberta families are making every day and is downloading the cost of their fiscal incompetence onto the next generation, who will ultimately have to clean up this mess. To the Finance minister: do you not realize that by avoiding tough financial decisions now, you're sacrificing the prosperity of our children and grandchildren?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Another member of that party gave me a piece of paper that said that Alberta has the lowest debt to GDP of any province in the country – the lowest debt to GDP – so we are taking the actions that we were voted in on in May 2015, which are to protect services, to protect programs, to invest in this province, and to diversify the economy.

Mr. McIver: Up to what the minister has said, I will say: you're welcome, Minister.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier also bragged that Alberta has a \$7 billion tax advantage over other Canadian jurisdictions. Two years ago that advantage was \$11 billion. She also inherited a \$1.1 billion surplus, a \$6.5 billion fund, and a triple-A credit rating. Now we've got a double-A credit rating, an empty contingency fund, and a \$10.8 billion deficit in this year alone. For the first time in decades Alberta is borrowing for operations. To the minister: when will you restore Alberta's \$11 billion tax advantage?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know what we also inherited from the other side? We inherited the inability to balance a budget. If you look back at the number of times when oil was at \$105 a barrel – they couldn't balance the budget. It's at \$45, and we're doing a good job.

Mr. McIver: High price or low, we never went in the soup \$11 billion in a year, and you're headed way higher.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I also asked the Premier when Albertans could expect to see a reasonable plan to pay off the mountain of debt her government is accumulating. Instead, she talked about bringing the budget into balance, refusing to give a timeline. Albertans know – and government should – that a plan to repay debt is not the same as a plan to balance the budget. Again to the Finance minister, who ought to know. I'll ask again: when will your government present a realistic debt repayment plan?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I delivered Q2 yesterday, and in Q2 we saw that a more positive economy is coming in 2017, 2.3 per cent growth. We also saw that the deficit is smaller at this point. So with regard to the challenges I want to let you know that the Saskatchewan minister is in the same position we are. He says that you don't want to shock your economy by firing literally hundreds of teachers and nurses and putting hundreds of people out of work. So we're keeping everything stable in this province. That's what Albertans expect.

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

Tobacco Reduction Strategy

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday's second-quarter financial update contained very little good news for Albertans. A quarter-billion-dollar piece of that report was cost overruns in health care. Prevention, now approximately 3 per cent of our health budget, clearly must become a larger part of bending the curve in health care. The Premier has been quite vocal on a number of occasions regarding the health effects and costs of tobacco use to individuals, families, and the health care system. However, tobacco legislation passed in this House three years ago and supported by the Premier when in opposition remains to be proclaimed. To the Premier: what's the delay?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. We have been able to move forward on a number of those pieces, including the banning of flavoured tobaccos, including menthol, in Alberta. We're very proud of that, and we are continuing to work with the chief medical

officer of health and others in a public health way to make sure that we're supporting Albertans and moving forward in a thoughtful way as we move forward with implementing additional pieces of the legislation.

Dr. Swann: Given that e-cigarette use is skyrocketing and given that youth are now almost as likely to try e-cigarettes containing addictive nicotine and given that Health Canada has now specifically recognized the danger e-cigarettes pose, will the minister commit to adding e-cigarettes to the tobaccolike products list and protect young Albertans by banning them in public establishments and workplaces?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for a question that is clearly connected to government policy and something that I think we have heard and many of us advocated for in terms of an expansion and looking at an area for implementation. I've been working collaboratively with my federal counterpart, the Minister of Health for Canada, and they are looking at bringing forward a number of different precautions and safeguards in the area of e-cigarettes and vaporizers and other types of tobacco products. We'll be looking at ways that we can have complementary collaboration to provide the very best safety for Albertans.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Dr. Swann: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Given that when in opposition the NDs made strong arguments against lobbyists from the tobacco industry having access to government ministers, in contravention of the framework convention on tobacco control, a global treaty of which Canada is a signatory, and given that there are still more than a dozen tobacco lobbyists currently operating in Alberta and on our lobbyist registry, will the minister commit today to ensuring that neither she nor her caucus members meet with tobacco lobbyists behind closed doors?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's certainly my intention. I'm glad to have it on *Hansard*. That's the way that we plan on moving forward, by making sure that we protect Albertans. They always deserve to be our number one stakeholder when it comes to making important decisions about their public health.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Municipal Government Act Consultation

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I attended the consultation on the MGA in Hinton this past June, and I've worked closely with municipal leaders in my riding of Stony Plain to get their feedback and input. These same leaders as well as many of my constituents would like to continue their participation by engaging in the consultations on the recently released discussion paper. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what will this consultation look like?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the summer during the MGA consultation tour I heard many great ideas from Albertans across the province, and I thank them for sharing them. Some of those ideas led to the current bill while others led to new policy proposals. These new policy ideas were collected in a discussion guide, *Continuing the Conversation*, where we are now asking

Albertans to share their feedback on these new, potentially groundbreaking proposals as they did not have a chance to comment on them over the summer. We will be collecting that feedback until January 31, and based on that, we'll bring forward further amendments to the MGA in spring 2017. I encourage all Albertans . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.
First supplemental.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the feedback the Ministry of Municipal Affairs received throughout the summer during the consultations throughout Alberta, to the same minister: can you tell us what new proposals the government is considering?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're considering a number of new policy ideas from Albertans that are innovative and forward-looking. Included in those are measures designed to strengthen collaboration between school boards and municipalities, that allow municipalities to create parental leave policies for elected councillors, and to empower municipalities to take a greater role in protecting the environment and combating climate change. These proposed policies need careful consideration and thoughtful feedback to ensure that they meet the needs of all Albertans, so I continue to urge interested parties to go online and tell us what you think.

2:10

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I've heard about potentially introducing parental leave for municipal councillors and given that the Ministry of Status of Women launched the Ready for Her campaign, which will encourage more women to seek office, again to the same minister: how is the minister working to remove barriers and diversify these important councils?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the proposed policies that I am most looking forward to receiving feedback on from Albertans. It builds off a lot of the work done by the Minister of Status of Women's Ready for Her campaign and would enable municipalities to create parental leave policies for elected councillors. This change could make elected work more family friendly or encourage more women to run for public office. Women still face more barriers when it comes to deciding to run for office, and it is policies like these that move us forward to more diversified representation in Alberta's local government.

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

Carbon Policies

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Carbon leakage is a real issue in any plan to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. Bad policy choices can lead to economic activity moving to jurisdictions that don't care about the environment. The spectre of a federal carbon tax is looming on our horizon, and there is considerable risk of carbon leakage as a result. Will the NDP be lobbying the feds to apply a hefty carbon tax to oil coming into Canada from regimes with no carbon tax and especially those despot regimes that support terror, enslave people, and oppress women?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, this question of trade exposure and carbon leakage has informed our hybrid system of an economy-wide price with a system of output-based allocations. We are in consultation with the various industry sectors on the question of these output-based allocations in order to allow for the consideration of trade exposure and some of those competitive pressures that many in Alberta's industries face. I just met today, for example, with members of Fertilizer Canada on this very matter. I'll have more to say about it in subsequent answers, I'm sure.

Mr. MacIntyre: Given that this government seems to care more about making their friends in the eco-radical community happy and handing them paid gigs on government panels and given that so far it seems that this government has not thought out the consequences of carbon leakage since we have yet to see the government's real plan to deal with carbon leakage, will the Premier pause the carbon tax until she gets a plan?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, there are a number of job creators in this province that the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake and the Wildrose have called self-immolating, and they're attacking those job creators, folks like Suncor, folks like Shell, folks like Syncrude, who publicly support a carbon price with a system of output-based allocations. Enbridge, TransCanada, Royal Bank, CNRL, the Cement Association, the Mining Association: these are the folks that the Wildrose thinks are eco-radicals. These are the folks that the Wildrose talks down every chance they get.

Mr. MacIntyre: Given that the chair of the NDP's own climate panel knows that carbon leakage is the weakness of carbon taxation – he said, quote: until the rest of the world has policies that impose similar costs, you're not actually reducing emissions to the extent that you think; you're just displacing emissions and the economic activity to other jurisdictions – and given that the carbon tax will hurt economic activity without actually reducing global emissions, why is the NDP blindly rushing headlong down a policy path that hurts Albertans without having an honest answer to the problem of carbon leakage?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've heard this before, a half interpretation of the Leach report, because it went on to recommend a system of output-based allocations, which we are currently negotiating with the industry sectors in question. That is why many, many Canadian corporate executives have been urging the federal government to move forward with carbon pricing and climate action, companies like GE Canada, SNC-Lavalin, Shell Canada, Rio Tinto, Teck Resources, Forest Products Association of Canada, Suncor, large employers in all of our ridings, who are looking to us to find a way forward for Canada.

Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

Mr. Fraser: Yesterday I asked about supports for families impacted by the accelerated coal phase-out. Clearly, this government completely missed the mark in providing any information to rural families or municipal leaders on how their communities will change. With all due respect to the economic development minister, I'm surprised that you didn't reach out personally to these communities on such an important matter. Minister, I've spoken to a few more mayors since yesterday, and still your office hasn't returned their calls. Why are you afraid to properly engage with these communities?

The Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Most of that premise is actually factually incorrect. First of all, I have sat down with many mayors and councillors from affected communities. That was several months ago. Since then one of my ADMs has been reaching out to each of the mayors individually. We set up a coal panel, which in the new year will be going into these communities. We are engaging with the local municipalities because we value their input.

Mr. Fraser: That's interesting, Minister, because you sat down with them in June, you released the report last week, and they didn't even get a copy of the report.

Given that the NDP have shirked their responsibility on this issue and are hiding behind the very businesses they shut down and are now asking them to help families and communities in the transition and given that families brace for the worst, this government is only planning on speaking with these communities months down the road. Premier, you haven't clearly outlined how businesses are supposed to adequately support these families to make this transition. Will you instruct your economic minister to do his job properly and outline transition support for these families?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of the environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the transition plan for workers and for communities has been at the forefront of our minds. That is why we have, first of all, engaged with the companies in an appropriate negotiation to provide certainty. Part of that certainty has been the capacity market and has been the negotiation of the transition payments over time. That is why TransAlta, which is one of the very important, embedded companies in this province, has said: this allows us to convert some of our coal plants to gas, keep our workers working, keep those communities strong, and be able to provide . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Fraser: Given that the truth is that the NDP government doesn't seem to have the backs of Albertans and given that the truth is that the NDP seems to have no interest in collaborating with these investors, to the Premier: you've told Albertans that these investments are here to replace the coal phase-out, but we know that these projects aren't even being planned. Where do you expect the investment in renewables to come from if struggling design companies in Alberta aren't even designing the projects?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have done is put forward a careful, thoughtful plan in negotiation and in consultation with the affected companies, ensuring that we are keeping that capital here in Alberta as we transition our electricity system. Now, when we took over, there were already 12 of the 18 plants scheduled for decommissioning, and we discovered to our horror that there was no plan for any of those communities. That is why we have dedicated funds within the budget. We are looking at our apprenticeship and training investments, and we are moving this province forward.

Health Care Wait Times

Mr. Barnes: Yesterday the NDP benches laughed and dismissed Alberta's serious wait times problem because they didn't like that the source of the report was the Fraser Institute. Well, it's funny because in 2008 the Premier had no problem using the same annual

report to criticize access to psychiatric care, and in 2010 the NDP Education minister cited the report to argue that the PCs needed to spend even more. Does the minister deny that wait times are getting worse or just her ability to do something about it?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I said yesterday and I'll say again today that we are committed to making sure that we provide support to help address ways that we can lessen wait times, but instead of what's being proposed by the Official Opposition, which is privatizing and outsourcing and allowing people to queue-jump, those who can afford to, we're doing so in a thoughtful, collaborative way. They're proposing billions of dollars in cuts and privatization. We're proposing stability and working together to address wait times in a reasonable way. I'm proud of our record to date.

Mr. Barnes: Given that wait times for back surgeries are worse than in May 2015 and that median cataract waits are 38 per cent worse and that shoulder surgery waits are 15 per cent worse and that the average pacemaker waits are 68 per cent worse and given that carpal tunnel is worse and hernia repair is worse and prostate surgeries are worse and urgent and semi-urgent CT scans are over 60 per cent worse and MRIs are worse and on and on and on, how long do we have to wait for the NDP to get serious about real improvement?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to the assertions that have been raised by the Official Opposition. Rather than proposing billions of dollars worth of cuts, which would result in laying off many nurses, which would impact our ability to access specialized services, including diagnostics, we are working together with the front lines. While we're in difficult financial times, I'm very proud of the record we have in working with organizations such as the AMA to bring them to the table to find ways, find up to half a billion dollars worth of savings in just the next two years that we can use to address some of the concerns that are being raised rather than proposing ideological transfers to privatization.

Mr. Barnes: Given that in the first-quarter fiscal update Health was projected to blow its budget by a hundred million dollars and seeing as the second-quarter update now shows \$260 million in cost overruns and since last year's total health spending was nearly \$300 million higher than projected, the Health minister is clearly confused about which way the cost curve needs to be bent. When it comes to the Health budget, where will the minister's wild ride end up this year?

Ms Hoffman: Well, I'll tell you where we're not going to end up, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to end up where they're pushing us, where they really want us to go, which is laying off nurses, firing those who are providing the important front-line care, because it's important that we work to provide what Albertans elected us to. While I want to acknowledge that we haven't hit our targets yet, the member opposite is speaking about a 1 to 1 and a half per cent increase over what was projected, which is down significantly from the 8 per cent that the members opposite have so much fun flirting with around moving forward on their former agenda. We're moving forward in a reasonable, thoughtful way, working with partners in finding ways to reduce the rate of increase.

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

Victims of Crime Fund

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Crime is rising across Alberta. Because of chronic shortages in courts, sex offenders are seeing their charges stayed and are now allowed to walk free on our streets. Victims are more vulnerable today than ever before. That's why I was surprised to hear at today's Public Accounts meeting that the NDP is thinking about using the victims of crime fund for legal aid. Yes, we need to ensure that legal aid is properly funded, but why isn't this money being used to help victims?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'd like to begin by stating that the premise of that question is completely false. The member was in the committee today when my deputy said that there are brackets in the legislation for what that money can be used for. We have no intention of using that money for anything but victims of crime. Sometimes victims of crime, victims of domestic violence need emergency protection orders, and those funds can be used for that purpose. [interjections]

The Speaker: First supplemental. [interjections] Folks, if you continue to raise that, I'm going to stop the clock.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Legal aid is important. We both agree with that. It helps low-income Albertans to speed up the justice system, but money needs to go to victims. Given that there are over 170 victims' services organizations and given that we have a massive surplus to support victims, why are these 170 organizations being left to just fend for themselves?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Of course, we're absolutely committed to seeing that those funds reach the victims that they're intended for. The Auditor General has asked us to take the time to do the work to identify the needs of victims and to see how to best meet those needs, so we're going to do that work to ensure that we're getting the money out the door in order to support victims of crime, not just for the sake of getting the money out the door.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The victims of crime fund should go to victims. Period.

Given that Alberta's victims of crime fund has surged to a record \$56 million and given that there are several organizations providing counselling and mental health support for victims across Alberta, where is this government's plan for getting more of this surplus to these essential community organizations?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Well, of course we intend for all of the funds in the victims of crime fund – I've said it before and I'll say it again – to reach victims because we think that that is incredibly important. We have a lot of organizations working incredibly hard across this province to support those victims. We are going to do the work that the Auditor General has asked us to do to ensure that we understand what those needs are, to ensure that we know how to meet those needs and that we have measurable objectives to

meeting those needs. We're going to move forward to support victims, not just to get the money out.

Thank you.

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

Opioid Use Prevention and Mitigation

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Federal Health Minister Philpott has brought opioids to the national stage with a summit on the crisis. Yes, she called it a summit. Our PC caucus has been blowing the whistle loudly on this ever since Alberta started seeing a shocking number of deaths, including in our vulnerable indigenous communities. We applaud the federal Health minister for this initiative that saw health ministers from across Canada attend, including B.C. and Ontario, the two other hardest-hit provinces. To the Health minister: what did you and your associate minister learn at this summit, or did you even bother to attend?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I was very pleased to represent Alberta at the Opioid Conference and Summit that was held earlier this month. One of the things that we learned at the summit is not just that the opioid dependency problem that we're seeing in this province is a complex, multifaceted one that requires a variety of responses but that the movements that our government has been making are on the right track and supported by experts from across our country. Additionally, provinces across our country are looking to Alberta as a leader on this issue.

Mr. Rodney: Speaking of leaders, the question was whether the Health minister was in attendance.

Now, given that the opioid crisis is a life-and-death issue for Albertans yet our province has yet to declare a public health emergency and given that the summit applauded British Columbia for its network and framework for dealing with its opioid crisis, including declaring it a public health emergency, and given that on November 21 the associate minister told this House that more information and awareness about this crisis would be a wasted PR exercise, again to the Health minister: when will you declare this a public health opioid emergency in this province?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'm pleased to be our government's lead minister on this file, and I work diligently on this issue day and night. I can't speak to how other governments have associate ministers working, but in our government I am considered an equal member of this team, and I'm working very hard on this issue.

As for the question of data, our government is able, because we have a single health region, to compile most of the data that other jurisdictions require specific legislation to be invoked to gather. I'm very proud of the Q3 report that we've put forward that has a wide range of data, not just . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Rodney: I shudder to think of how the families feel about the leadership.

Given that many provinces, including British Columbia, have approved the nasal spray version of naloxone, which is much easier to administer, especially for those who are not first responders, and given that naloxone is saving thousands of lives and Narcan can

save more and given that we have not heard of its use in Alberta, to the minister in charge: has Narcan been issued anywhere in Alberta? If so, to whom, and if not, why not?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We do know that naloxone is able to save lives by reversing the effects of an overdose. However, medical attention is still required after administering naloxone. Our government has increased the access to naloxone across the province to have 13,000 kits available. We have also been working with our partners in Justice to have the nasal spray available. The RCMP has made that move for their members, and that is something that we're continuing to explore. We know that getting naloxone in any form out to the community where people need it is going to help save lives.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane.

2:30 Flood Damage Mitigation in Southern Alberta

Mr. Westhead: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The municipal district of Bighorn was hit hard by the 2013 floods. They experienced alpine torrent flooding, much different than the overland flooding experienced elsewhere during the 2013 event. Bighorn's small population is now struggling to move forward on flood mitigation infrastructure they need to protect their communities. To the Minister of Environment and Parks: what is the government doing to protect the municipal district of Bighorn?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is of course taking action to reduce the threat of future flooding in communities like the MD of Bighorn. We've committed \$500 million over 10 years to protect homes, businesses, and the economy through the Alberta community resilience program. In February we committed over \$3.3 million to the MD of Bighorn for mitigation work on Heart Creek. We will continue to work with those communities, like the MD of Bighorn, to make sure that residents and businesses are protected.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that similar to the municipal district of Bighorn the town of Canmore and the hamlet of Bragg Creek eagerly await community-level flood protection, again to the Minister of Environment and Parks: when will residents of these communities see shovels in the ground and these projects built?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we worked with the federal government to secure \$5.5 million in federal funding for Bragg Creek and \$14.4 million for Canmore. This builds on over \$50 million of provincial funding already in place to fund local mitigation efforts in Bragg Creek and Canmore. Working with our municipal partners, we expect construction to start on the Bragg Creek flood barriers in the next construction season, spring 2017.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that indigenous communities such as the Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations have been quite severely impacted by the flooding, what steps has the minister taken to support First Nations?

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, indigenous communities in Alberta were hit hard by the 2013 floods, and it's important that we partner with them to make sure that they are protected and that they have a voice in the reconstruction. That's why we committed \$2 million to construct an extension of the Redwood Meadows berm onto Tsuut'ina lands. We also committed \$400,000 to flood proof the sewer lines, to prevent flood waters from overwhelming the local sewer system.

The Speaker: The Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta ranchers are concerned about what is happening with bovine tuberculosis. According to the federal ag minister the ag recovery program is meant to pay for the ongoing cost for feed, transportation, and interest payments due to the TB quarantines. Now that the CFIA can begin setting up a high-risk quarantine feedlot for these ranchers, who will cover the cost of setting up this commercial feedlot, meeting the CFIA standard, and what is your plan B?

The Speaker: The minister of agriculture.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Absolutely, I understand the stress these producers have been going under. CFIA continues the investigation of a federally reportable disease. A lot of the onus is on the federal government. I've had the opportunity to meet twice with the federal agriculture minister. We've met with the CFIA, we've met with the Alberta Beef Producers, the individual producers, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, going through to make sure that programs are in place, that we can support these farmers as they go through this incredibly stressful time.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Every rancher in Alberta knows that they could have been the victim of poor government policy. Given that today the federal ag minister stated that while this program will help out with these costs for these affected ranches, this program will only cover about 90 per cent of those costs, will this government be topping up this federal funding with the newly announced \$222 million disaster expense for agricultural indemnities, or is that money strictly for unharvested crops?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I had the opportunity to review the programs with the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation to find out what programs are able to better assist these producers. That work is ongoing. I'm very happy with the department for the work they've been doing, the collaboration they have done with other ministries, including Alberta Health, to ensure that the health of producers are protected, the health of Albertans is protected, and the health of the industry is protected.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, ranchers are worried and scared. Given that there are over 40 premises currently under quarantine

and given that there are now 10,000 cattle destined for slaughter, leaving the financial viability of these ranches in question, Albertans are wondering if the minister will use this line item to assist these ranchers with loans owed to financial institutions so that they don't default due to circumstances completely beyond their control.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the follow-up question. This couldn't come at a worse time. These producers are looking for their one and only paycheck. It came at a time now when we want to ensure that the work that's being done by the CFIA is being done to be able to get a handle on this. To ensure that we maintain our tuberculosis-free status is important for the industry, again, working with AFSC, CFIA, agriculture Canada, and the federal government to ensure that support for the producers is there when they most need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provincial Fiscal Policies

(continued)

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The late Member for Calgary-Greenway was a wise man. I clearly recall two exchanges he had with the Finance minister in June 2015, when he warned that the NDP's economic policies would push taxpayers and business out of Alberta. The minister confidently responded by saying: they won't leave Alberta; in fact, they will stay here because of our beautiful mountains and our new NDP government. To the Finance minister: it's a year and a half later, and business confidence is at an all-time low. Is this not in contradiction to your earlier pronouncement?

Mr. Ceci: I remember the Member for Calgary-Greenway as well, and I really appreciated his work on that side. I just want to say that our plan is having, you know, across the economy – it's going to be growing next year. Next year the confidence of people will be returning because they know that we're investing massive amounts of money into capital infrastructure across this province, putting people back to work. They know we are working to diversify our economy, and our EDT minister is doing that work as well. They know that if they stick with Alberta, we will stick with them.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that yesterday's second-quarter fiscal update shows a precipitous decline of \$877 million in corporate taxes – oh my – and given that corporate taxation has been an important revenue pillar through 80 years of small "c" conservative governance and given that this NDP government continues to display nothing but contempt for Alberta business, again to the Finance minister: given that the late member's predictions have come true, are you going to moderate your policies, or will you continue to ignore his advice?

Mr. Ceci: Well, he just mentioned the Q2 update. I want to say that the Q2 update also talked about signs of improvement in our economy. It talked about many areas where there is an upswing: the number of wells being dug, the amount of manufacturing done, the amount of export happening. That is happening.

You know, the deficit is also smaller. He didn't talk about that. We are holding the line on expenses. We're moving forward. That's what Albertans want, and that's what we're doing.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the proof of this government's policies is evident by the deplorable state of our current economy and given that this government is pushing out corporations with the accumulated effects of accelerated taxation, the highest minimum wage in the country, and court action to renege on long-standing business agreements and given that the carbon tax is waiting in the wings, set to crush those still keen to remain in Alberta, to the same minister: are you willing to at least moderate one of these policies in order to help re-establish business confidence?

Mr. Ceci: You know, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade is so proud of the work he's doing and involved in it out there that he wants me to talk about the record of investment that is going on in this province. The record of investment is \$38 billion a year, higher than any other province, private investment in this province. You're not mentioning that. You're also not mentioning that capital investment is ready to flow again because of the work we're doing to increase the capacity market for electricity. That will change things as well.

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

Transportation Infrastructure

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents in Red Deer are concerned that the infrastructure needed to reduce traffic congestion and increase safety by providing better access to highway 2 has taken too long. Given that Alberta Transportation is investing \$4.7 billion towards new road projects and bridges, to the Minister of Infrastructure: will the concerns of my constituents be addressed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

2:40

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for her question on behalf of her constituents. I'm pleased to say that projects like the Gaetz Avenue interchange are progressing very well at Red Deer and will be ready to serve Albertans and visitors from around the world in time for the 2019 Canada Winter Games. Construction on this \$80 million project started in September, and Albertans can see it as they travel between Edmonton, Calgary, and all points in between. Once it's complete, the interchange will improve travel on this very busy corridor and provide access to key destinations for local residents as well.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta's capital plan invests \$2.1 billion for capital maintenance of roads and bridges, to the Minister of Infrastructure: what impact has this investment had on the province's infrastructure deficit?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Members will know that this government inherited a very, very large infrastructure deficit, and as indicated in David Dodge's report, it's the time to invest now for the future. In fact, we're experiencing many contracts coming in at 10 or 15 per cent below budget, and we can reallocate that money to build additional infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure to make our roads safer and to make the travel more efficient and convenient for all Albertans.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the current economy and the state of our province's aging infrastructure, to the same minister: what results is this investment having for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Our \$34.8 billion capital plan is putting Albertans back to work. By enhancing the capital plan by 15 per cent, as Mr. Dodge recommended, we're creating 10,000 new jobs over three years. Ten thousand. Not only are these investments in hospitals, schools, roads, and affordable housing creating good family-supporting jobs, but they will result in projects that will facilitate our economic recovery and enhance the overall quality of life for all Albertans.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Edmonton Salutes Committee RCAF Captain Thomas McQueen

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to speak about the Edmonton Salutes Committee, which was established in 1997. I have been honoured to work with this dedicated team over the past year and a half in my role as the provincial government liaison for the Canadian Forces. The committee's mandate is to promote and recognize our local military community contributions both at home and abroad.

The Edmonton Salutes Committee membership is drawn from the city of Edmonton, corporate Edmonton, surrounding municipalities, and the government of Alberta. Military members from the 3rd Canadian Division Support Group, HMCS *Nonsuch*, and the Canadian Forces recruiting centre prairies and north detachment Edmonton, representing army, navy, and air force, each have a seat at the table. The committee has collaborated to promote and support incentives such as the Freedom of the City parade and ceremonies; collaborating on the Griesbach's Flanders field park commemoration; celebrating the city's namesake ship, HMCS *Edmonton*; and supporting the Military Family Resource Centre and other organizations seeking to recognize the military in the capital region.

On return from deployment in Afghanistan troops were met by the members of the committee, who offered Tim Hortons coffee and doughnuts. The committee also arranged for an Edmonton Police Service escort from the airport to the base. Edmonton, through the efforts of the Edmonton Salutes Committee, enjoys a strong relationship with the military and a well-deserved reputation as a garrison town.

Through the commitment of support for the military community it is with a heavy heart that I share my deepest condolences to the family and colleagues of Captain Thomas McQueen, the pilot who perished in the CF-18 fighter jet accident yesterday. It is never easy to lose a member of the Canadian Forces. The families and communities, 4 Wing, and CFB Cold Lake, Alberta, and Canada have suffered a tremendous loss. On behalf of Albertans I would like to extend my deepest sympathies and gratitude to the fallen soldier and his family for their commitment to serving Canada. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

Organ and Tissue Donation

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the altruism and community spirit of Albertans who donate blood, bone marrow, stem cells, and cord blood. I also want to recognize and encourage Albertans in their involvement in organ donation so that our world-class heart, lung, liver, islet cell, cornea, and kidney transplant programs can continue to benefit Albertans.

I was the medical director of the blood transfusion service here in Edmonton for 15 years. I became involved because my leukemia patients needed a reliable local supply of platelets and red blood cells to benefit from their chemotherapy treatments. I learned that Edmonton and Calgary had the best blood donors in Canada, and they are routinely supplying other parts of Canada. Today it was my pleasure to introduce Maurice Brunelle. Maurice is one of thousands of Albertans who have volunteered to donate marrow or stem cells to the unrelated bone marrow donor registry run by Canadian Blood Services.

Twenty years ago I collected bone marrow from Maurice at the Cross Cancer Institute. It was transported to Ontario and transplanted successfully to a police officer with leukemia. Twenty years later donor and recipient are friends, and Maurice's community extends across Canada. Bone marrow and stem cells from Alberta donors have been used across Canada and around the world.

Using what we learned from the UBMDR, hematologists in Alberta now use stem cells to rescue the bone marrow function of patients with lymphoma, myeloma, and other cancers that require high-dose chemotherapy. Our patients in the cancer program now have as good an outcome as patients anywhere in the world.

I also appreciate Alberta parents who contribute placental blood to the cord blood bank. Placental blood cells are particularly important for patients who are unable to find a donor on the UBMDR. Cord blood is special in that it does not cause the graft reaction that stem cells from adults do.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I implore all Albertans to follow the example of stem cell donors like Maurice and sign their organ donor cards and make sure that all their loved ones know about it.

Thank you.

Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, this government is trying to pull a fast one on the people of this province. One day they say that they have to shut down our coal plants or else the federal government will shut them down for us. The next day we learn that both Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have made deals to keep their coal plants operating beyond 2030. This government didn't even try to get a deal for taxpayers or defend the thousands of Albertans who make a living in the coal industry. They are putting thousands of families out of work in communities like Hanna, Forestburg, and Keephills.

To make matters worse, they're paying a king's ransom to shut down these plants: \$97 million a year for 14 years, \$1.36 billion. This money could be better spent on pressing needs like building critical infrastructure or even reducing taxes. There is no need to shut these plants down early and put thousands of Albertans out of work.

The federal government is clearly open to compromise, but this isn't about the federal government. This is about that government across the aisle who puts ideology before all else. To no surprise, Mr. Speaker, this government is made up of NDP world view activists from B.C., Manitoba, and also Ontario, where, by the way, the most unpopular Premier in all of Canada just apologized for completely mismanaging the electricity file. This government is already starting to backtrack by imposing a cap on what they know

will be higher power prices. Alberta taxpayers will be stuck with paying the rest of the bill. This government knows they've sold Albertans down the river, and Albertans know it, too.

But there is a better, more stable vision for our province, one where the government actually defends people over ideology. This government is letting people down while this government continues to serve the NDP world view.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

2:50

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Bill 34

Electric Utilities Amendment Act, 2016

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 34, the Electric Utilities Amendment Act, 2016. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The proposed bill would enable the government of Alberta to manage the impacts of the coal power purchase arrangements on the Balancing Pool and provide consumers with stable electricity prices.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I would like to table the requisite number of copies of a letter I received from Dr. Les Ellis, a veterinarian from Lloydminster, stating his opposition to proposed government Bill 207.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a letter I received from Dr. Tim Goodbrand, a veterinarian from Vermilion, stating his opposition to Bill 207. I have many more.

The Speaker: Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table three documents to which I referred yesterday. The first one is a document regarding an interview with the Leader of the Official Opposition where the title says Help Fort McMurray by Slowing Down Oil-sands Development, ex-MP Says. He says: I'd like it slowed down; sometimes it feels like we're racing to the end; the oil is not going anywhere.

The second document, Mr. Speaker, is a report from the World Bank stating the problems with trickle-down economics.

The third document is a report from the International Monetary Fund also confirming the problems with trickle-down economics, that the Wildrose believes in.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five copies of a report by EDC Associates that I referenced last night in debate on Bill 27, Multi-client Study of Potential Impacts on the AB Electricity Market of Policy Implementation Choices for the Climate Leadership Plan, which shows a 25 per cent renewable target is much more economically viable than a 30 per cent target.

Thank you.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Bilous, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, response to Written Question 13 asked for by Mr. Clark on May 16, 2016: what are the deliverables from the Minister of Economic Development and Trade's recent trip to Washington, DC, from February 3 to 5, 2016?

On behalf of the hon. Ms Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, the Alberta Law Enforcement Review Board 2015 annual report, Alberta Human Rights Commission annual report 2015-16; pursuant to the Legal Profession Act the Law Society of Alberta 2015 annual report.

On behalf of the hon. Minister Miranda, Minister of Culture and Tourism, pursuant to the Wild Rose Foundation Act the Wild Rose Foundation annual report 2015-16, pursuant to the Historical Resources Act the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation 2015-16 annual report, pursuant to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act the Alberta Foundation for the Arts 2015-16 annual report, pursuant to the Alberta Sport Connection Act the Alberta Sport Connection annual report 2015-16.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 25 Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have an amendment.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A1.
Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Fraser to move that Bill 25, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, be amended by adding the following after section 2:

Annual Report

2.1 Commencing one year after the coming into force of this Act, the Minister shall, as soon as practicable after December 31 each year, prepare and make publicly available an annual report, which contains:

- (a) the reduction, expressed in megatonnes, from the previous calendar year in upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions;
- (b) the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emissions, expressed in megatonnes, that will be produced in the first year of commercial operation by oil sands sites approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act in the year for which the annual report is made;
- (c) the amount of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions for the year for which the annual report is made; and
- (d) the amount, expressed in megatonnes, of greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emission excluded under section 2(2) for the year in which the annual report is made.

I rise today to speak about the amendment on Bill 25. We'd like to see this bill amended to include the annual reporting mechanism. As we've certainly noted in this House, we in the PC caucus do not believe that this bill has been thought through enough. We believe that there are some serious issues that have not been addressed by this government and that there are going to be real consequences in the prosperity and everyday lives of Albertans, so we're not generally supportive of this bill.

That being said, we do believe that there are some changes to this bill that this government should absolutely be considering. If the government is committed to barrelling ahead on legislation like this, then we hope that they will at least allow members of this House to provide their input in trying to improve this piece of legislation. The amendment we are proposing today is along those lines, and the amendment tries to at least allow for measures for this government and Albertans that can actually gauge the success of this bill. That's why we are proposing that the government release a progress report of sorts at the end of each year.

This report is going to contain information like how much progress has actually been made in reducing upgrading emissions. We're also looking to see how much greenhouse gas is being produced by facilities approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act. This will give us some understanding of whether or not this bill is accomplishing its stated goal, which is information that I'd hope the government would like to have and information that I'd hope they'd be willing to share with Albertans.

We would also like to see this report detail how much money is coming from the government in terms of supporting research and development on emissions reductions. I think it's important that we can demonstrate to Albertans that we are delivering value for their tax dollars, and it's hard to know whether or not that kind of investment is worth while if we don't have the information on spending in one consolidated location.

3:00

Lastly, we'd like to see this report include a summary detailing the amounts of various emissions detailed in the bill. Again, this is important information when we're making decisions on the effectiveness of the act. We want to measure where exactly we're seeing reductions or, perhaps, where we're seeing increases so that we can measure whether or not we're making progress or simply shifting emissions between different categories.

As you can see, this is a report card of sorts, the kind of amendment that aims to increase accountability and transparency in government programs. Hopefully, if the government is being honest about their desire to increase transparency, they will have no problem with this amendment. I look forward to their thunderous support of what really is just a common-sense improvement to the legislation.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am grateful to the hon. member for this amendment. I will be supporting it, and I would encourage all members of this House to support it. If I had my druthers, I would druther that we had this happening monthly. Given the advent of technology today there are places you can go on the web and you can see, live stream almost, the kinds of activities that are happening with different industries in different places around the world. We know that we have the technology right now to live stream GHG reductions. It would be nice if Albertans could go to a website and actually see: okay; well, here's

this particular industry sector, and here's the amount of emissions that are being handled. Kind of like our debt clock. You can go and see how the debt is just clicking off and clicking off. You know, I would like to see that clock run backwards, but it isn't going to happen at least for a few years.

Anyway, back to this particular amendment. As I have said in this House before, you cannot manage what you do not measure. We have attempted on a number of occasions to have this government accept amendments to different bits of legislation to measure the effect of a given piece of legislation or a given policy that this government puts out. I am grateful that we have this amendment before us because here's a performance measurement that we can take to see how effective the government's actions are on this file. It is vitally important because as we go forward, of course, we're hoping that we're going to see some sort of reductions taking place, although as we've mapped out earlier, if they don't take care of the issue regarding carbon leakage, the net to the globe isn't going to be positive.

Nevertheless, as you look through this particular amendment, you've got "the reduction, expressed in megatonnes, from the previous calendar year in upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions." I'm grateful for that because now we're going to be able to look over previous year after year after year and see how we are doing. I would hope that having a measurement like this, the government or the people within the department can then look at how we're proceeding, look at our progress, and make adjustments as we go along.

I mean, it's very important that we do make adjustments because initially, of course, whenever we human beings embark on something, invariably the best laid plans of mice and men end up having to be changed on the fly as we go forward. You know, this particular issue of greenhouse gas emissions is just one of those things where the government has an idea that if we do A, B, and C, it's going to result in a particular outcome. But there's no guarantee those outcomes will actually be reached, and if we don't measure what we're doing as we go forward, the government is not going to know what they're going to need to do to improve the outcome at the end of the day.

Here we have (b):

the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emissions, expressed in megatonnes, that will be produced in the first year of commercial operation by oil sands sites approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act in the year for which the annual report is made.

Again, if I had my druthers, I'd druther have seen a bill where specific components in this big thing we call greenhouse gas emissions – I would rather have seen a splitting out of those things. Maybe where the government will go if they approve this is actually list for us the particular emission and its level as we go along here. Because with the technologies that the oil sands group are employing and with the technologies that at least some of us in the House are aware of, that are just waiting in the wings to get deployed in the oil sands, there are going to be different emissions impacted differently with these new technologies that are coming out. It would be very important from a scientific point of view, from a research point of view, to actually watch as we go along how we're impacting these different components in the greenhouse gas emissions mix. So I would rather have seen a splitting out here, but that's fine. The amendment is good as it is. It can always be amended later.

"The amount of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions for the year for which the annual report is made." It's very important to the taxpayers of this province that they know that their tax dollars are being used wisely. Without a

performance measurement like this to actually see how much we're spending per tonne of reduction – that is vitally important to taxpayers. The people of Alberta are hard-working people. Great gobs of the money that they are earning is being taken out of their pocket by this government's tax, tax, tax on this, that, and the other thing. It would be, I think, only respectful that the government would then have some sort of performance measure in place to assure the taxpayers that – you know what? – yes, we took those taxes from you, but look what we managed to accomplish with them.

Without some sort of measurement and verification of that, then what do the taxpayers have to go on? Just trust me that it's working. That's not good enough, Madam Chair. That's not good enough at all. This is their money. It's taxpayers' money. They have a right to know that the money that is being taken from them – and when it comes to carbon taxation, if the polls are accurate, and I have no reason to doubt their accuracy, it is being taken from them against their will. They at least ought to be given the decency of knowing that money is being used appropriately.

What else can I say about this wonderful amendment that we have? I hope to see more amendments like this because it's clear that Bill 25 is going to be shoved through this House, but I would hope that the government will at least have the sense to take good, serious consideration of amendments that are brought forward to the House, that are an attempt to make this bill better than it currently may be. We have to make improvements to it. It is impacting one of the most significant industries in our province. I would hope that the government is not just presuming that they do know best and that we're just going to have to take their word for it.

I'm aware that there are certain industry participants that have reviewed Bill 25. They want to see some amendments made to it because of the impact Bill 25 is going to have on them. I would hope that this government will listen to some of those voices that we represent over on this side and that they would in fact listen to those industry people, who I know have been attempting to make contact with the members on the other side.

All in all, I'm very happy with this amendment. I would encourage my colleagues in this House to support it. I look forward to more such amendments coming forward to try and improve this bill.

Thank you very much.

3:10

The Chair: The hon. minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm very pleased to rise and speak to this amendment. I commend the member and his caucus for putting forth thoughtful amendments to this bill, Bill 25, of course, which was asked for by the oil sands industry. When we took the decision to move forward with this, it was on the advice of oil sands operators, and we listened to them. We listened to their concerns around tidewater access, and one of the things that they brought to us was that they asked us to grapple with the issue of greenhouse gas emissions coming from the oil sands through a legislative mechanism of a cap. So that's what we have done. We listened to Shell, ConocoPhillips, Cenovus, Statoil, CNRL, Suncor, and MEG.

Now, on the matter of reporting, Madam Chair, first of all, the Auditor General has flagged this matter of GHG measurement and reporting several times over the years. Of course, we inherited a carbon pricing system from the previous government, and in successive reports the Auditor General indicated that the government was not providing accurate and timely reporting on emissions

inventories. That is why we have taken steps to ensure that our emissions inventories are keeping pace. We have ensured that we have the right kind of support for this given that this is such an important undertaking of our government. In fact, it's so important to the national economy and, indeed, to our investment climate going forward so that investors can make investments in the oil sands in a way that they know there is a climate policy that will surround those investments and therefore insulate those investments from some of the political uncertainty that was arising from having no real serious and robust climate policy, which is why oil sands companies asked us for this in the first place.

So there has been that Auditor General recommendation, and in our department the climate change office is moving forward with a number of different initiatives to ensure that we've got the right measuring, reporting, and verification happening, Madam Chair. However, in the aggregate – and this is broken down by industrial sector as well – we do have reporting via Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada. They form part of our national emissions inventories, which then, in turn, form part of our nationally determined contributions to the UNFCCC. Those are national emissions inventories to which Alberta provides its data on an annual basis once it has been appropriately measured, reported, verified. We undertake those efforts in conjunction with the federal government.

Certainly, they do take time to verify, Madam Chair, and there's a good reason for that because with carbon pricing now with tradeable permits, with an offset protocol system, and so on, they must be real. They must be substantive. Yes, technology is changing, but that is why there is some lag time. We are working on 2014 inventories right now that form the basis of Canada's analysis and recommendations to the UNFCCC, which is, of course, the framework convention on climate change, which provides, then, the baseline for our nationally determined contributions under the Paris agreement.

In addition, Alberta already is part of measuring, verification, and reporting with other subnational governments. Here again it's important for us to have a uniformity across jurisdictions, particularly as jurisdictions begin to take on Alberta's offset protocols in agriculture and elsewhere. We report through the climate group, our membership in the climate group, which is the compact of states and regions, which is, of course, an international body, Madam Chair. So we undertake those efforts as well.

In addition, the National Energy Board, Madam Chair, does consider emissions as part of their pipeline applications. In fact, they did an upstream emissions impact assessment for the Trans Mountain pipeline, and that's one of the reasons why oil sands operators wanted the cap in place. What it does is that it takes that question of the upstream emissions impact off the table as a consideration in NEB deliberations because the energy infrastructure in question is already within an emissions limit that is then woven into Canada's overall climate strategy. On that point I will simply say this. Having robust measuring, reporting, and verification within an overall architecture of climate policy that is thoughtful, that works with oil sands operators is what leads to success for all Albertans and all Canadians.

So while well-intentioned, we cannot support this amendment because we already have a number of different measuring, reporting, verification, and other systems in place, Madam Chair, and we would not want to jeopardize our intergovernmental relations or other relationships at this time.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View on the amendment.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to commend the member for this amendment. I will be supporting this amendment as well.

One of the things that the minister was mentioning was about the FCCC reporting in conjunction with all of the other reports that come forward. As much as I agree that those metrics are already there, the problem is that those metrics might not necessarily be being translated back to Albertans so that they understand the way that this is working. Metrics are actually about where the dollars are going, how they're being spent, and how that is actually going to not only impact us here in the province but show an overall impact to Albertans about how those dollars are being spent.

As much as there are already aspects of these things that are going forward – and I agree with the minister that there are established protocols to show things already – we're not talking about those specific protocols. We're actually talking about reporting to Albertans about what is happening with the hard-earned dollars that are going into a fund when it is not understood by any of us how that's going to be spent.

There are specific metrics. For example, if we're talking about accountability, what is the difficulty in making sure that some of these reductions – especially because this entire climate action leadership plan is based upon the assumption that there is going to be a change in the overall footprint, I don't understand why there would be an issue or why anybody would disagree with the aspect of wanting to make sure that those express megatonnes are made available to Albertans so that they understand where we started, where we got to, and where we're going.

This is an aspect of accountability that will actually uphold what this government is trying to do, not just at a national level or an international level. We've asked many, many times to make sure that there's crossjurisdictional information to make sure that the ideas that are coming down from this government actually make sense. So these are actually specifics for Albertans. The government keeps saying that this is a made-in-Alberta project. Well, then, make the accountability made in Alberta, too. Make sure that those metrics and those pieces of accountability are actually transferring to Albertans in this province so that they understand what is happening. That's what this amendment is about.

This is about relating back to "the Oil Sands Conservation Act in the year for which the annual report is made." The member is asking to make sure that the first year of commercial production of oil sands sites under this is made available to Albertans. This is different than what the minister is talking about. We're wanting it to be broken down so that Albertans understand where their hard-earned dollars are going. I don't think that that's too much to ask.

When the minister was talking about the oil sands groups that are already involved in talks about this, we understand that. But there are a lot of other smaller companies, small and medium-sized companies, that were not included in those discussions that may be cut out of the megatonnes that are leftover. It brings to mind a question of who it is that's going to be available to be able to even purchase, trade, or participate in the leftover megatonnes. This is another bit of accountability that makes sure that this government is not picking winners and losers and that there is accountability there. That's what this amendment is about, in my opinion.

3:20

I think that as much as I agree with the minister that there are things there already, this goes to that next step of accountability, not at a federal level but at a provincial level, on behalf of the folks here that are paying the dollars into this plan to evidently be able to change the way that we do things here, to change our footprint. We've said many, many times that there's nothing in this plan that's

actually going to change the footprint. There's nothing here that's actually going to reduce emissions.

So that's why I fully support this amendment, and I encourage everybody in this House to also support the amendment.

Thank you.

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

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just coming back to this amendment again, the hon. minister of the environment said that she didn't want to endanger relationships that we may have with other jurisdictions. Frankly, I think it's kind of a stretch to suggest to this House that monitoring Alberta's emissions is going to somehow endanger a relationship we may have with some other jurisdiction. Like, give us a break here.

Coming back to this, I understand, you know, what the hon. minister of the environment was saying about the monitoring on a macro scale of emissions that does take place currently and that are reported at that level. But if you get down into the details of this particular amendment and take a look, for example, at part (b), the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emissions . . . that will be produced in the first year of commercial operation by oil sand sites approved,

what this is basically saying is that when a new site is going to be coming on stream, this amendment would require that there be an estimate made of the GHG reductions for this new site coming on.

Again, you cannot manage what you do not measure. The importance of this is that when we receive an estimate and that site comes on, a year later we have the actual measurements. We can then go back, and we can compare the actual measurements with the estimate. If there's a difference, then both the government and the company involved can go back to the drawing board and say, "Why was our estimate off?" or, if it's close: "Well, great. It confirms the equations and the calculations that we used to come up with an estimate that was right."

Any way you look at it, measuring on a new site coming on stream is very valuable, not only to the people of Alberta but to the company as well. They are going to probably be developing other sites, and if a particular methodology of measurement has proven true for them at this site, then they can use that same methodology in another site, do that same measurement and verification again. If it proves true there, then they've got something very valuable that they can use in planning forward, which is extremely valuable to them, not just valuable from a scientific point of view but valuable in dollars and cents to that company and certainly valuable to Albertans.

I think that part (b) of this amendment is extremely important and one that is not currently being utilized. I would see that as development happens, going forward here to develop the rest of these leases up in the north, this particular section within this amendment is very, very important going forward.

Secondly, we have part (d):

the amount, expressed in megatonnes, of greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emission excluded under section 2(2).

There is within section 2(2) a list of exclusions. Now, if we are not going to be keeping track of the GHG emissions excluded, we have the potential of a runaway freight train. We have emissions that are happening that are not even being looked at. They're not being reported. This is extremely important. Why would we be going through the trouble of having all kinds of legislation about GHG reductions, but here's a list of exclusions, and we're not even going to watch them. We're not even going to pay attention to them. That just doesn't make sense at all.

It is very important that those excluded GHG emissions be reported and recorded so that we can see what is happening there. Again, you cannot manage what you do not measure. When you have something like this that's an exclusionary and you've got something happening that you're not even watching, that's not a good idea, not a good idea at all.

Again, I would ask the hon. minister to reconsider her position on this. This is an excellent amendment, one that I support, and I would encourage all members of this House to support it because, again, you cannot manage what you don't measure. This amendment puts in place some excellent measurement and verification metrics that I wholeheartedly support.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any further speakers to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to offer some friendly advice to the government. The government has talked a lot about risk and what it looks like to partners, investors, and bankers, but ultimately the true test is: what does it look like to Albertans?

What we want and what we need in government and what creates sustainability in our banking systems, our financial institutions, and our partners right across the world is when there is political certainty. When you create a bill that doesn't have a measurement of performance, that is something that other governments that come in the next election or the election after that may want to overturn, that type of uncertainty.

There's an opportunity here to be very transparent, to show exactly what we're doing, mostly for Albertans and for their sake, if the government believes that what they're doing is the right thing, to have those performance evaluations in there. But it also says to everybody else and to opposition members like myself that the government is open and transparent, and it shows to Albertans that they're open and transparent.

Again, I'm encouraging the members to take a look at this, you know, read it, talk to their administrators behind the scenes, and get this done because this is transparency. This is what Albertans are asking for, and we want to see that it gets done, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to say that I think it is important that the House supports this amendment. It really will tell the rest of the world that we are going to do a good job on monitoring, and that's going to matter.

Today, of course, they had approval for a couple of pipelines, including one to B.C. [some applause] I thank my colleagues in the House for that cheerful outburst, and I share that sentiment with you a hundred per cent. But I will say that I'll be happier – and this is the point of my argument here – when there is oil flowing through the pipeline. [some applause] Good. I'm glad we all agree on that. Thank you.

I think this talks to getting between here and the oil-flowing part because I think that's when we can really celebrate. Today is good news. I'm not going to dampen it. I'm very, very happy, and I think I heard that other members of the House are happy, too. It's wonderful news. But it doesn't change the fact that we have to get to the point where there's actually oil going through the pipeline.

This government has talked about it. Listen, I haven't been sold completely. I have to tell you that. Largely, not sold. They said that the secret is getting along with other jurisdictions. Okay. You know what? I'm not arguing with that. I would just say that it has been

presented and not yet proven, and when I see that we get from today's good announcement to oil flowing through and there are no protests along the way, if there are no protests along the way, then I will say that this government has got that social licence.

I'm not sure there are not going to be any protests. I'm still waiting to see, Madam Chair, whether that happens. But if the government truly believes that what they're saying is that it's about working in partnership with other jurisdictions, a very useful amendment like this would be a good place for the government to say that they really mean that.

3:30

While I don't like Bill 25 – I make no excuses or exceptions to that – this would improve it, and it would actually give the government a chance to make a demonstration that they're willing to work with other parties in order to get the pipelines built and things done.

For that reason, I am going to recommend that members of this House, including on the government side, vote yes to this amendment. At the end of the day, it doesn't stop the main purpose of the legislation, to put a cap on emissions, whether I like it or not, but it does say that you are going to look at how you measure it. It will actually demonstrate some of that working together that the government has said time and again that they think is one of the keys to getting a pipeline successfully built.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd just like to stand up and speak in support of this amendment. The technology is there. It has been. We're measuring greenhouse gas emissions right now. It shouldn't be a big stretch to quantify that and do a report to Albertans so that they can feel – you, know, this is a really good opportunity for the government to gain back some of the confidence of Albertans and to show them responsibility, show them that exactly the targets we're shooting for are being maintained. Like I said, the technology is already there. Why not measure and confirm that the policies you're putting in place, that the money you're spending from Alberta's carbon taxes are actually getting the results that you want?

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other speakers to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I would like to speak in favour of this amendment. It starts by saying:

Commencing one year after the coming into force of this Act, the Minister shall, as soon as practicable after December 31 each year, prepare and make publicly available an annual report.

Now, it appears that the government doesn't want to support this motion, which, I should say, is quite alarming. With "one year after the coming into force of this Act," there's plenty of time for preparation for this to happen, and it doesn't have to be produced until "as soon as practicable," which leaves a pretty wide door open as far as when this report would be deemed necessary to be out for the public to see. I don't see any excuses here why this would be any sort of burden on the government. In fact, what it would do is give the government an opportunity to show exactly what it's doing. If this government is serious about being open and transparent, it would only make sense that they do this.

Now, it goes on. This report is supposed to contain:

- (a) the reduction, expressed in megatonnes, from the previous calendar year in upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions.

When we have this cap that this Bill 25 puts in place, I think it would be valuable to know where in relationship to the cap the emissions are, especially concerning upgrading emissions and, of course, greenhouse gas emissions. So there are two different aspects to it. Of course, the upgrading emissions fall under a different cap than the greenhouse gas emissions, but both are capped. This is an opportunity for the government to clearly express what the emissions are to the public of Alberta and to know where they are in relationship to the cap.

Now, it goes on to say:

- (b) the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emissions, expressed in megatonnes, that will be produced in the first year of commercial operation by oil sands sites approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act in the year for which the annual report is made.

This provides an opportunity for the government to provide the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would be produced in the first commercial year by oil sands sites approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act. Again, this gives an opportunity for the government to be transparent, to provide information to the public. If there's any attempt to be transparent, to provide information for people to make informed decisions, then this is the perfect opportunity for the government to do that.

Now, the report is also supposed to contain:

- (c) the amount of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions for the year for which the annual report is made.

Again, this should be no burden to the government. It's purely the amount of funding provided by the government of Alberta, taxpayer money paid out for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions. Clear and simple: taxpayers' money. Really, what that amounts to is: should taxpayers have a right to know where their money is going? I think they do. In fact, I know they do, and I think Albertans expect that, too.

The next part:

- (d) the amount, expressed in megatonnes, of greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emission excluded under section 2(2) for the year for which the annual report is made.

Now, if we look at section 2(2), that's where it talks about the exclusions that wouldn't fall under the regular 100-megatonne cap. I'll just read from it here.

In determining the greenhouse gas emissions for all oil sands sites combined in a year for the purposes of subsection (1), the following greenhouse gas emissions are excluded.

Item (d) under 2.1 is specifically referring to section 2(2), which is the exclusions, the amount of megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emissions excluded under section 2(2). What is excluded is:

- (a) cogeneration emissions attributable to the electric energy portion of the total energy generated or produced by cogeneration, as determined in accordance with the regulations.

So one of those exclusions is cogeneration emissions attributable to the electric energy portion.

Now, the next portion:

- (b) upgrading emissions
 - (i) attributable to upgraders that complete their first year of commercial operation after December 31, 2015, or
 - (ii) attributable to the increased capacity resulting from the expansion, after December 31, 2015, of upgraders

that completed their first year of commercial operation on or before December 31, 2015.

Some of these exclusions that this would refer to are upgrading emissions under the guidelines that I just read.

It goes on to say:

as determined in accordance with the regulations, to a combined maximum of 10 megatonnes in any year.

So upgrading emissions has the cap of 10 megatonnes.

Now, also excluded are:

(c) greenhouse gas emissions from any prescribed experimental scheme or any experimental scheme within a prescribed class of experimental scheme.

Again, this request in this amendment would ask for the amount of emissions to be reported from experimental schemes also.

3:40

Now, also excluded are:

(d) greenhouse gas emissions from any prescribed primary production or any primary production within a prescribed class of primary production.

Again, another exclusion here, described as “prescribed primary production,” that this amendment would ask for a report on.

I would think that the government itself would want this breakdown anyway, and if the testing and reporting that are already being done are, as the minister suggested, robust, then I would suggest that this is already happening, and the only thing that comes into question is whether a report is going to be made for the public. There shouldn't be any problem with passing an amendment such as this. If it's already being done, as is suggested, and it's not going to be hidden from the public, then it would only make sense that this amendment is perfectly reasonable.

Now, it goes on to another exclusion.

(e) greenhouse gas emissions from any prescribed enhanced recovery or any enhanced recovery within a prescribed class of enhanced recovery.

Again, another exclusion here that this amendment is requesting.

Now, we had a chance to listen to the minister talk about how the oil sands companies asked for this cap. Obviously, as soon as this NDP government was elected, I guess the oil sands companies came running to this government and said: we want a cap. They asked for it. I mean, they had to have. That's my understanding. I wasn't there, so I can't say, but I guess they just came running and said: “We want a cap. Please cap us.”

Now, I would suggest that if their shareholders thought that this was going to be damaging to them, they probably would have said something, so obviously there's something in it for these companies that came running and asking for the cap, because I'm sure those companies that supported this didn't come running to ask for something that would hurt their business. Of course, we weren't there when these deals were made and how this all came about, which is why transparency is such an important thing in this world, especially in politics. I'm sure ourselves and a lot of Albertans would love to know how this all happened.

The minister also said that the Auditor General said that the previous government was not doing accurate reporting. Now, I don't know what's changed since then as far as the accurate reporting, but I guess I would hope that it is accurate now. We haven't seen the latest Auditor General report on that, so I'm not sure where that is, but I would hope that now it's being accurately reported.

The minister also talked about how, as far as investment, the climate change plan that the government has brought in gives industry certainty. Well, there are a lot of different aspects to the climate leadership plan that the government has brought forward, and we keep seeing things pop up all the time as far as other little parts of this plan, almost as afterthoughts, kind of like the

exclusions. It's almost like they came up with the idea: “Well, a 100-megatonne cap sounds pretty good. Let's go with that, a nice round number.” Then it was, like: “Oh, except how about this? How about prescribed experimental schemes?” “Uh-oh. Um, well, maybe we'll have an exclusion for that.” Then it's, like, “Well, how about cogeneration emissions attributable to the electric energy portion?” “Well, yeah, we'll just exclude that, too.” “Then how about upgrading emissions? We don't want to stop upgrading.” “Well, we'll throw that into the exclusions, too.” Prescribed primary production: “Oops. Another exclusion there.” Then prescribed enhanced recovery: “Uh-oh. I guess we'll have an exclusion there, too.”

Of course, we sit here in this Legislature, and we just got handed another bill today, where the government has got to figure out how to get money into the system to pay for it, I guess. We just keep coming up with new ideas all the time. The one we were handed today was the Electric Utilities Amendment Act, 2016, loans to the Balancing Pool and guarantee.

Now, obviously, this is all related to the climate leadership plan that the government has, all of this stuff, but they just keep throwing stuff piece by piece at us here. Of course, never is there any sort of report. There are no economic or environmental assessments or studies, none of them. This stuff is just thrown up here, and any time we ask for any kind of report or any kind of study that justifies any of this, there's never anything unless, of course, through FOIP something leaks out, and then you realize: well, that didn't make us look good, so we didn't want to tell you about that even though you asked a hundred times for it.

Now, the minister also suggested that the reporting from Environment Canada and some other groups is already reported annually. She suggests that there's robust testing and reporting, and that leads to success. But then she says that she can't support it. She can't support a bill that provides clarity and appropriate reporting. She made the bizarre statement that somehow it would jeopardize the testing and reporting in the other jurisdictions that are involved. Like, I would hope there's nothing to hide here, Madam Chair. I would hope that the only reason it could jeopardize anything is if somebody didn't want to see it. Are we involved with groups or organizations or jurisdictions that are scared of having reports like this made? I would hope not. I would sure hope not.

Now, we look at the Climate Leadership report. I'm just going to quote from it here. “Alberta's action on climate change will not take place in a vacuum – what happens globally, both politically and economically, will determine its relative success.” Well, Madam Chair, there have been a lot of things politically and economically that have happened since this report was released, so I think that's correct. We can't have this climate change plan happen in a vacuum. We've got to look at what's happening around us. There was a recent election with our largest trading partner that spelled clearly some directions of our largest trading partner, but this government hasn't blinked. We have an economy that's suffering and continues to suffer. More and more each day Albertans are suffering job losses.

3:50

A simple request like an annual report on what this government is doing and what's happening in the oil sands – annual reporting somehow is taboo. I don't understand why. I haven't heard an excuse that makes any sense at all other than, I guess: maybe since it comes from this side of the House, then we've got to turn it down. I think this spells out pretty clearly some reporting that would be very advantageous and beneficial for Albertans.

I don't see a problem with having annual reporting as soon as practicable after December 31. That's very reasonable. It doesn't

even put a deadline of, you know, three months or six months or a year even, just “as soon as practicable.” So there’s no problem with that. Then, of course, waiting till one year after this act comes into force: that makes sense. Let’s wait a year, and at the one-year anniversary let’s look at that then.

Now, when we look at this motion, I think it makes a lot of sense. I think it would provide the government with an opportunity to show Albertans what’s happening, what they’re doing, what greenhouse gases are being emitted in various stages of the oil sands operations. So this is just a good amendment.

The Chair: Are there any other speakers to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to elaborate a little bit on what the member was talking about. One of the things that we have to remember with amendments like this is that this is about trust and about making sure that Albertans and Canadians know that they can trust this government.

There have been a lot of aspects – and we’ve alluded to many, many of the aspects – that have come forward with this particular bill and the little puzzle pieces that are coming together, that I know in my constituency – and I’m sure I can speak on behalf of many on this side of the House that are trying to explain what the overall gist of this entire climate leadership action plan is. It’s obviously convoluted. There are a lot of things that are going on, a lot of moving parts at all times. So it’s absolutely imperative that the government take a look and take a step back and make sure that those metrics and that accountability are consistently there in order to be able to show Albertans what it is that you’re doing.

Now, there are so many things. We’ve talked about the 100-megatonne cap on prosperity, and the minister had mentioned earlier that that was something that these companies wanted. They wanted that cap. Well, here’s where the issue comes in of whether or not the government is actually acting on behalf of Albertans appropriately, because as much as those corporations may have suggested that that might be appropriate for them – why is that? Well, it could be because they’re first on the docket to be able to apply for those leases that are left over in that 100-megatonne cap.

This is a major trust issue for Albertans. This is a major trust issue. All of a sudden companies that have leases, that have already paid for those, are now not going to be able to follow through with things that they banked on, with projects that they were going to put forward in the first place. So those metrics for the reasons why the government is making these decisions are imperative. Albertans are looking to the government to give them some sort of understanding and clear process about how these are moving forward.

The other thing: we could go on with the cap on electricity. Any of the companies that, again, are standing up for this cap: well, we have to ask why. Why are those companies standing up? Well, that’s a good question. That’s because the government is not explaining how it is that they’re going to be able to fill the gap between the amount that is supposedly going to be stabilized in the electricity market and what’s left over when we bring renewables online. Where is that coming from? Where are those dollars coming from? Those are subsidies. Even though the average Albertan may not see that on their direct bill for electricity – guess what? – it’s going to be in their tax dollars. That is a piece of transparency that, again, at least when I’m out talking with Albertans every day, is a major issue for them. A major issue.

We could go as far as looking at even the 10-megatonne cap that is going to be on upgrading. There are so many things in here that are counterintuitive for the prosperity of this province.

As the other member had mentioned, with pipeline approvals at this point in time, which are wonderful and that all of us are just jumping up and down and absolutely grateful for – well, that’s wonderful, but now if we’re going to build capacity, all of a sudden, though, we are hamstringing capacity at the oil sands level. How does that work out? How is that in any way conducive to building capacity but not producing?

We’ve said it a million times in here and I’ll continue to say it: we should be producing in Alberta more, not less. We should be doing everything in this province more, not less. We are the best example. We are the people that should be producing. As the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake had mentioned earlier, carbon leakage is a massive issue. If we’re not producing here, somebody else is going to do it. They’re not going to just stop and say, “Oh, Alberta is not producing suddenly” and decide not to produce. That’s not how this is going to happen. This is another issue of trust for Albertans because on one hand you’re suggesting that this is all for the conservation and the betterment of our province, yet we, who produce better than anywhere else in the world, are now being told that we’re not supposed to produce because – I’m not quite sure why.

The question remains, then, that when we’re bringing in and when the member has brought in an amendment that provides the government the ability to show metrics and be accountable, they should, with everything that they’ve got, be ecstatic to have the opportunity to show the things that they’ve done well. If you truly believe in what you’re doing, why not show us? If you truly think that this is the best decision, why not show Albertans? If you really, really believe that this is going to do all the things that you intend it to do, which are all great intentions, why not be as transparent as possible for Albertans and show them that that’s what you’re doing?

You can have all the words in the world, you can give all of the ideas in the world about what you think is going to happen, but the actual metrics and the actual timelines of what’s going to happen – where we started, where we are right now, where we were, and where we’re going – are imperative to Albertans to understand the processes of this government. It’s imperative for us to understand the processes of this government. So why not show us? Why not pass a piece of legislation, an accountability piece of legislation? Do you know that we’ve brought on this side many, many pieces of accountability legislation? Many. Not one has been passed. Why? Why? If this is such a good deal, if this is so good for Albertans, why not show them? Why not be accountable a year from now, six months from now, whatever that is, to show them in emissions, in megatonnes what it is that their dollars have purchased for them? Obviously, social licence was one of those things.

Obviously, this government seems to know better than anybody else about how to reduce emissions, yet every piece of information that we brought forward has shown that there is no change in emissions and there’s no change in the footprint. So I’d like to know why it is that this government is so determined to not pass any accountability legislation to show Albertans how this is going to work.

This is a very, very straightforward amendment that basically gives you the opportunity to show Albertans how this worked out. It gives you every bit of ability to show people that what you’re doing and what you’ve come up with is the right thing. Are you afraid that you are wrong in maybe some of these decisions that you’ve put forward? Is that why you don’t want to be accountable? Is that why you refuse to pass any amendments on accountability when, actually, this amendment does nothing but make you look good? That’s all it does. It gives you the opportunity to do what you

said you were going to do when you were campaigning, which is accountability and transparency. So why not pass it?

4:00

There's absolutely no good reason to look at this amendment and not pass it. Just because there are other pieces of legislation that are federal and global that have tracking mechanisms of what's going on, how does that translate to Albertans and the carbon tax, that they're paying in order to garner some sort of social licence that this government keeps talking about in order to be valued enough to be able to produce in a province that produces better than anywhere else in the world? Please, please explain to me why you wouldn't want to pass a piece of legislation that explains to the world and to Canada and to Alberta why you're doing such a good job. Please, I would love to understand why.

These are such small asks. This is actually saying: this is what happened; we have this many megatonnes in emissions changes that actually changed the footprint. Albertans will thank you for that. They will be grateful for what you have put forward. Everybody on the government side of the House keeps saying that Albertans are grateful to you, that they're happy that you did this. Well, then, great. Then prove to them that what you're doing is appropriate. Prove to them.

The pipelines are not the jurisdiction of this Legislature. They are the jurisdiction of the federal government. Prime Minister Trudeau has done the right thing by Canada by putting through national infrastructure that is going to help out all of us. That is his responsibility. That is his job.

As I've said before, this House, with all of the activists on that side that have been antipipeline, that have pushed to make sure that it stays in the ground – I mean, wasn't it Karen Mahon, who is on the oil sands advisory panel, that specifically said today that there is no reason to increase capacity? Oddly enough, I don't believe anybody on this side of the House yet has heard anything from the oil sands advisory panel. Anybody on this side? No? So here's yet another piece of accountability that has not come from the government.

Why not pass an amendment that will give you all the credibility in the world to show Albertans that what you're doing is right and fair? Why not? That's all this does. You're already telling me – the minister has already said to all of us that that already happened, so why don't you do it for Albertans, then? Albertans are going to look at this, and they're going to say: yet another time this government refuses to pass an amendment that makes them accountable. That rides on your shoulders, purely on your shoulders.

If you think that social licence – maybe we should talk a little bit about what social licence is. Social licence is an ongoing discussion between the NEB and the people along the lines of disturbance, ongoing, all the time. The NEB is our social licence. We have it. That is their job. Their job is to make sure that they're constantly, every single time, having ongoing discussions with everybody along lines of disturbance, with all people.

If you want social licence, there it is. You want more? Tell Albertans that you're doing the right thing. Give them the opportunity to understand what you're doing, that the hard-earned dollars that you are taking out of the pockets of Albertans in this carbon tax are actually going to do something. Give them the opportunity to be able to understand what you are doing, especially when your panel is not going to even report before this legislation is going to be passed, when you have activists on that panel that are actively speaking out against pipelines and against the oil sands right now, even with a pipeline being passed as we speak. It's up to you.

This is a great amendment. I would highly recommend that everybody in this House consider the opportunity to show all

Albertans that what you say is true and that you're willing to stand behind it and have some accountability for the things that you want to see happen in this province.

Thank you.

The Chair: I'll recognize the hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I was planning on reserving some of these remarks for speaking to the actual bill, but since the questions were asked by the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View just in her recent speech, I feel like speaking to the amendment is actually probably more the appropriate time.

I have to say how proud I am to rise on the floor of this Assembly and speak about the proof, which was asked for, and the proof is specifically . . .

Mr. Hanson: Point of order.

The Chair: Hon. minister, we have a point of order.
Go ahead, hon. member.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Hanson: Just relevance, Madam Chair. We're on an amendment.

Thank you.

Mr. Mason: Madam Chair, it's well known that we provide a great deal of latitude in committee to speak about many matters, but the interesting thing is that the hon. member making the point of order doesn't even know what the hon. Deputy Premier is going to say, and he's already up there trying to stop her from saying it. I would argue, you know, that until the Deputy Premier has concluded her remarks, the question of relevance is absolutely premature.

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

Mr. Hanson: Madam Speaker, I called a point of order for relevance because if you check the Blues, the minister stood up and said that this has no relevance to the amendment.

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

I will rule that there is no point of order. I have this afternoon given great latitude to all of the speakers until it became apparent where their point was going, so I shall continue to do that.

Go ahead, hon. minister.

Debate Continued

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. I'm pleased to respond to the last speaker on the amendment, and the speaker asked a very clear question. She said: where's the proof? I have to say, Madam Chair, that the proof is in the pipeline. Earlier this afternoon the federal government announced their decision to approve Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. Prime Minister Trudeau and his government have approved energy infrastructure projects that are critically important to the economic future of the people of Alberta and the country of Canada, and in doing so, the federal government has shown extraordinary leadership.

To all of the members of this House, the members of our House: our province has been brutally slammed by the collapse of commodity prices in Alberta, and the result has been a long, dark night for the people of Alberta, Madam Chair, but today we finally see some morning light. We are getting a chance to break our land lock. We are getting a chance to sell to China and other new markets

at better prices. We are getting a chance to reduce our dependence on one market and to be more economically independent, and we are getting a chance to pick ourselves up and move forward yet again. When the member asks, “Where’s the proof?” I’ll say again: the proof is in the pipeline.

Of equal importance, we are building the economy with a stronger new national environmental policy. We are getting out of coal by 2030. We are implementing an emissions cap in the oil sands, and we will all be phasing in a \$50 carbon levy to help reduce emissions and help finance the transition to a lower carbon economy.

4:10

Madam Chair, to the people of Alberta who have waited so very long for this day I say this: Albertans are used to being leaders, and that’s what we are doing here today. We all knew our province had driven itself into a dead end, so Albertans decided it was time for change. That included ending climate change denial, and that included working constructively with other Canadians instead of just shouting at them or tweeting mean remarks at them. As we’ve now seen here today, that’s how you actually get results.

The message to all Canadians today is also clear. We’ve made a choice. We’ve chosen regularly – we’ve been told by the Official Opposition that you have to make a choice between the environment and building the economy, and that Canada is going to be a global leader on climate change is the answer. We can do both, Madam Chair. Our country will still create jobs and a greater economic equality.

Finally, to our neighbours in British Columbia . . .

The Chair: Hon. minister, if I could just interrupt for a moment. We do need to get to the amendment, so if you could kind of direct your comments in that direction, please.

Ms Hoffman: Very happy to.

I listened to many speakers make arguments counter to this – many other speakers previously – and I want to set the record straight. I was asked: where is the proof? Madam Chair, I am speaking directly in response to the questions that were raised from Chestermere-Rocky View.

Finally, to our neighbours in British Columbia our government says this . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: Point of order.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Fildebrandt: Madam Chair, I believe the matter under debate is an amendment on reporting metrics for the bill at hand. I’m not sure how this has anything to do with it.

Mr. Mason: It is absolutely outrageous that the Official Opposition is trying to prevent the Deputy Premier from talking about this critical, important announcement that was made today, that they’re using points of order that could have been used against any one of their speakers with respect to their comments because their comments were wide ranging. Wide ranging. The fact of the matter is, Madam Chair, that the opposition doesn’t want us to talk about the fact that our program is working. We have got not one but two pipelines approved by the federal government, and they don’t want us to talk about it. Well, we’re going to talk about it, and we’re going to talk about it from here to the next election.

Mr. Hanson: Madam Chair, please. Please don’t allow the Government House Leader and the minister to highjack the debate

that we’re in the House to do today on Bill 25. We are in Committee of the Whole for Bill 25. We are not here to make pipeline announcements that are already all over the media. We don’t need it here. We all know about it. Thank you very much for the announcement. Can we just get on with the debate on Bill 25, please?

The Chair: Any further speakers to the point of order?

I will allow the hon. minister to continue, but again I would caution. I have given a great deal of latitude this afternoon, but we are speaking on the amendment, and we do want to stay on topic and not get sidetracked.

Please continue.

Debate Continued

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Madam Chair. To be very clear, I’m speaking in opposition to the amendment, and these are some of the reasons why. We, I think, need to acknowledge the fact that we are engaging in metrics, and we are reporting on these in very clear and concise ways as we move forward.

Just like B.C. was a leader in addressing climate change, the rest of the country is catching up to B.C., Madam Chair. B.C. has always argued for strong measures, which we’re referring to in this bill. Some argue that these metrics are irrelevant to the amendment; I would argue that they are relevant. B.C. has always argued for strong measures to protect our coast and its waters, and that’s going to happen, and it must happen. B.C. has always played a key role in building our national economy as Canada’s leader and gateway to the biggest market in the world, that being the Asia Pacific. These B.C. priorities are now shaping all of our priorities.

These are putting in place strong national climate change policy, and we are getting on with creating jobs and economic equality under the terms of that new policy, which demonstrates as clearly as it possibly can be that we don’t have to ask working families to choose between protecting the environment and making a good living, Madam Chair. We can do both; we are doing both. Let’s work together right across this country to protect our environment, and let’s work together, as we are doing today, to show that there will be jobs and prosperity for Albertans and Canadians alike in a greener future.

The Chair: Any other hon. members to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, in regard to the amendment I just wanted to clarify. Again, the amendment was about providing metrics to make sure that Albertans understand what this government is doing. Just to be clear, the insinuation that only the government can balance environment and prosperity is a slap in the face to every single other Albertan that lives, breathes, eats, and sleeps in this province. So be careful about who it is that you’re talking about. This is about Albertans. And you’re right; this pipeline will bring prosperity to all of Canada. Thank goodness for that.

But if we’re actually talking about the amendment and about proof, this amendment helps you. It helps you. It helps you to make sure that what you’re doing actually has availability to the average Albertan to know what it is that you are doing. The fact that the federal government has passed, finally, to get a pipeline to tidewater is a gift to absolutely everybody. It is a gift to everybody. Congratulations to all of us.

Having said that, we need to make sure that the policies in this government, in this province are conducive to making sure that that capacity actually has the availability to fill what’s going to be going to tidewater in the first place. Everything that is happening in these

bills is kneecapping our oil sands and everything else that is actually going to provide capacity for a pipeline that you obviously find is important.

It's completely counterintuitive to this entire pipeline announcement that you just said right now. Completely counterintuitive. Let's keep in mind that in order for the pipeline to be useful, we have to fill it with product. Why don't we talk about and make sure that in what you're trying to actually accomplish with what you're doing in this bill, which is a 100-megatonne cap on emissions, you are telling Albertans why you're making the decisions that you are? That accountability helps you. That is the proof that we are seeking, not the proof that this government is going to try and take credit for, a pipeline that is put through by our federal government, and that is their responsibility.

Every single province in this country will work in lockstep to make sure that national infrastructure is put through on behalf of all Canadians. It is the responsibility not only of this government but every other one, and the federal government ultimately makes that decision.

Now you're telling me that it's great that we have a pipeline, but you're willing to actually stop production to reduce capacity to go into said pipeline. It makes no sense. How about you show us some proof by actually putting through an amendment that holds you accountable and shows Albertans what it is that they're going to be getting from this climate leadership action plan?

Thank you.

The Chair: Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: I'll defer to my colleague.

The Chair: I'll recognize Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise and speak to the amendment. On behalf of all members of the Official Opposition and, I believe, all members of the opposition and all members of this House we are very pleased to see pipelines being built. This is good news for Alberta, and it's good news for Canada. However, I am certainly concerned that we've got two out of three. It appears that political interference around Northern Gateway is completely unfounded. We are still pleased, nonetheless, to see Kinder Morgan and line 3 being approved.

4:20

I think it's very important to note that a key part of that was depoliticizing the process. We should all be thankful to Stephen Harper, who put in place the process to make this happen. You see, Madam Chair, it's important that we depoliticize this issue. That's why this amendment is important. The amendment is important so that we can measure things, you see. The members across have been protesting and have been working with the protestors for years. They opposed pipelines for years. Now I'm happy to see that they saw the light on the road to Damascus. But you know who didn't have to be convinced 10 years ago? Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who was on the right side of history in this.

Madam Chair, many of the members across were vehement foes of pipelines. They opposed pipelines. I remember the Minister of Education chanting on the steps of the Legislature, saying: "No new approvals. No new approvals." He led a chant on the steps of the Legislature. Remember that the Member for Calgary-East, before being elected, was a vehement opponent of pipelines. Now, we certainly appreciate it when people change their minds, when people come to a better conclusion along the way. We are pleased to see members across finally supporting pipelines.

This amendment is important so that we can actually measure the progress of what they're proposing to do here. They're proposing a huge and, I believe, damaging limit on oil sands development. Now, if we're going to get something out of that, we want to be able to measure it. When Ronald Reagan was negotiating nuclear arms control treaties with the Soviet Union and, of course, good friends of the NDP members like Castro, he was accused of not trusting the Soviet Union in their arms reduction. President Reagan's motto in dealing with the Soviets was "trust, but verify." Now, I'm not saying that I trust the NDP, but even if I did trust the NDP, I believe we would still want to verify what they're doing. We want to trust but verify what they're doing, which is why we need to actually measure what they're doing.

We're not convinced that any of this will even necessarily lead to pipelines because, at the end of the day, the radicals have not been appeased. Elizabeth May has stated that she is willing to go to jail. The federal Green Party leader has stated that she is willing to go to jail to stop Kinder Morgan from happening. These are people who do not respect the rule of law. These are radicals. These are extremists who do not understand that economic development is necessary for human existence, Madam Chair.

In addition to getting an official clearance for pipelines, I'll believe it when we actually get some oil flowing through those pipelines, Madam Chair, when we actually get the oil moving through them.

Point of Order Referring to a Nonmember

Mr. Mason: I have a point of order, Madam Chair. There's a well-known convention in this place that you should avoid attacks on individuals who aren't present in the House to defend themselves. As someone who was elected as a member of the House of Commons by the people in her constituency, Elizabeth May should not be dragged into the mud in this way.

Mr. Hanson: Madam Chair, that individual has been mentioned in the paper today. It's simply a matter of debate, and it was brought forward by my colleague. It's public knowledge. It's not something new that he's inventing.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Madam Chair, the individual noted is in the papers. I'm merely quoting what the individual herself said. That individual has no ability, thank goodness, to appear in this Chamber in any case. It is a matter of public debate. There's not a personal attack on anyone. It's not questioning anybody. This is quoting what they have said on the public record, what they have said to the media, what they have said in their own Legislature. This is a matter of debate. The Government House Leader is talking nonsense.

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

I don't believe we have a point of order at this point. However, I would caution members. Things are getting a little heated in here this afternoon. Let's try to be a little more respectful on both sides and keep this dialogue going, and let's move through the work we have to get done.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Chair. Very good points.

Debate Continued

Mr. Fildebrandt: This is important. It is important to measure what the government is attempting to achieve here. A think tank often quoted and loved by members of the NDP, the Fraser Institute, has

as their motto If It Matters, Measure It. When we're talking about limiting the economic development of this province, when we're talking about limiting huge economic drivers like our oil sands, we want to be able to at least measure it. If it matters, measure it.

It is important that we do that because if we do buy into the argument of social licence, which I believe is a phony argument to begin with, even if we do buy into that, we're going to need some evidence to tell the radicals what's actually been done. We've got people who are promising to use force, violence, civil disobedience, and breaking the law to stop pipeline construction.

I'm pleased that we finally got legal approval for the pipeline, but I'm not going to believe it until we get oil running through it. And I'm optimistic that we will get oil running through it. But it will be very, very useful for the NDP to be able to tell their radical friends in the eco-movement what they have actually achieved. If they can go there with a measurable and say, "Mike Hudema, look what we've achieved; we have hurt the oil sands by this much," then perhaps – perhaps – he'll be less likely to want to get in the way of pipeline construction. If we can actually measure these things, they'll be able to have more evidence to actually take to some of their more, let's say, enthusiastic protesting friends and tell them that they're hurting the oil sands just fine, that they can allow some pipelines to go through.

Madam Chair, it is important that we can actually measure what we're doing. In absolutely everything we do in this place, especially on very important legislative matters like this, it's important that we set accountability for ourselves. You know, on the budgets, Jim Dinning brought forward legislation in the early 1990s to require regular, quarterly updates so that government would have to be accountable to the Legislature on how they're tracking their budget in between the bookends of the fiscal year. The government before that, the Getty government, was notorious for going wildly off budget and without any accountability measures in between introducing the budget at the beginning of the year and the fiscal report at the end of that year. So they brought in reporting measures, regular quarterly updates, so that the government would have to be held accountable in between those budgets.

We had a second-quarter fiscal update just yesterday, and I could see that the Minister of Finance just hated – hated – standing at that podium delivering the news that they're still not meeting their budgetary targets. Nonetheless, they had to be held accountable because there were reporting requirements. I think that all members of this Legislature agree that it is important that we have quarterly fiscal and economic updates even when the government doesn't like the news in them. We're asking for something similar when we're talking about reporting and accountability requirements for this bill.

I would thank the Member for Calgary-South East for his important contribution to the debate, and I'd encourage members of all parties to vote for the amendment.

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

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, on the amendment from the hon. Member for Calgary-South East I think there are perhaps some points that need to be made regarding the value of measuring and verifying those measurements. The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks was mentioning just how important it is, going forward here, that this government has something to talk about and tell its base, its supporters, as to how well it's doing on the greenhouse gas reduction front.

4:30

Any time a government – in fact, with an awful lot of the things that take place within this Legislature, with laws that are made,

policies that the government makes, there are often cases of unintended consequences. I'm aware, as I think everyone in this House is aware, that oftentimes when a government enacts policies or laws in an attempt to help something, inadvertent harm is done over here that wasn't counted on. It becomes very important, especially in a democracy, where the mission ought to be for the government to always be helpful to all people that they're responsible for, that any time there is a harm inadvertently done someplace in our economy or in our society, the government would back up and say: "Whoa. Okay. Well, we need to make a little change here, a little change in course because we've inadvertently done something that is going to result in damage."

Going forward, this government is going to need to have some sort of evidence, as the hon. member pointed out, that they can take to their base and say: look; look at what we're doing on this front. Now, we have some conflict that currently exists in that although we have an announcement today of these pipelines being done, we also had earlier today announcements from a member of the oil sands advisory group, OSAG. That announcement came at 5:28 p.m. PST, and it said, Trans Mountain Pipeline, Even if Approved, Won't Be Built. That came from Ms Mahon, who's on the OSAG panel.

Here we have actually a member on the government panel who recognizes that having the federal government approve something doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to be getting oil coming out the other end just any time soon. It's a sad thing when the statements made are things like this: "Granting a permit to build this pipeline will not end this issue. It will only be the beginning of a long and drawn out fight. And the real tragedy is that issue keeps us looking backward to the extraction economy." She ends by saying, "The world doesn't need this pipeline."

It sounds to me like the social licence either got revoked or never got picked up down at the registries. It sounds to me like the social licence hasn't occurred, that the radicals in the environmental movement such as this individual sitting on our OSAG still don't consider this government's actions good enough to warrant favourable response to such a vitally important piece of infrastructure. Obviously, this government's, you know, damage done to the Alberta economy in the name of social licence hasn't done the job.

What I'm suggesting, Madam Chair, is that if this government can adopt some measurement and some verification of that measurement, maybe, just maybe the people who are so – I refer to them often as frothing-at-the-mouth radicals. Maybe, just maybe if they see some hard evidence, real evidence that greenhouse gas reductions are taking place on account of specific policies and specific actions that this government is taking with regard to the oil sands, maybe, just maybe people like Ms Mahon will write out a social licence and deliver it to the Premier.

I'm not holding my breath, you know, that that's going to happen, but it seems to me that the government at least needs to make the effort. After all, they're destroying our economy. They're taxing Albertans into the ground. The very least they could do is at least measure some of that effect.

Now, I want to, if I may, take a moment and explain a little bit about the value of just what we're talking about when we say measurement and verification. Historically, when you're talking about the implementation of any kind of energy efficiency project, it's been carried out by project owners to either replace or upgrade equipment or plants and systems and things like this. Of course, dollars and cents always matter. They matter to everyone. So it is very, very important that any time these kinds of programs are put in place, the savings from the project have to be regarded as an added benefit, and the savings versus the amount of energy reduced,

the savings in money versus the amount of energy consumption reduced or pollution reduced needs to be quantified because effectively what you do when you do that is that you justify the expense. It becomes a justifiable expense or perhaps not. Maybe it's too expensive.

In the world of business, anyway, it's always very important to weigh the impact with the cost of achieving that impact. The same thing goes for a provincial economy. We have an impact befalling this economy, and it is monstrous. It's huge, a great impact on this economy. We have an enormous impact on the current leaseholders up in the oil sands, who are going to have to try to squeeze into that 32-megatonne window that remains. We have an enormous impact from this government's action on the upgrading and partial upgrading that we want to see take place in this province.

All of these are huge impacts, yet repeatedly this government has rejected calls for measuring the effect of the impact to deliver the promises this government is making, not only promises to Albertans, but the Premier and the ministers in this government have been making promises to the world about the impact that their policies are going to have on the world's greenhouse gas situation. So a lot of press around the world has been, you know, focused in on what our Premier and the ministers have been claiming, yet when asked to verify that, to measure that so you can verify that, this government repeatedly shoots those proposals down. That really harms credibility. It harms credibility not only here in this province amongst the people of Alberta; this harms our credibility globally because now this government isn't going to have anything to prove that all of these measures they're putting upon Albertans and upon our economy actually result in what they claim it's going to result in.

When the climate leadership plan was first rolled out, this government stood in this House and stood before the people of Alberta and said: we're taking a leadership role; we're going to show the world how it's done. Except what wasn't said was: but we're not going to measure it so we can prove it to anybody. That's pretty silly. Here we have a perfectly good amendment coming forward from the hon. Member for Calgary-South East to put in place a simple little measurement process to prove, in fact, that the reductions are taking place and in such a way that we can quantify the cost per tonne of the reduction.

Now, if you're going to provide leadership to anybody in the world, one of the marks of leadership is that you can turn around and see people following you. If you claim to be a leader in something, you turn around and there's nobody there, you're not really a leader in anything at all. It's just talk. If this government is really serious about providing leadership to the world – and let's be really frank about this. Alberta is a resource giant because of the blessings we have beneath our feet. We have some of the most abundant resources in coal, in oil, in natural gas, and on top, the surface, in agriculture, in forestry, and our greatest resource of all, the precious people of Alberta. We have this abundant resource beneath us.

4:40

We're a tiny, little population, but Alberta: right from the very beginning of our province we have always punched above our weight. It's in our blood in this province. We're a strong, innovative, creative, compassionate bunch of people. We love to work together.

I remember in the '70s when our oil and gas people were travelling all over the world because the world wanted the kind of drilling technology that we had developed here. Our experts from oil and gas resource development were travelling all over the world. When I started travelling all over the world – and I was not involved

in oil and gas – people in the Middle East knew where Alberta was and they knew what Alberta was. They knew. "Oh, you guys. Don't they call you blue-eyed Arabs?" Yes, they did. We were and are a resource giant in this world. We led. We turned around and you could see nations following our lead in resource development.

Well, this government made a gigantic claim, spent a bunch of money, flew to France. They spent a bunch more money, flew to Marrakesh, claiming to be a leader, claiming to have figured out how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Lots of claims were made, but without measurement and verification, those are empty claims, unprovable claims, claims that – well, you know, at some point you've got to put your money where your mouth is. So if this government really, really believes that they have the answer and that the measures they're putting in place and the pain they are causing our economy are really going to bring greenhouse gas emissions down to the level that they claim, then there shouldn't be a problem measuring it.

But what happens now, when you have amendments like this coming forward that are asking for simple measurement and verification metrics to be put in place to prove it and the government then votes it down? What kind of message does that send to Albertans and to the world? "Oh, well, what are you hiding? What are you afraid of? Why don't you want these measurements to take place?" "Is this just, you know, not true? Are these claims just fiction? Is this government over there in Alberta putting its people through all of that pain for no real greenhouse gas reductions?" Those are the questions that are going to be asked.

There are going to be more conferences like COP21 and 22. There are going to be lots more. What the world is looking for are some real answers to pollution, not just pretend answers, not just a bunch of academics sitting around in a circle, drawing things out on paper. The world wants boots-on-the-ground, concrete proof that this may work or that may work or this is working or that is working. That's what the world is wanting; they're wanting real proof.

This government has made a whole lot of claims, they brought a whole lot of policies in place, they brought a whole lot of pain to our oil and gas sector, to our electricity sector, and they trot out different corporations, saying: well, they're approving of what we're doing. Well, yeah. Take a look at their share price. You bet they approve of it. Some of them are completely exempt; it's just going to wash right through.

Ultimately, it will be the moms and dads of Alberta that pay every form of taxation in this province. It ultimately comes back to that taxpayer, and there's only one. Whether it be in our electricity sector, oil and gas sector, everything a government does in the form of taxation comes back to the moms and dads and the young people trying to eke out a living in this province. When you're going to put a population through that much grief in the name of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, I believe the government has a moral obligation to actually prove it – to actually prove it – and this government has repeatedly voted down mechanisms to prove it. They're going to stand up and say: well, those pipelines prove it. No, they don't. They don't prove anything at all regarding this government's policies and work. The NEB was created to be nonpolitical. The NEB was created for the very reason of protecting transprovincial pipeline approvals, to remove them from the political process because it was just getting mucked up. Unfortunately, we're starting to see the current federal government start to meddle with it again.

We have the same thing happening in this province with our electricity sector. AESO was originally developed to be nonpolitical, to get the politics out of critical infrastructure, to get it

based on what people actually do need. Unfortunately, we saw political meddling in that process even before this government came to power. We saw massive transmission line infrastructure built, and we're still paying for it. It wasn't all needed, but we got it anyhow. Now this government is making things even worse, reaching deeply within the mechanism of AESO and completely gutting its ability to act independently, the same as with the Balancing Pool.

Here we have now Bill 25 capping emissions, capping development. The government is making claims that this is somehow going to lead to greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Here's a wonderful amendment coming along allowing the government the opportunity to prove – to prove – to Albertans and the world that what they're doing will work. You know, the beauty of M and V and the reason why measurement and verification are used in private industry so much – in some projects we measure down to really small, not macro but at the micro levels – is because as we go forward with those measurements and we start getting the data back, we can make adjustments to the processes to maximize, to optimize.

Now, optimization is absolutely critical. I will say that in this particular situation, where we're talking about the entire oil sands development, to optimize the policies is going to require measurement and verification of those results. Otherwise, you start with a policy at the front end, you make the stupid presumption that it's got to be right exactly like the first iteration, and we just start going forward with our eyes closed. Not having measurement and verification is driving with your eyes closed, with no speedometer, no oil pressure gauge, nothing, nothing to tell you the condition of the vehicle or the direction you're going, to know that it's even right. Simple measurement and verification are your eyes and your ears as you go forward with a project. You can make little tweaks as you're going along, and you get it right. Optimization is always the goal, to optimize whatever that program might be.

Measurement and verification come in as an enormous economic benefit, especially if what you're measuring has some value to it. When we're talking about things like carbon credits, things like allocations, those things have value to them. Measuring and verifying the results . . .

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Well, thanks very much, Madam Chair. I just want to take a few moments to make a few comments with respect to this amendment. It is clear that reporting on the outcomes of this policy or any other policy is important. The Minister of Environment and Parks has made it clear that this information has already been gathered and is publicly available, so in that particular case I think this is a little bit unnecessary.

4:50

Now, the hon. member has said, you know, that the proof is not in the pipelines, but on a macro level. Madam Chair, I think that the hon. member is not right. The purpose of a number of steps this government is taking with respect to oil sands is to create political conditions. Some have called it social licence. I think that's a very misinterpreted and misunderstood term. Social licence assumes that you're going to get everybody to agree that your pipeline is a good thing.

You know, we've heard from the hon. Member for Brooks . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Mason: Strathmore-Brooks. Thank you. A beautiful part of the country.

. . . that, you know, there are all these radicals and extremists and all of these protesters and everything. There are a significant number of people in this country, in Alberta, but also a greater number perhaps in the province of British Columbia who have some real concerns.

Madam Chair, the intention of the policies that we have implemented with respect to the oils sands are in order to create the political conditions for the approval of the pipelines, which we've seen today. It doesn't mean that every environmental organization or every environmentalist or every First Nation or every citizen is going to become convinced of the value and the need for pipelines for Alberta. That was never the intention. What it does do is create the political conditions for other governments – the federal government and other provincial governments – to say yes.

You know, the hon. member talks about the NEB. Well, the fact of the matter is that these pipelines already received conditional approval some time ago from the national regulatory bodies. What we saw today was a final political decision by the government of Canada to approve these pipelines. I just want to quote the Prime Minister this afternoon, Madam Chair, with respect to this matter. He said just today: let me say this definitively; we could not have approved this project without the leadership of Premier Notley and Alberta's climate leadership plan.

Hon. members are talking about how we're constraining growth in the oil sands and so on. Actually, putting upset limits on it that will allow saving about a 50 per cent increase over current levels has allowed for the growth of the oil sands. It's contrary to what the members opposite are suggesting. What it actually does is create conditions where we can go forward and continue to grow the oil sands and that we can get infrastructure to get those products to tidewater in place, and that's what we have done.

You know, the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks wants to give credit to former Prime Minister Harper. Madam Chair, I almost choked when he said that because what we had seen under the former Conservative government, of which their leader was a member, and under the former government of Alberta was essentially a policy of pretending that there were no real issues with respect to development of the oil sands. Although they would acknowledge climate change and even admit that it was caused by human economic activity, they in effect wanted to just close their eyes and hope that the issue would really go away.

I remember when I believe it was the Stelmach government decided they were going to spend \$3 million in New York in the American market to try and persuade Americans that everything was fine. But, of course, Americans have access to the data that the hon. member says that we need to pass this amendment. The Americans had access because that data was available.

They weren't fooled. They're not fools, Madam Chair, and this whole idea that there were no problems and no changes in policy that had to be addressed was in fact what led to 10 years of systematic failure in the siting of new infrastructure, which led eventually to a situation where the oil sands themselves were going to stagnate. Now, we've lifted those restrictions by accepting a voluntary cap that will allow a substantial expansion in the oil sands. Putting in force other measures as well has created room for the oil sands to continue to be the engine of economic activity of this province and of this country. When the price of oil recovers – and we believe it will – there's going to be renewed activity in the oil sands because they are going to have additional capacity that they can take advantage of to get their products to market.

What I want to say to all the members opposite is that we've seen proof today that the policies of the Alberta government with respect

to that industry are working, that it is focused very much on the key economic driver of this province, and whatever individual members on this side or the other side may have had to say about it in the past is immaterial. The opposition keeps going back to that. The fact of the matter is that the government will be judged not by what individual members said when they were much younger and not involved in politics but by what the government actually does and what it actually accomplishes. They can try as they might to discredit individuals on this side of the House, but the fact of the matter remains that the policy has been a solid policy that has allowed for political conditions to allow continued expansion in that key driver of our economy, that key creator of jobs and at the same time acting responsibly with respect to the very real threat faced by this planet by human-caused climate change.

The last point that I would like to make is that the opposition has vehemently objected to being characterized as climate change deniers. Fine. I take them at their word that they believe that climate change is real and that it is caused by human activity. But the fact of the matter is that they have no proposal to deal with it. If, in fact, climate change is going to bring about major changes to the planet that will render significant portions of it uninhabitable in our children's and grandchildren's lives, then that is a most serious matter, and any party that wants to be taken seriously for government must address this very fundamental question. It's fine to say, "We believe in climate change," but you can't say, "I believe in climate change, and I understand the impact it's going to have on future generations on this Earth, but I don't want to do anything about it."

I think we've adopted a prudent course that combines responsible environmental stewardship with sound economic growth for the province, and when the price of oil begins to rise, as I believe it already has, I think we're going to see renewed economic activity and the creation of jobs that we all want to see, that communities that have been hard hit by unemployment are going to recover, and people are going to be able to make a solid contribution to their community, to their province, to their family, and hold their head high because this province is once again, Madam Chair, going to be the economic leader of this country. We have taken the first critical step today.

Thank you.

The Chair: Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

5:00

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd just like to stand up again in support of this amendment because it is all about accountability and transparency, which I believe all parties actually campaigned on in this last election.

I'm really starting to understand why this government doesn't want to wait for the oil sands advisory group's report in February, which we tried to push forward in an amendment earlier to have this hoisted till spring.

I just want to read you a little bit here. It says:

Having been arrested more than 20 times over the course of her career, her work day is equally likely to include an announcement next to [Alberta's Premier] as a stint in jail for blocking a tar sands pipeline . . .

She has no doubt her future will include many more arrests as a "raging granny" and environmentalist, she laughed . . .

The latter occurred before her detention on Burnaby Mountain, B.C. during the 2014 protests against Kinder Morgan's controversial Trans Mountain pipeline expansion designed to bring Alberta bitumen to Vancouver harbour. Almost exactly a year later, [she] was on-stage next to [Alberta's

Premier] to announce a climate plan supported by the CEO's of Big Oil and Greenpeace Canada.

No, I'm not talking about a current government MLA. I'm talking about OSAG member Karen Mahon. That's probably why they don't want to wait for this report to come through. You know, the Premier and the NDP might publicly support pipelines, but hiring all of these known anti-oil operatives with Alberta taxpayer money sends a very, very clear message to Albertans, and we will stand by that.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to speak also in support of this amendment about accountability.

When I look at what's happening here and some of the conversations we're having today, I see that, you know, this government has a group of friends and a group of appointees to their energy advisory group, OSAG. They have their hand-picked lawyers. They have their own advisers and authors of the environment minister's stone cold science, one of the wonderful favourite terms that I love to hear, stone cold science. I dare say many of their own MLAs and the rest of the people who perhaps give a rat's nether region about social licence will work tirelessly, endlessly and will chain themselves to trees in defiance of the rule of law and ensure that the celebration, gloating, and claims of single-handed success of a federal pipeline approval will be very short lived. That's why the accountability here is so important.

As pointed out, the Prime Minister once said that the government grants permits but only communities grant consent. As noted by the now famous Ms Mahon, who's a member of the OSAG group, there will be mass protests, there will be lawsuits, Madam Chair. So where is this approval going? Is this actually going to get us to tidewater? Is this going to get Alberta products and oil to tidewater? Let me point out that a permit was issued approving Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline over two years ago – this is, again, by claims from Ms Mahon – and no shovel has ever broken ground.

You know what, Madam Chair? The rule of law means nothing. Social licence means nothing to the people who will oppose this in defiance of what's best for Canada and best for Alberta. Your own hand-picked champions plan to openly defy the laws of this land, thumb their noses at democratically elected legislators like yourselves, and tell Alberta where to go with their social licence. Mark my words and make no mistake that these are the vehement, frothing naysayers that even you and your brethren of the Leap Manifesto are ill equipped to convince that access to tidewater for Alberta oil or gas is good for Alberta, good for British Columbia, or good for Canada. It's just not going to happen with the attitude we see from the people that are pushing that agenda.

Their claim is that a hundred people were already arrested: grandmothers, academics, priests, students, and First Nation leaders. Line them up. They're all your friends. Maybe you need to get on the phone and tell them: there's a protest coming; you might want to be there; get the placards out. You might even remind some of your members: get your placards out, guys; this is placard season.

There are already seven legal challenges to the pipeline before the courts, and more are predicted. Wow. Gee. I think there are some lawyers in B.C. that are pretty good on this stuff, aren't there? Some hand-picked lawyers. I'll bet you that the same law firm that you've selected to help you with the PPAs is going to be really busy in British Columbia making more millions of dollars on the backs of taxpayers, Madam Chair.

Oh, by the way, Canadian law requires the protection of endangered species and restoration of their habitat. Oh, we're going

to use that. We're going to chain ourselves to trees to do that. But nobody thinks about whether it's appropriate to apply the same rule to thousands of tankers approaching our east coast and heading up the St. Lawrence with foreign unethical oil on it, Madam Chair. Wow. Let's stop that Alberta oil from getting to market.

Granting a permit to build this pipeline will not end this issue. It will only be the beginning of a long and drawn out fight.

Oh, Ms Mahon again. Wow. She seems to be popping up here thanks to the friends of this government, Madam Chair, from coast to coast.

She also says:

And the real tragedy is that issue keeps us looking backward . . .

Backward. Oh, sounds like Alberta.

. . . to the extraction economy that was . . .

Oh, I guess that means that we're dead here in Alberta. The economy is done, isn't it?

. . . instead of forward, to the renewable energy economy that is forming.

That is going to create such vibrancy in the Alberta economy and create jobs out in those coal mining towns and put all those oil and gas workers back to work. Oh, no. Actually, they're going to be putting up solar panels and wind farms, aren't they? Oh, yeah. We're going to be farming wind from now on, and that's going to give us lots of business, except that all the farmers are going to lose their oil and gas jobs, and we're going to replace that with a new economy, so the smaller farms are going to be gone.

This, my friends, is the economy of this government – this Minister of Environment and Parks, this Energy minister, this Premier – and fully consistent with what we have now come to know and loathe, the NDP world view, Madam Chair, that is killing the province that I love. Support this amendment, support accountability, and – you know what? – be honest with yourselves, and make sure that what you're saying and what you're gloating on today are not words that you will eat tomorrow.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. This government is pushing off public annual reporting on emissions. This is absolutely disappointing, and it's quite incredible that this government would not want annual reporting from oil companies on their emissions to be made public. I have no doubt that the government side has really warmed up to those seats over there, enjoying life in the public service, with that big salary, and don't consider themselves members of the public. It's really unfortunate because it's the public that should really appreciate this. It's when you're in the public and you're not in the government that this is the kind of information that you want.

If I might just abbreviate this, you are saying that you don't want the government to publicly make reports that state the reduction in upgrading emissions and greenhouse emissions; that we do not want to release the information that estimates the amount of greenhouse emissions that would be produced by these oil sands sites; that you do not want this information to be released that reflects the funding that the government, your tax money, is paying in regard to research and development to reduce the emissions and greenhouse emissions, gas emissions. Finally, you're saying that you don't want the public to know the amount of greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emission that is excluded under the act. I find this really incredible because government bodies have a duty to provide frequent and accurate reports to citizens because it's their money, it's their livelihoods, it's their province.

You know, typically bad data isn't detected until it's too late. Nothing is more frustrating and more time consuming and labour intensive than having to start from scratch after realizing that you can't glean any useful insights from the information that has been provided. That's why it's important that our government is transparent and accountable. One example of bad data are the power agreements. If only you'd thought to look at all of the aspects of the contracts, then perhaps Albertans wouldn't be on the hook for billions, like a Wynne-led Ontario. It's astounding that this government, made up of people who criticized and picketed pipelines, oil sands, would not want annual reporting from oil companies to be made public. It is astounding.

5:10

You know, you spent the first eight months of your governance destroying confidence in our oil sands development. How do I know this? Because Saskatchewan is currently absorbing a lot of investment that would have continued here in Alberta; hence, my friends that are moving to Saskatchewan. Why did they leave? That's what happens when you do a royalty review. What you don't recognize is that on the international investment charts these international oil companies simply see this jurisdiction as imperilled; thus, they move their attention away from Alberta. Fortunately, a Brad Wall led Saskatchewan kept their investments here in Canada.

Only after eight months of looking at the facts and understanding how important natural resource development is to the Canadian economy did you truly recognize: oh; maybe we should take the Wildrose stance and support our industries. I congratulate this government for demonstrating that they can indeed learn, that they can indeed be educated. You have gone from picketing this Legislature, from standing in these very same pews above us and getting escorted out, to supporting oil. This is fantastic. Eight months it took for you to listen to the Wildrose and accept our stance.

Measures are important. It is where we use this evidence to help us with our decision-making. When we give pharmaceuticals as an example, we use the science of trial and error, measuring the reactions of patients when they're treated with various drugs. Here we want the public to be given the opportunity to measure the impact and the results of incentives and initiatives that are supposed to help clean our air. These measures can be used to identify good initiatives and technologies that achieve their objectives of reducing emissions and for us to recognize those that have not worked. It's important to measure these things as they will receive other benefits of claiming to achieve these environmental goals. Because what if they're wrong? What if some of this information that these oil companies give us on their initiatives is wrong? We need to measure these things.

Transparency and accountability are Wildrose staples. These are our core values. I thought, perhaps, that a New Democrat government would be along the same path, but the rejection of this amendment is the epitome of your lack of transparency and accountability. It truly is. Not only this, but I can't help but wonder what will happen in a couple of years from now should there be a new government in place. The former environmentalist picketers turned politicians turned back to Joe Public will look back at some of their own decisions and go: oops; we messed that one up, didn't we? I'm asking this government to look back to your roots, to remember where you came from, and to ensure that government and industry are transparent and accountable because you're in the position to support this. You have to recognize that it might benefit you in the future when you're not sitting in that seat any longer.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we have to say that it is a great day for Alberta to have two pipelines approved today. I think that's a great day for Alberta.

What's interesting is that the Prime Minister approved Enbridge line 3, which will allow western oil producers to ship up to 760,000 barrels of oil per day from Alberta to the U.S. Midwest, not the coast but to the Midwest. It's still good. We're getting our oil to market. That's great. That doubles the capacity of the existing line. This is already an existing line. It's not a new pipeline. It's an existing line. It goes to the U.S., not to the coast. That existing line had pressure restrictions for safety reasons. Now, it's also important to note that Canada's National Energy Board recommended this in April, recommended that the government approve this line 3 replacement project, and of course there were some conditions involved. So this was approved by the National Energy Board last April.

Now, the Trans Mountain expansion – again, it's an expansion of an existing line – would triple the capacity of an existing pipeline network that links Edmonton into the Vancouver regions and that would ship roughly 890,000 barrels of crude oil and petroleum per day. The NEB recommended that project for approval in May – I believe it was around the middle of May, May 17 or something like that – along with, again, some environmental, financial, and technical conditions.

Now, I do want to point out that this government brought in their first Climate Leadership Implementation Act, which is Bill 20, on May 24 of this year. So the NEB had already approved both of these before the government even started on their climate leadership plan. That's when they brought their bills in. I think that's kind of an interesting fact.

Now, another interesting fact is that the federal government approved the Northern Gateway pipeline back – let me see here – in 2014. So the Northern Gateway pipeline was already approved by the government, but of course two years later the federal government has now not approved it. I think these are some interesting facts on pipelines. Of course, it seems like the present Alberta government want to pat themselves on the back for this, but this is similar to getting elected on third base and then claiming that they hit a triple. That's not the case, Madam Chair.

The NEB does a lot of good work to approve pipelines, and there are people that stand in the way. There are governments that stand in the way. These people are like the people that this government appointed to the OSAG panel, who are still threatening to prevent the just-approved pipelines. Does that make any sense to Albertans, that the same people that this government appointed to a panel are protesting pipelines, pipelines that have just been approved? I don't think that makes any sense at all, Madam Chair.

Now, I do want to read one other thing here, too, that I thought was kind of interesting.

In October the International Energy Agency, the IEA, released a review showing that 16 countries around the world are making significant progress towards developing legal and regulatory frameworks. Alberta is the only jurisdiction and the first one in Canada to move forward with legislative amendments, so while others are talking about tackling climate change, we are acting.

Anybody have any idea where that came from? I think we've heard that a lot: “while others are talking about tackling climate change, we are acting.” That sounds like something that this NDP government has been saying.

I'll go on to read the next paragraph here.

CCS is a new technology, and quite simply it is a game-changing technology in the fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Well, that probably should be your first indication of where that first quote came from. It came from the previous government on November 3, 2010. They were tackling climate change with new CCS technology, “game-changing technology in the fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Madam Chair, we've heard this before. This government wants to pat itself on the back for something that it had nothing to do with. The previous government didn't do anything with what they tried. They tackled climate change, too, and six years later we got some pipelines.

5:20

The Government House Leader got up and spoke here just a little bit ago. He talked about the previous government's closed eyes, that they just closed their eyes to environmental problems. Well, reading *Hansard* from 2010, they had it all under control, just like this government claims to have it under control.

He also said something about lifting restrictions by putting in a cap. That doesn't even make sense. I think a cap is a restriction.

He also talked about discrediting individuals for things that they did and said when they were young, you know, holding up signs that said: no more dirty oil. How about these individuals that were just appointed to a panel by this very government to represent Albertans while they're protesting pipelines that are getting approved now? This government wants to take credit for pipeline approval when they're hiring people that protest pipelines. Does that make any sense? I guess this is the new reality of common sense in Alberta with the NDP government.

Now, he also said that the Wildrose has no plan for climate change. That's not true, simply not true. If they go back to the last election campaign, they can see our plan for climate change. In fact, it had some similar things as far as using natural gas. The government is suggesting that we didn't have a plan for reducing carbon emissions, but some of the plan is the same. So how could we not have a plan when parts of our plan are similar to your plan?

Another thing that the Government House Leader talked about: sound economic growth. His idea of sound economic growth was that the oil prices are going to go up. They're going to recover, so it's all good. We hear this government talking about this roller coaster, that we've got to get off this roller coaster where we depend on the price of oil. But what did he say? Sound economic growth depending on oil prices. They're coming up, so everything is going to be fine. It doesn't sound very promising to me as far as a government that's suggesting that they get off the oil roller coaster.

Now, we know, of course, that the government has cancelled the opportunity to have the Northern Gateway pipeline. I would like to hear what this government is saying about that. We have a Prime Minister that just overrode an arm's-length review process, the NEB, overrode the previous Prime Minister's approving it, but then he wants to do a victory lap, too, on approving two pipelines that already exist. He's the same one that put the ban on the Northern tanker traffic.

This government over and over again is doing things contrary to what they've said in the past. The NDP spent its days in opposition bashing the previous PC government regarding this very thing about transparency, about reporting. They bashed the oil sands for their emissions not being recorded properly, and now somehow today their suggestion is: “Nah, we don't need these reports. That's all fine. The studies are already being done; therefore, we'll just leave it.” This is the exact same stuff that the members of this government that were previously in opposition railed on the previous government about over and over. But today it's all different now: “This is different. We don't have to report. Why would we have to report?”

Well, Madam Chair, I think it only makes sense that this government should report to the people of Alberta how their legislation is going to affect emission reductions, emissions reporting, emissions, period. I still don't understand what would be wrong with reporting. What would be wrong with "as soon as practicable after December 31 each year, prepare and make publicly available an annual report"? Annual reports are just a common way of doing business, and it should be a common way of doing business in government. Any government that wants to be open and transparent should not fear an annual report.

The suggestion is that the report contain "the reduction, expressed in megatonnes, from the previous calendar year in upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions." Now, upgrading emissions fall under a separate cap along with cogeneration emissions. So why wouldn't it be appropriate to calculate and report the reduction of emissions? That's what this is all about. I mean, if this is about emissions, if this is climate leadership and climate leadership is reducing emissions to protect our environment, then why wouldn't we want to report the reduction, the amount?

Now, it also goes on to say to report the greenhouse gas emissions "that will be produced in the first year of commercial operation by oil sands sites approved under the Oil Sands Conservation Act in the year for which the annual report is made." Again, Madam Chair, this only makes sense. It's reporting greenhouse gas emissions. This is what this is all about, I presume, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act. Emissions from oil sands: that's what it's about. Why can't we have a report on the emissions from oil sands if we're talking about the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act? It doesn't stand to reason.

5:30

It goes on to say, "the amount of funding provided by the Government of Alberta for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions and greenhouse gas emissions for the year for which the annual report is made." Taxpayers' money. The government of Alberta doesn't spend their money; they spend taxpayers' money. They spend our money. They spend Albertans' money. That's what the government of Alberta spends. It's not the government of Alberta's money. There's only one place they get their money from, and that's from us. So why would there be a problem with providing the funding amount that the government gives for research or developments to reduce upgrading emissions? I mean, it'd be a pretty simple cost analysis. We find out how much emissions have been reduced, we find out how much money the government of Alberta has put into it, and then we have an idea of what the cost is for reducing emissions. It doesn't seem like much to ask.

Now, of course, the minister suggested that all this testing and reporting is happening, but I don't believe that Environment Canada is doing reports on the amount of funding provided by the government of Alberta for research developments. I would presume that none of the other environmental organizations that are involved with the testing and reporting do that. I don't think that would make sense if they're reporting and doing the analysis. Why would this be a problem, then? This is obviously something that's not happening, but it should be happening.

I think that when we provide people with information, they can make informed decisions. It's pretty easy to go out into a crowd and say, "Wouldn't you like us to do something for the environment?" Everybody says: "Yes, of course, we want you to do something for the environment. We're all concerned about the environment." All Albertans are concerned about the environment. But then if you said, "Oh, we're going to pump millions of taxpayer dollars into something, and we might not get any results," they might think: "Oh, hmm, second thoughts. Why don't you come back with something that works?" That's what I would do. I would want to

have something for my money. When I go to buy something, I like to get something. I like to get something when I buy something. So I would think that Albertans would love to have this information.

Now, going on here, it talks about the report on "greenhouse gas emissions for each type of greenhouse gas emission excluded under section 2(2) for the year for which the annual report is made." Again, we get into these exclusions from the 100-megatonne cap, so this is asking for an annual report to include these emissions from all these different things. Again, Madam Chair, I don't know that Environment Canada and these other organizations that are doing the reporting take that into consideration.

The Chair: On the amendment, the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to speak to this amendment. As I think has been pointed out quite effectively by many of my colleagues throughout the evening, it's important to make sure that the government, when bringing forward legislation of this type, can make sure there's a mechanism within that legislation to ensure that the government is accountable to Albertans. I can't think of anybody who would find that unreasonable except, possibly, unfortunately, the government members through their indication of how they intend to vote on this amendment.

We have a bill, Bill 25, which experts are predicting could cost our economy from \$153.41 billion to \$254.74 billion, somewhere in there. Now, I don't know about you, Madam Chair, but I think that's an astronomical amount. The government is quite excited about some pipeline announcements today, and I agree with them on that, but even if every pipeline that we hope for in our province right now was approved, the expected bump to the Canadian economy would be about \$30 billion. Compare that to upwards of \$254 billion that we're going to lose from this bill if it passes this House.

The hon. member has brought forward this amendment, which reads, "Commencing one year after the coming into force of this Act, the Minister shall, as soon as practicable after December 31 each year, prepare and make publicly available an annual report, which contains," and then it goes on to describe some metrics of measurement and some measurements that would make the government have to be able to report to the people of Alberta the impact of this legislation that they brought forward, which is going to cost \$254 billion, possibly, to our economy.

If we're going to say that Albertans want to invest that much in continued job loss, continued negative impacts on their business, continued negative impacts on the energy industry – now, I would argue to you, Madam Chair, that they don't want to do that. If we are to take at face value the government's argument that Albertans as a whole want to lose \$254 billion on their economy, I would say that at the very least Albertans would be reasonable to say to their government, "We want you to be able to show us the results of the legislation that you brought forward that has caused us so much grief, has caused so much trouble for our economy," to show that at least that investment that Albertans are going to make, not the hon. members across the way – Albertans, everyday Albertans are going to make that investment – that the results have had a meaningful impact.

I would submit to you, Madam Chair: why would the government be concerned about a simple amendment to make sure that they are accountable for the decisions they make? If this legislation is going to have such a positive impact – to be fair, no government member has really stood up to show what the positive impact of Bill 25 will be. Assuming that they're bringing it forward because they think there will be a positive impact, if there's going to be such a positive

impact from this legislation, you would think the government would want to have some sort of accountability and measurement and mechanism to be able to report to the people of Alberta the success that they've had with this bill.

Now, most people in the communities that I represent have absolutely zero trust in this current government. You would drive a long way through Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre before you could find an NDP voter, and you would drive even further before you would find somebody that trusted this government, particularly now, after they've been in power for two years. That's fair, but there are other places in this province where they might have trusted this government. They obviously trusted them enough to elect them and give them a chance to govern. I would submit to you, Madam Chair, that for those people at the very least this government has the responsibility to report back to them on the results that they're having with their legislation.

By not passing this amendment, it looks to me like the government is concerned about what may be reported in a year, and that shows a tremendous lack of confidence in Bill 25, the legislation that they're bringing forward and asking members to vote on despite clear evidence that it will continue to cause more hard-working Albertans to lose their jobs, more families to not be able to make mortgage payments, less vacations for children and their families, less positive stuff and cause negative things to our economy. That must be it. That's the only thing that would make any sense to me, Madam Chair. They don't want the report to come forward, an annual report to hold them accountable, because they know that Bill 25 obviously won't accomplish what they think it will accomplish, or at least they're concerned that Bill 25 won't accomplish what they think it will accomplish. Otherwise, they would be excited to pass this amendment and make sure that there are accountability measures put in place to show the positive and the great results for Albertans that this piece of legislation is going to have.

But over and over we're hearing from government members that they will not support this amendment, so the only logical conclusion, I would say, Madam Chair, is that the government is not that confident in Bill 25, and given the estimates of upwards of \$254 billion lost in our economy, I've got to say that I don't think I'd be too confident either if I was a government member across the way.

5:40

This is why the hon. member brought forward this amendment. I think this is why I certainly am going to support this amendment. I believe all of my colleagues in every opposition party will support this amendment. I think it's a great amendment. I thank the hon. member for bringing it forward, and I would encourage members opposite to seriously consider why they would want to vote against a measure that simply requires them to report to Albertans the progress that they've made with this legislation and the results that this legislation has brought forth.

I can't think of any other business setting where you would make decisions that could cost upwards of \$254 billion and require anybody to make that level of investment and not put in some sort of measure to make sure that the investment is working, some sort of measure to make sure that you are aware if you need to make adjustments to the decisions that you're making. Certainly, if I was a government member and I thought that legislation was going to have a great, drastic, and positive impact on the people that I serve – and let's be clear, Madam Chair, that they serve the people of Alberta; it's a privilege – I would excitedly vote for this and would excitedly want to put in place something that would show the people of Alberta the great accomplishments of the legislation.

I think for myself – and I know, certainly, that the people I represent and, I suspect, the majority of Albertans, Madam Chair, are asking themselves why the government would not vote for something as simple as this. The fact is that it's pretty clear that they're bringing forward legislation that's going to cost Albertans about \$254 billion, and the logical thing is that, of course, you would not want to vote for this if you're the government because you are not proud of what's going to happen and you're scared of what the results of that annual report would be.

So I highly encourage all of the members of the Assembly to vote for this simple accountability measure, which does nothing in any way to negatively impact the legislation the government has brought forward.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:42 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Gotfried	Nixon
Ellis	Hanson	Panda
Fildebrandt	Loewen	Strankman
Fraser	MacIntyre	Yao

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Horne	Phillips
Babcock	Kazim	Piquette
Carlier	Kleinsteuber	Renaud
Carson	Larivee	Rosendahl
Connolly	Littlewood	Sabir
Coolahan	Luff	Schmidt
Cortes-Vargas	Malkinson	Schreiner
Dach	Mason	Shepherd
Dang	McCuaig-Boyd	Sigurdson
Feehan	Miller	Sucha
Ganley	Miranda	Turner
Gray	Nielsen	Westhead
Hinkley	Payne	Woollard
Hoffman		

Totals:	For – 12	Against – 40
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[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill.

Mr. Mason: Madam Chair, I would move that the committee rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 25. I wish to table copies

of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed, say no. So ordered.

Mr. Mason: I move that we call it 6 o'clock and adjourn.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

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