



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, March 20, 2017

Day 10

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

Third Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND),
Deputy Government House Leader
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (ND),
Deputy Government House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W),
Official Opposition House Leader
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND),
Government Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC),
Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (PC)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (ND)
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (ND)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (ND)
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Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)
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Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)
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Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
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Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
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Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W),
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Premier
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
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Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND)
Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND)
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC),
Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND)
Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W)
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND)
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND),
Deputy Government Whip
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
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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STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Coolahan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

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| Cyr | McKitrick |
| Dang | Taylor |
| Ellis | Turner |
| Horne | |

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Sucha
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

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| Carson | McPherson |
| Connolly | Orr |
| Coolahan | Piquette |
| Dach | Schneider |
| Drysdale | Schreiner |
| Fitzpatrick | Taylor |
| Gotfried | |

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goehring
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

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| Aheer | Miller |
| Drever | Pitt |
| Hinkley | Rodney |
| Horne | Shepherd |
| Jansen | Swann |
| Luff | Yao |
| McKitrick | |

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

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| Drever | Nixon |
| Ellis | Pitt |
| Horne | van Dijken |
| Kleinsteuber | Woollard |
| Littlewood | |

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Wanner
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

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| Cooper | Nixon |
| Dang | Orr |
| Jabbour | Piquette |
| Luff | Schreiner |
| McIver | |

Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

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| Ellis | Pitt |
| Horne | van Dijken |
| Kleinsteuber | Woollard |
| Littlewood | |

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Ms McPherson
Deputy Chair: Connolly

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| Anderson, W. | Kleinsteuber |
| Babcock | McKitrick |
| Drever | Rosendahl |
| Drysdale | Stier |
| Fraser | Strankman |
| Hinkley | Sucha |
| Kazim | |

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

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| Carson | Loyola |
| Coolahan | McPherson |
| Cooper | Nielsen |
| Ellis | Schneider |
| Goehring | Starke |
| Hanson | van Dijken |
| Kazim | |

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Cyr
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

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| Littlewood | Westhead |
| Luff | |

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Hunter

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| Clark | MacIntyre |
| Dang | Malkinson |
| Drysdale | Nielsen |
| Hanson | Rosendahl |
| Kazim | Woollard |
| Kleinsteuber | |

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, March 20, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Bonjour. Good day. Would you please bow your heads.

Let us reflect or pray, each in our own way. Let us acknowledge the value of human diversity and the importance of all cultures in our country, particularly on this International Francophonie Day. Let us celebrate the riches that the French language and culture have brought to our country and to our province.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark.

Hon. Members:

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

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: 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 a great friend of mine and a great friend to Alberta, Jason Kenney. On this day it's important to note that he's fluently bilingual, which is an upgrade. Jason was elected leader of our PC Party on the weekend, and he is in your gallery today. I ask him to rise and receive the usual warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you the students, staff, and parents from Delburne school, located on the eastern side of the magnificent riding of Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. We have instructor Derk Unterschultz accompanied by parents James Guynup, Beverly Christensen, Sharleen Klein, and Alison Southworth. If the students, staff, and parents would please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Merci, M. le Président. C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de vous présenter aujourd'hui, à vous et à tous les membres de cette Assemblée, des représentants de la communauté francophone de l'Alberta qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui pour célébrer la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie, le 19^{ième} Rendez-vous de la

Francophonie: 40 élèves de l'école Maurice-Lavallée, une école francophone ici à Edmonton, ainsi que leur directrice, Mme Kim St. André-Brady, l'enseignante Chantal Grégoire, et Yic Camara, travailleur en établissement. J'offre à nos invités mes meilleurs vœux pour une agréable célébration, et je leur demande de se lever afin de recevoir l'accueil chaleureux et traditionnel de cette Assemblée.

Merci.

[Translation] In the gallery today are 40 students; the school principal, Kim St. André-Brady; their teacher, Chantal Grégoire; and Yic Camara, settlement officer from l'école Maurice-Lavallée. [As submitted]

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Merci, M. le Président. C'est avec fierté que je me lève à la Chambre aujourd'hui, le jour de la Francophonie, pour introduire 37 étudiants de l'école Earl Buxton elementary. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Tony Foote and Mrs. Julie Serbinek, along with their chaperone, Dr. Samina Ali. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly representatives from Alberta's French-speaking community who are here today in celebration of Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie and International Francophonie Day. They are Mr. Leo Piquette, former member of the NDP caucus and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Athabasca-Lac La Biche from 1986 to 1989; Ms Audrey Poitras, president of the Métis Nation of Alberta; Mr. Jean Johnson, president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta; Victoria Wishart, president of the Alberta branch of Canadian Parents for French; Mr. Dicky Dikamba, executive director of Canadian Volunteers United in Action; Ms Aminata Diallo, president of the Calgary Guinean association; and Evelyne Kemajou, co-ordinator of the Portail de l'Immigrant Association de l'Alberta. I would ask them to please receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Miranda: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the wonderful staff of the Francophone Secretariat who are here today: Cindie LeBlanc, Antonine Bergeron, Rhéal Poirier, Denise Lavallée, and Martin Bouchard. I would ask them to please receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The 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 the Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta. With them today is Dr. Hilary Kornder. She is vice-president, leadership and education, on the executive board of the association. I was pleased to meet with her as well as many of her colleagues. Today marks the 10th anniversary of the Resident Physicians in the Legislature event. This year they are advocating specifically for increased awareness of advanced care planning and goals of care designation. They urge all Albertans to discuss this with their

primary care providers as well as their families. I ask that the staff and team members from PARA who are here today please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Connolly: Merci, M. le Président. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Alphonse Ahola Ndem, Audrey Poitras, Dulari Prithipaul, Emmanuel Mulumba, and Pierre-Yves Mocquais. I introduce them today to mark International Francophonie Day and to thank them for their invaluable contribution to the community and to Alberta. I invite them now to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

It's also my pleasure to introduce today the MP for Rimouski-Neigette-Témiscouata-Les Basques, Guy Caron. I invite him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Marie Gaudet. Marie is a proud descendant of one of the first Acadian families to come to North America. She has never forgotten her roots and is always happy to promote the French language and culture in all of its glorious diversity. I would like to thank Marie for her contribution to Sherwood Park and invite her to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly two councillors from Rocky View county. Liz Breakey and Margaret Bahcheli are in Edmonton for the AAMD and C conference. They are two of the most hard-working councillors I've had the privilege of meeting. I'm honoured to call them both colleagues and friends and to work together with them to serve rural Albertans. I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to rise today to introduce two people in the public gallery from the great constituency of Edmonton-Rutherford. David Ealey was an issues manager in the communications branch of Alberta environment and sustainable resource development and developed a role of providing support and mentorship to young students coming into that program. He continues to do this now that he's no longer working for the department. Today he's brought one of his mentees with him, Zvonimir Rac. Zvonimir is currently studying public relations at MacEwan University. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other guests today? The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the House three devoted Albertans and tireless members of the unity campaign: Mr.

Tyler Shandro, Mr. Dan Heath, and Mr. Dan Williams. If I may just add, Tyler is a respected lawyer in the city of Calgary. He's a member of the Calgary Police Commission. He is the president of the Calgary-West constituency association. He is a beloved husband and father and a personal friend. If we could please give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Or Children's Services.

The Speaker: I'll try that one.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence, I would like to introduce three individuals today. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three members of the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. I ask my guests to rise as I call their name. Dr. Peter Choate holds a PhD in addictions and a master of social work. He is an assistant professor of social work at Mount Royal University and a continuing education instructor at the University of Calgary. Bruce MacLaurin holds a master of social work and is a member of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work. He teaches classes on child maltreatment, social work evaluation, and research social work policy related to child and family issues at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Patti LaBoucane-Benson has a PhD in human ecology, focusing on aboriginal family and community resilience. Dr. LaBoucane-Benson has worked for Native Counselling Services of Alberta for 21 years and is currently the director of research, training, and communication, providing leadership for research teams undertaking community-based applied research. Dr. LaBoucane-Benson is a proud Métis member in this province as well.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals bring to the table decades of experience working to make lives better for Alberta's children. Their thoughtfulness and caring perspectives contribute greatly to the panel's work. I ask all members to give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other guests? Lethbridge-East.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Merci, M. le Président. C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de vous présenter aujourd'hui my two daughters, Selena and Michelle Carter, who are in the gallery. They both are incredible supports to me, and Selena is a constituent. Please give them the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Journée Internationale de la Francophonie

Miranda: Merci, M. le Président. Je suis heureux de me lever en Chambre aujourd'hui et de prendre la parole à l'occasion de la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie. Aujourd'hui, de concert avec les 80 autres états et gouvernements membres de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, nous célébrons la langue française et les cultures francophones ici en Alberta, partout au Canada et aussi à travers le monde.

À mon arrivée au Canada, je ne parlais ni l'anglais ni le français, mais je me suis engagé à adopter mon nouveau pays, et cela

signifiait apprendre les deux langues officielles. Même si ma langue maternelle est l'espagnol, je suis fier de me considérer franco-albertain au cœur, et je suis très fier de partager cette fière tradition linguistique et notre héritage dans notre province.

L'Alberta a fait de grandes avancées pour reconnaître les contributions des Albertains d'expression française et des communautés francophones. Il y a presque 30 ans aujourd'hui que dans cette Chambre Leo Piquette, alors Député d'Athabasca-Lac La Biche, s'est levé pour poser une question en français. Sa question a été rapidement interrompue, mais son audace a néanmoins suscité un débat sur les droits linguistiques des francophones en Alberta.

Les années quatre-vingt et quatre-vingt-dix ont été des décennies importantes pour les droits linguistiques au Canada et en Alberta. Par exemple, à la suite de l'adoption de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés en 1982, les francophones ont le droit de bénéficier d'une éducation en français langue première financée par la province de même qu'à une gouvernance scolaire francophone.

Aujourd'hui l'Alberta peut se féliciter de compter sur l'un des plus solides programmes de français langue première et de français langue seconde au pays. Un étudiant albertain sur trois est inscrit à un programme en français.

Je voudrais souligner que Leo Piquette a également participé à la promotion de l'éducation francophone dans le cadre de ce mouvement. Plus récemment il a vu son fils, mon honorable ami le député provincial d'Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater, poursuivre son œuvre politique. Les efforts de M. Piquette père se faisaient au nom des communautés francophones, et ils ont rappelé aux Albertains que la diversité, peu importe son origine, a toujours été une réalité dans notre province. Reconnaître et célébrer les langues officielles du Canada et toute notre diversité rend aujourd'hui notre société plus forte et plus riche, ce qui rend la vie meilleure pour tous les Albertains.

Aujourd'hui, que ses membres soient des Franco-Albertains de plusieurs générations, des Québécois, des Acadiens, des descendants métis, ou des nouveaux arrivants en provenance de tous les coins du monde, la population francophone de l'Alberta prospère et continue de croître. Le français demeure la deuxième langue la plus parlée, après l'anglais, et est parlé par plus de 238,000 Albertains.

En tant que ministre responsable du Secrétariat francophone, je suis fier de travailler côte-à-côte avec cette communauté plurielle et dynamique sur une panoplie d'enjeux et d'opportunités. Dans cette optique nous pouvons mentionner le fait que l'Alberta est l'une des deux provinces canadiennes qui n'a pas de politique de services en français. Pour remédier à la situation, nous avons entrepris des consultations communautaires à la fin de l'année dernière, et pour la première fois le gouvernement de l'Alberta poursuit l'élaboration d'une politique en matière de francophonie visant à améliorer l'accès aux services gouvernementaux en français. L'objectif de cette politique est de renforcer l'avantage concurrentiel de l'Alberta, de renforcer nos relations avec la communauté francophone et de tirer parti du financement offert par le gouvernement fédéral.

Au cours du mois de mars Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie ont offert un important éventail de manifestations culturelles aux communautés d'expression française et ce afin de présenter et de célébrer leur patrimoine. Par exemple, le 3 mars, pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la province, notre gouvernement a procédé au lever du drapeau franco-albertain sur les terrains de la Législature ici à Edmonton et sur ceux du Centre McDougall à Calgary.

M. le Président, j'encourage tous les Albertains d'apprendre davantage au sujet de l'histoire et des contributions de notre Francophonie à bâtir cette province afin de reconnaître tout ce que cette communauté importante, vibrante et culturellement en santé

apporte à notre quotidien et de célébrer l'Alberta en français en l'honneur de la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie.

Je vous remercie.

[Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today on International Francophonie Day. Today, along with the 80 other member states and governments of the International Organization of la Francophonie, we celebrate the French language and francophone cultures here in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world.

When I arrived in Canada, I could not speak English or French, but I was committed to adopting my new country, and that meant learning the two official languages. Even though my mother tongue is Spanish, I am proud to consider myself Franco-Albertan in my heart, and I am very proud to share this great linguistic tradition and heritage in our province.

Alberta has come a long way in recognizing the contributions of French-speaking Albertans and francophone communities. It was almost 30 years ago today that in this very Chamber Leo Piquette, then the MLA for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, rose to ask a question in French. His question was cut short, but his effort nevertheless touched off a debate on language rights for francophones in Alberta.

The '80s and '90s were important decades for language rights in Canada and in Alberta. For example, as a result of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, francophones have the right to publicly funded French first-language education and the right to francophone governance. Today Alberta can pride itself on having one of the strongest French first-language and French as a second language education programs in the country. One in three students in Alberta is enrolled in a French-language program.

I should point out that Leo Piquette was also involved in championing francophone education as part of this movement. More recently he has seen his son Colin carry on his legacy in provincial politics as the Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater. While the elder Mr. Piquette's efforts were on behalf of francophone communities, they reminded Albertans that diversity of all types has always been a fact of life in our society. Recognizing and celebrating the official languages of Canada and this diversity makes our society stronger and richer today, which, in turn, makes life better for all Albertans.

Today, whether its members are Franco-Albertans of several generations, Québécois, Acadians, Métis descendants, or newcomers to Alberta from all corners of the world, Alberta's French-speaking population is thriving and continues to grow. French remains the second most spoken language after English and is spoken by more than 238,000 Albertans.

As minister responsible for the Francophone Secretariat I am proud to work with this diverse and vibrant community on wide-ranging issues and opportunities. Among those is the fact that Alberta remains one of two provinces in Canada without a French-language services policy. To remedy this, we undertook community consultations late last year, and for the first time the Alberta government is moving forward in developing a French policy to help improve access to government services in French. The aim is to enhance Alberta's competitive advantage, strengthen our relationship with the francophone community, and leverage Alberta's fair share of francophone funding from the federal government.

The month of March has seen an exciting array of cultural events called Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, an opportunity for French-speaking communities throughout the province to showcase and celebrate their heritage. For example, on March 3 our government, for the first time in the province's history, raised the Franco-Albertan flag on the Legislature Grounds here in Edmonton and in front of McDougall Centre in Calgary. It has flown in these places

of honour for the entire month of March. It is an important recognition of the historic presence of French culture and language in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage Albertans to learn more about the history and contribution of our Francophonie to the building of this province to recognize all that this important, vibrant, and culturally alive community brings to our way of life and to celebrate Alberta en français in honour of the Journée Internationale de la Francophonie, International Francophonie Day.

Thank you. [As submitted]

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

Mrs. Aheer: Aujourd'hui c'est la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie, où nous célébrons notre patrimoine canadien-français. C'est un patrimoine qui ne serait pas le même sans nos frères et nos sœurs français.

French was the first of the European languages spoken in our great province. Many of our communities were named by French missionaries, including Lacombe, Lac La Biche, Bonnyville, Legal, and many others. These towns were established in part to entrench French language and culture in the west. Today French is the mother tongue of over 80,000 Albertans. While approximately 238,000 speak the language, more than 390,000 Albertans are French descendants. This puts Alberta as the third-largest francophone population in Canada.

Le 22 mars commence la célébration des Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, qui met l'accent sur les contributions que les francophones ont apporté à leurs communautés.

The official flag of the Alberta francophone community includes Albertan and francophone symbolism and combines the delicate but resilient wild rose with the light and life of the fleur-de-lys.

J'encourage tout le monde à participer à des événements dans leur communauté pour honorer et célébrer notre patrimoine francophone. Je suis fière de pouvoir parler cette belle langue, d'avoir cela dans mon patrimoine et de pouvoir le transmettre à mes beaux enfants.

Je vous remercie.

1:50

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the House to allow the leader or designate of the third party and the other independent members to respond to the ministerial statement.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, members. It's an honour to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to acknowledge International Francophonie Day and the contributions from the francophone community to our province and indeed all of Canada. From St. Paul and Bonnyville to Beaumont and many other communities across this great province Alberta francophones have helped build this province for hundreds of years.

The Progressive Conservative caucus understands that our province thrives best when we work closely with all communities like the francophones in Alberta to add to our cultural mosaic, although they are at the core of our cultural mosaic. That is why the previous government was proud to establish the Francophone Secretariat to act as a liaison between the provincial government and the community. Since 1999 the role of the Francophone Secretariat has been to advocate for grant funding, public education, and vital information for the French community.

Moving forward, this caucus will encourage the provincial government to continue supporting this important initiative. Even centuries after French explorers made the voyage to what is now Alberta, the community continues to grow, and we are seeing an increase in our bilingual population. Over 81,000 Albertans speak French as their mother tongue, and nearly 240,000 are bilingual. As world-wide markets continue to become more globalized, it's critical to fund bilingual programs and train our province's future leaders to represent Alberta on a global scale.

Mr. Speaker, on International Francophonie Day we're proud to look back on the contribution made by Alberta's French community to our culture and economy that has truly helped build our province, but we also look forward to this continued partnership that we all benefit from.

M. le Président, au nom du Parti Progressiste-Conservateur je suis tellement fier de vous dire: vive la Francophonie Albertaine.

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

Mr. Clark: Merci, M. le Président. C'est mon honneur de me lever aujourd'hui, la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie, which we celebrate every March 20 in commemoration of the 1979 Nîmes convention, where French-speaking states aligned their mutual interests. The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie brings together 84 member states and governments from five continents, representing approximately 1 billion inhabitants, including 274 million francophones.

Now, francophones first came to Alberta in the 1780s as part of the fur trade. Today francophones are descendants from the Québécois, Acadians, and, of course, the Métis peoples. They have passed down their identity, their culture, and their language through the generations, and Alberta is much stronger for it. Many people don't know that until the 1870s, French was the primary European language spoken here in Alberta. Today the contribution of francophone Albertans remains strong, with approximately 85,000 Albertans claiming French as their first language and a further 240,000 being bilingual. Well, perhaps that's 240,000 and a half, as you will soon find out that my French is not quite good enough to be considered fully bilingual. But my daughters are taking French immersion in Alberta's tremendous public school system, and they have taught me a great deal. Alberta's francophone community is remarkably diverse, with over 10,000 newcomers of francophone descent from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East who call Alberta home.

Mais étant que la Francophonie est une mode de vie, c'est une culture distincte et une identité. C'est une famille et une aide composée que nous sommes comme des Canadiens et des Albertains et la nation de Métis. Elles sont des parties importantes de l'Alberta, et nous sommes les meilleurs pour cela.

Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the House to continue with the Routine until its completion.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Budget 2017

Mr. Jean: The Premier says that her budget provides a steady hand. Well, here's what a steady hand from an NDP government looks like: a slumping economy; a \$10.3 billion deficit; \$71 billion in

provincial debt, where every single household in Alberta owes \$60,000; and, to top it all off, a carbon tax in the midst of one of the deepest economic downturns our province has ever seen that just keeps getting things more and more expensive. How is strangling growth, taxing families, and plummeting our province into debt a steady hand?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say that our government refuses to sacrifice our children's future by forcing them into overcrowded classrooms, so we are funding enrolment, and we are building 24 new schools. We refuse to leave seniors who need care to languish on waiting lists, so we're funding health care, and we're building a new long-term care centre in Calgary. I refuse to hold our economy hostage by letting infrastructure crumble, so we're building a new bridge to Fort Saskatchewan and putting people to work while we do that. We're building our province. They want to tear it down.

Mr. Jean: The fact is that this Premier and her cabinet are living in a fantasy world. In their world raising people's heating and gas bills and making Alberta less competitive is good for Albertans, and in their world Alberta can drive our balance sheet off a cliff with zero consequences. But that's not reality. Moody's and DBRS are warning that this NDP budget will lead to more credit downgrades. That means billions more being siphoned away from hospitals and schools, that are so important to Albertans, so that the NDP can pay back the big banks. Does no one over there realize that this is a budget crisis?

Ms Notley: Well, speaking of billions, Mr. Speaker, here's what the opposition proposes to do. They promise to cut \$10 billion in funding from hospitals, schools, and roads. Why do they want to do that? So they can pay for tax giveaways at the very top. That means no new hospital in Edmonton, no cancer centre in Calgary, and no new schools. The opposition wants Albertans to set their sights lower. Our government wants to help Albertans move forward and do even better.

Mr. Jean: None of that is true, Mr. Speaker. But this is true: "I believe that this 15 per cent limit will not be breached." That was, of course, the Finance minister just a year and a half ago. Now Alberta is set to hit a 20 per cent ratio. Once debt free, soon we will have a higher debt burden than British Columbia. It means \$2.3 billion in annual interest payments that is not going to hire teachers or nurses as we need but to big banks. With more downgrades it will make it even more difficult for things to get back to balance. Why can't the Premier admit her government has a spending problem?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're building up Alberta. We're building up Alberta. On that side of the House they want to tear Alberta down. What they want to do is raise tuition fees, raise school fees, raise energy bills. You know, if they're so concerned about our finances, why is it that they want to give \$600 million in giveaways to people who are struggling on \$300,000 a year or more?

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, here is how a credit downgrade works. It makes it more expensive to borrow. That means higher interest payments for everybody. That's money that doesn't even go to paying off the debt but just to keeping creditors happy. It hurts the

ability for our province to tell the world that we are open for business and that we are a safe place to invest. That's what Alberta should be about. But it means fewer jobs, fewer services, and higher taxes for Albertans. This is shameful. When will the Premier clue in and get us off this budget meltdown?

2:00

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, here is how cutting \$2 billion out of our operating expenses works. It means eliminating the whole child protection ministry. It means cutting the entire seniors ministry. It means getting rid of the Justice department. It is time for a realistic evaluation of what Alberta needs to go forward. We are a government that is supporting Alberta families, and we are proud to do that.

Mr. Jean: Well, here are a few easy ideas on how to save money and support Albertans. How about using the private sector to do linen services in Alberta instead of the government? The government can go ahead and cut the carbon tax – that would help – and the billions in green slush money that she wants to spend, billions and billions. Finally, how about not wasting billions on a job-killing coal shutdown and suing Alberta power companies? That not only saves taxpayers money, but instead of destroying communities in the province, it will actually save jobs. These ideas would help the budget and create jobs. What a concept. Why won't the Premier do any of them as we ask?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is investing in Alberta and investing in Albertans and investing in Alberta jobs. We are doing it through an ambitious capital plan, which is going to build the Calgary cancer centre, something that they would cut; build a new hospital in Edmonton, something that they would cut; build 24 new schools across the province, something that they wouldn't do. As a result of that, Albertans have paid for that year after year after year. The time for that kind of backward thinking is over. We are moving Albertans forward.

Mr. Jean: The fact is that the NDP jobs plan has been a total disaster; 81,000 full net jobs – it's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker – have disappeared since this government took power. Household incomes last year plummeted by thousands of dollars, and this budget is just one more of the same failed policies. We should be doing better right now, but we're not. NDP policies are strangling Alberta's potential, growth is almost nonexistent, and the budget is bathed in red ink. The Premier's plan has failed Albertans. When will she start to get some common sense and change course? Go in a different direction, Premier.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that Albertans are struggling because of the drop in the international price of oil. We know that it is not something we can control, but what we can control is how we respond to that crisis. So we've invested in Alberta, and since June 19,000 new jobs have been created in Alberta. We will continue to support Albertans because we have their backs. [interjections]

The Speaker: Folks.

I could try and give the requests in French, but that would be very painful for you, so let's keep it down because that's the next station I'll go to.

The third main question.

Mr. Jean: Merci. When a family sits down to pay their bills, they look at how much money they have coming in and how much they

need to go back out for bills, their mortgage, and other expenses. Alberta families understand that when times are tough, they need to find a way to shave down expenses where they can. Well, by the time the NDP are done, they will have increased spending in Alberta by \$9 billion annually. How on earth is this bending the curve and showing some restraint?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I reject the numbers that the member opposite is putting forward, but what I will say is that we will not make drastic, unthought-out, dramatic cuts that will hurt Albertans. We are going to make life better for Alberta families. We are focusing on creating jobs, we are focusing on making life more affordable, and we are focusing on protecting those important public services that support Albertans day in and day out because, as I've said before, we have Albertans' backs.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not the only one that's rejecting the numbers; Albertans are, too, and the NDP should get spending under control.

Although the NDP tried to stuff it away in their budget, the fact is that taxes are still going up this year big time. The carbon tax has already raised the cost of gas, fuel, and groceries, and with the NDP it's going to go up another 50 per cent this year and continue to increase until it costs a typical household \$2,500 or more per year. Why is the government misleading Albertans by claiming that there are no tax hikes in this year's budget?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as you know, what that plan actually did is that it succeeded in getting Alberta something that the fellows over there could not make happen for over a decade. Our climate leadership plan is entirely related to how we got not one but two pipelines approved, the very pipelines that are going to bring jobs back to Alberta and put those families back to work.

Mr. Jean: The NDP keep showing how out of touch they are with families across this great province. Bringing in a carbon tax isn't affordable. Raising the price of that carbon tax definitely isn't making life more affordable for Albertans, and running a government that has raised taxes, capped growth on our oil sands, and mortgaged future generations at dangerous levels of borrowing isn't helping either. These policies are very bad news for Albertans and Albertans long term. When will the Premier finally give them a break?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what makes life more affordable for Albertans: dropping their school fees by 25 per cent, freezing tuition rates, and putting a cap on energy prices. Each one of those things the folks over there would have rejected and would undo. Albertans don't want that. They want to stick with our affordability.

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

School Fees

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, the NDP has profiled their incompetence once more in the form of Bill 1, where they're actually legislating their failure to deliver on an election promise, as they will reduce school fees not by 100 per cent as promised but only 25. They claim they have found efficiencies in the Ministry of Education. I have not yet found in the budget any funds to make the school boards whole once they can no longer collect these fees. To

the Minister of Education: why are you penalizing school boards, who will now have to cut in other areas, disadvantaging the very children you claim to help in order to make cheap political points?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is true that we are only reducing school fees by 25 per cent, but that's because year after year after year after year, 44 years, the previous government allowed Alberta to develop the highest school fees in the country. They ignored people saying that school fees were out of control. They thought it made perfect sense to make hard-working families pay more for their public education. Our government took action. Our government said: no more. I think Albertans are probably pretty happy about that.

Mr. McIver: No answer for school boards, as expected.

Mr. Speaker, according to the NDP any discussion by previous governments around efficiency they have said meant laying off teachers and nurses. Now they claim to have found efficiencies. They can't have it both ways. I would like to ask the minister to give the real story. How many teachers or essential personnel will you be laying off, or if no layoffs, what will you be forcing school boards to shortchange Alberta kids by?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was so proud to table Bill 1. Certainly, the hon. member can choose to not, you know, vote for that same Bill 1 if he wants to, but if passed, it will put real reductions in school fees, which will help school boards and parents as well because it is a perennial problem that school boards have these fees. They tried their best over the years, but they did not have long-term, stable funding from the government. Now they do. Now we're working together to make life better for Albertans.

Mr. McIver: Oh, Mr. Speaker, we'll support the decrease. It's still a broken promise, and they still haven't answered the question, so I will ask it a third time. To the minister: isn't it time to tell Alberta school boards the truth for a change? Since you're not really making them whole from the fees they can no longer collect, what services will Alberta children now have to do without so that the NDP can have one good media day at children's expense?

Mr. Eggen: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not just about media days and so forth; it's about making life better for regular Albertans, and that's what we have been doing day in and day out, and school boards have been behind this. Parent groups have been behind it as well. Albertans know that the school fees were too darn high. We're here to clean it up because – you know what? – there was a big mess to clean up after this previous government not funding long-term, stable funding for education. Now we're doing so, and I'm pretty darn proud of that.

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

2:10 Mental Health Patient Advocate

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mental Health Patient Advocate's office was established in 1995 to protect patients' rights and improve the mental health system. Since 1990 the advocate's work has increased exponentially, but the resources have not. In fact, it went from being an independent office with its own budget to recently being rolled into the Alberta Health Advocate's office and sharing its funds. To the Minister of Health: if the government truly values mental health and rejects stigma and protects patients' rights, why does it keep shortchanging the mental health advocate's office?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I look forward to having an opportunity to engage in full budget discussions. One of the things that I'm so proud to make sure that everyone knows is that we've more than tripled the investment to make sure that addictions and mental health are addressed properly as we move forward. I'm incredibly proud of that. It's my understanding that at a specific point in time following the floods in southern Alberta that office was created, but there have been considerations of how best to serve the people, and I look forward to having opportunities to continue that dialogue with hon. members.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In her previous annual report the advocate said:

The past year posed challenges to fulfill our legislative mandate in a timely manner . . . largely due to the loss of a position along with the Government . . . restraint measures. It had a direct impact on the number of Albertans we served and the comprehensiveness of our investigations.

As a result, the office was unable to conduct a single formal investigation of a patient complaint. To the minister: do you not see that chronic underfunding of this important office is causing it to fail to live up to its mandate?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Just to follow up on a piece of the earlier question, funding for the mental health advocate in Budget 2017 is consistent with last year. In fact, the advocate has been appointed on an interim basis during the recruitment process for a new person to fill that role. Our government is very committed to ensuring that Albertans are able to access the mental health supports that they need, regardless of where they live in our province. To that end, we've committed more than \$5.6 million in new operating funds towards implementing the recommendations of the mental health review in addition to the funding that has been included to address the substance use crisis in our province.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the mental health advocate speaks for mental health patients who are not happy with the way that the system is working. Mergers seem to be the rage these days. Now even the NDP is getting into the act. When Carol Robertson Baker finished her term as mental health advocate, the government didn't replace her; instead, the Minister of Health has simply merged the mental health and the Health Advocate, as I indicated. Apparently the government has no intention of empowering this office, which is odd given the increased complexity and the increased volume of cases we are now dealing with, especially with the opiate crisis. Clearly, the advocate needs independence and an increased budget . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to reiterate my answer from the last question. Currently the mental health advocate role is being combined with the Health Advocate on an interim basis. We are in the process of an open recruiting process, and we look forward to hiring a new person for that role. Frankly, we know that that is an important role within the system, and we continue to look for other ways that we can expand access to all Albertans. You

know what? The only way that we can get there is by continuing to work together to increase funding for mental health.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Calgary-Hawkwood.

Health Services for Transgender and Gender-diverse Albertans

Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Metta clinic in Calgary was created as a pilot project in 2014 to provide trans and gender-diverse youth in the Calgary area with comprehensive health care and provide the care that these youth need in order to live happy, healthy lives. Since its creation wait-list times have risen from nine months to nearly three years. To the Associate Minister of Health: what are you doing to ensure that our youth have access to these invaluable services?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for this question. This past January I had the opportunity to meet with the member as well as Lindsay Peace and her son Ace. Ace came out as transgender at the age of 14, and their family had made use of the medical services available at the Metta clinic. As they shared their story, they described the clinic as a supportive and vital resource. The clinic's mandate is to provide multidisciplinary assessment and consultation to transgendered youth in Calgary and in southern Alberta, with specialists from psychiatry, adolescent medicine, and endocrinology being brought together to find an allied and co-ordinated approach to care for transgendered youth.

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

Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the wait times for the Metta clinic continue to rise and given that the continued operation of the clinic is essential to ensure trans and gender-diverse youth are kept safe and healthy, to the same minister: what is the government doing to ensure the Metta clinic moves from a pilot program to a permanent program?

The Speaker: The associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to the very critical services provided by the Metta clinic. Since its opening the Metta clinic has seen more than 60 patients and has received over 200 referrals. We know that these services save lives and that timely access is critical to youth, particularly as they approach puberty. I've asked AHS to bring forward options for improving access to these kinds of services, and we expect their recommendations on the next step to be brought forward later this spring. Outside of the clinic, we're also looking to expand service for transgendered youth depending on their needs, including service through family physicians, endocrinologists, and mental health services.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Connolly: Given that many trans and gender-diverse people have difficulty accessing health care due to transphobia and misinformation within the health care system and given that trans and gender-diverse individuals often need more medical attention in their lifetime than their cis counterparts, what is the minister doing to help educate doctors and nurses within the health care system about LGBTQ-plus issues?

The Speaker: The associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the very important question. Albertans from the LGBTQ-plus community deserve to have access to care in safe, inclusive, and respectful settings. Our government is working to make life better by including protection for transgender Albertans through changes to the Human Rights Act. Additionally, we're attending to this at every level, from the front line to policy. Alberta Health offers regular training for its staff on LGBTQ-plus issues, and we're continually looking for ways to be more inclusive and supportive, working with our partners such as the College of Physicians & Surgeons, who've recently launched new training programs in this area.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Budget 2017 (continued)

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, we all know the guy: the rich kid who was given a brand new car and a credit card before he had to work for any of it. To him, wealth was something inherited or taken, not something that had to be worked for or earned. Soon he maxes out the credit card, and someone else has to pay. That guy now has Alberta's credit card, and on the spending bender he intends to triple Alberta's debt to \$71 billion in just two years. The first step to recovery is admitting that you have a problem. Will the Finance minister admit that he's a spendaholic?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, our government works very hard every day to put Albertans back to work. We're committed to putting businesses back in business and Albertans back to work. People with jobs pay taxes, and people who pay taxes can afford health care and education. The reckless cuts of billions of dollars proposed by this opposition will jeopardize the economic recovery before it even has a chance to get started.

Mr. Fildebrandt: The Minister of Finance should stand and answer for himself, Mr. Speaker.

Last week the Wildrose laid out our plan to cut taxes, reduce spending, and balance the budget. When the government released their budget last week, I said that not only do the NDP not have a credible plan to balance the budget; they have no intention of ever balancing the budget. When asked about this on the radio, the minister said: well, they don't have any plan either. Does the minister admit that he has NDP: no darn plan?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, it's the Wildrose that is proposing reckless cuts that would jeopardize our economic recovery before it even has a chance to take root, putting thousands of Albertans out of work and jeopardizing our health care, our education, the hiring of police officers, teachers, nurses, doctors. That party over there would cut that, and it would hurt Alberta, Albertans, and hurt our economy.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Rats.
When the NDP repealed . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, there are no preambles on supplementals.

2:20

Mr. Fildebrandt: When the NDP repealed their own meagre debt cap of 15 per cent of GDP, we warned that this would lead to a credit downgrade. The NDP claimed that we were being Chicken Little. Well, the sky might not be falling, but our credit rating sure

is. To date we have had four credit downgrades. Moody's and DBRS have now issued new warnings that the NDP's budget could risk yet another credit downgrade. Will the minister pick up the scissors, cut up the credit card, and go to credit counselling, or does he need an intervention?

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I assume that the hon. member is not happy with the answer, and that's why he said "rats." I sure hope that that's the case.

But I want to tell the hon. member that the best way to build the economy in this province is not to lay off hundreds and thousands of teachers, nurses, police officers. The best way to rebuild this economy is to stimulate it, to put people back to work and help our businesses be successful, something that that party doesn't want.

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

Government Spending and Job Creation

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year at this time this NDP government unveiled Budget 2016. They called it the Alberta jobs plan, and it came with \$11 billion of debt. The Finance minister introduced it with these words. "Above all, the Alberta jobs plan . . . creates thousands of jobs." Back then Alberta's unemployment rate was 7.4 per cent; today it's 8.3 per cent. So much for job creation. To the Finance minister: why did the Alberta jobs plan fail to create any jobs?

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

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll take this opportunity to inform the hon. member that our jobs plan is working. If we look, since July over 19,000 full-time jobs have been created. The Conference Board of Canada, the TD Bank, and numerous banks have forecast that Alberta is set to grow at a rate higher than any province across the country, a rate of 2.7 per cent for this year and for next year. And you know why? We've got two pipelines and an infrastructure program through our capital budget that are going to help put thousands of Albertans . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Gill: Only the NDP would take 10 jobs away and get two back.

Given that last year's ironically named Alberta jobs plan racked up \$11 billion in debt and that the result of all their spending was a further spike in unemployment and that Budget 2017 racks up at a minimum another \$10.3 billion in debt and given that more than 200,000 Albertans are seeking work, 24,000 more than last year at this very time, including devastating unemployment in Calgary and other communities, Minister, what is your specific target for Alberta's unemployment rate a year from now? The real number.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say that our government recognizes the impact of the sustained drop in the world price of oil and the impact it's having on Alberta businesses and Alberta families. That is exactly why we introduced the Alberta jobs plan, exactly why we are investing in infrastructure, where both opposition parties would cut. It's not just about cutting schools and roads and bridges; it's about the tens of thousands of Albertans that they would put out of work, making the problem worse. We are making life better for Alberta families, and we're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Gill: Lots of excuses for this fail, Minister.

Given that the Premier and her ministers keep insisting that, quote, they have the backs of Albertans, unquote, and given that through this government's inability to curtail spending, Albertans will by the end of the NDP's only term carry well over \$70 billion worth of debt on their backs, Premier, just how strong are the backs of Albertans? Do you think they can carry \$100 billion, \$150 billion, \$200 billion? Is there even a limit?

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members: no preambles on supplementary questions. This last time you did two of them.

The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that Alberta families deserve a government that's got their back, and that's exactly why we've put in caps to make sure that electricity rates don't continue to hit the roof like they did under that party. That's why we put in a freeze on tuition, because under the former government it kept going higher and higher and higher. We know the opposition wants to jack up fees and make life more expensive for Alberta families. We're standing with them, and we are honouring the contracts that those guys negotiated, that now they want us to break. I have to say that their criticism is pretty rich.

Health Care Wait Times in Central Alberta

Mr. Orr: Mr. Speaker, compared to everywhere else in Alberta, surgery cancellations in central Alberta are incredibly high. Red Deer hospital has triple the cancellations compared to the second-worst hospital. Red Deer had 325 cancellations, almost 10 times as many as the third-place hospital, and thousands of times higher than most others. Central region cancellations make up almost half of the total surgeries postponed in the entire province. We have asked for outcomes to change. The minister accuses us of asking for more money. What will the minister do to actually fix surgical outcomes in central Alberta?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've had the opportunity to visit the Red Deer hospital, and I have to say that I commend the staff for their diligent work in making sure that they are taking care of patients and patient needs first. I want to remind everyone that during construction at the hospital last year, there was a flood that impacted emergency rooms and required some of those surgeries to be moved elsewhere, and that's because nothing is going to stand between patient safety and this government. We're always going to make sure that we have the backs of Alberta families, and we're working to make their lives better. Members opposite want us to bring forward deep, rash cuts. We're not going to do that. We're going to make sure that we're working thoughtfully, finding efficiencies, protecting Alberta families, and addressing wait times across the province.

Mr. Orr: Given that we have asked for a report that would immediately act to reduce surgical wait times for patients who are suffering and given that no explanation has been granted as to why central Alberta health outcomes are so far below the rest of the province – those who are having life-altering surgeries postponed are not having their days brightened by free light bulbs – if the government cannot tell us how they are going to fix the problem, can the minister at least tell us what metrics they are examining to identify the problem with surgical wait times in central Alberta?

Ms Hoffman: I get that the members opposite like to spend their time watching movies, Mr. Speaker, and identifying matrixes and matrices and where they want to land on those, but where we want to land is on moving Alberta families forward and having their backs. That's why we are building eight new youth detox beds right in Red Deer. That's why we've added a new, state-of-the-art MRI in Red Deer. That's why we're investing \$9.7 million in the extension of the obstetrics unit in Red Deer. The members opposite want to cut all of that. We're not going to let that happen. We're standing up for all Albertans, including the people living in Red Deer.

Mr. Orr: Given that wait times in other parts of the health care system are also failing, such as the requirement that seniors be placed in continuing care facilities within 30 days – recent data reveals that the 30-day limitation is being exceeded – it would seem that this is a systemic problem. The NDP have had two years to create solutions, yet we see a continuing downward spiral in placing seniors within the 30-day period. What is the NDP doing to ensure that seniors are in fact placed in care within the 30-day limit?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the fact that we are on track to meet our 2,000-bed commitment to make sure that Albertans can age in communities throughout our province. Thank you so much for the opportunity to highlight that we're investing in 550 long-term care beds in Budget 2017 alone. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to highlight that we know that the members opposite have no intention of investing in health and education. All they can say is: cut, cut, cut. Instead, Albertans have elected a government that's got their back, that's going to stand up for their right to age in community and have a quality of life, unlike the members opposite.

Castle Parks Management Plan

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, when the minister announced the creation of the Castle provincial park and the wildland provincial park in 2015, there wasn't any open, public consultation and the announcement was poorly communicated. Fast forward to January 2017 and the release of the parks' new draft management plan: again, no open, public consultation other than a heavily weighted survey. Minister, why didn't you consult with the general public before implementing these drastic changes?

2:30

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

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, in the intervening 16 months between the announcement of the creation of the park and the release of the draft plan in January we spoke with ranchers, we spoke with municipalities, we spoke with those involved in the enforcement community, we spoke with the off-highway vehicle community, and we spoke with campers, hikers, fishermen, hunters, and others. We came to a draft management plan. Now, we are very proud that we are moving forward with protection of headwaters for southern Alberta. We are proud that we are moving forward with high-quality outdoor experiences for all Albertans to be able . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Stier: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that that's totally true.

Given that the September 2015 announcement included random camping as an allowable permitted use but the 2017 announcement pulled out the rug and overturned that promise, to the minister: where, beyond a few so-called rustic group spots, will all the hundreds of random campers who want to experience the beauty of southern Alberta now go?

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had also listened to his own constituents, the grazing lease holders, the municipalities in his constituency, he would have heard that there are many, many instances where due to the actions of the previous government unregulated, improperly enforced use of the land was conflicting with those trying to make a livelihood; that is, the grazing lease holders. We have responded, and we will proceed thoughtfully and carefully and actually invest in that area, unlike the previous government.

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, once again this government is failing to consult on its decisions.

Given that the 2015 announcement included a promise that OHVs would maintain their access to approved trails and given that the January 2017 announcement revealed a new plan to phase out OHV use entirely and given that on March 10 the government disclosed a new new plan for OHV users to move to the Porcupine Hills, will the minister admit she made a mistake when she tried to bulldoze ahead with this ill-conceived plan before consulting the people first?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, what we have heard over many months was that years of inaction on enforcement and cuts, in fact, to the enforcement budgets by the PCs have left a number of conflicts on the landscape. They have left a situation where hunters did not have the access that they once did, where families could not fish in ways they used to be able to. We have a situation where we have a decline in our fish populations. We have a number of species at risk in that area. We are listening to municipalities, who would like us to increase enforcement and increase our planning. We are listening to grazing lease holders. We are listening to the Alberta Beef Producers and . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Emergency Medical Service Funding

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the government has been very critical of the opposition in this House, saying that we would cut front-line services if we were allowed to exercise some spending restraint. Of course, this is false. Our caucus values the important work that is done by front-line staff. However, it appears that this government is less genuine in their commitment to front-line health staff as their budget cuts funding for emergency medical services by \$17 million. Minister, why was the funding cut for such a crucial front-line health service?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the opportunity to clarify the record. There are a number of areas where there have been ambulances that have been paid off in the province, so amortization. It's good. Ambulances are paid in full, and that's good news. There are a number of other areas where AHS believes they can see some efficiencies. I want to make it very clear to the member opposite and to all members that I've made it

very clear that this cannot happen at the impact of front lines, so we're making sure that we're protecting front-line workers, who, in turn, protect all Albertans.

Mr. Fraser: Given the work that this government has done on the Health Professions Act for EMS, the work that I've praised this government for undertaking, and given that some of the progress made under this act will be threatened if there is a lack of resources for EMS, to the same minister: how can the minister provide any assurance that this cut won't affect resources for EMS and the paramedics dealing with posttraumatic stress syndrome and other complications stemming from the already out-of-control call volume?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. I want to thank the member for bringing up some of the very good work that's been done in the past, including what we did around moving Quarry Park to make sure that we're able to find those efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that I show up to work every day working to make life better for Alberta families, and that's one of the reasons why we've made it very clear to AHS that we will not see contractions to the front lines and to the work that's being done diligently to make sure that EMS is there where and when Albertans need it. I know members opposite are pushing for billions of dollars in cuts in areas that would impact the front lines. We're not going to do that. We're going to make sure that we stand up for Alberta families and that we improve wait times.

Mr. Fraser: Given that emergency medical service is such a crucial front-line service and that when you add in the fentanyl crisis, weekly code reds in our major cities, high call acuity, and rising PTSD claims for paramedics that are already being pushed to the brink – cutting \$17 million from their budget would axe 11 ambulances and their staff – Minister, you can't possibly believe that this is in alignment with Alberta's priorities, or can you?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. Again, I just want to reiterate that I asked: how exactly are we going to make sure that this doesn't impact Albertans and the care that they require? The response, I have to say, was very assuring. It was around making sure that those ambulances were paid off and finding other efficiencies like we have through the dispatch in Quarry Park, Mr. Speaker. So this is good news.

I also want to provide my assurances to everyone who works in an ambulance as well as to the member opposite that I made it very clear that these savings, if they are achievable, cannot be achieved on the backs of front-line workers, including dispatchers and those who are working in ambulances. AHS believes that there is some more additional room, but they have assured me that they will not impact the front lines.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

GenA Youth Employment Program

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, everyone. Alberta's youth workers have a history of facing high barriers in the workforce, especially during difficult economic times. Given that youth today are facing higher unemployment and given that the long-term effects of lost wages negatively impact their future

earnings, to the Minister of Labour: what is the government doing to help youth in this province secure good jobs?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have heard from young Albertans that they do need support getting into the workplace, and that's why we were pleased to announce a two-year pilot project with GenA and Prospect Human Services. This is a project that will help young Albertans have success in the job market and help employers connect with the best and the brightest. This follows our successful STEP program, that we reinstated after it was cancelled by the previous government.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to hear about the GenA program specifically targeting young Albertans.

Given that lost wages have economic impacts on many levels, to the same minister: how many young Albertans have benefited from this strategy, and how many more will stay in or enter the workforce through this program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This program launched only last month and already has helped nearly a hundred young workers find or retain a job. GenA will help more than 1,200 young Albertans get that all-important first job. It will connect 200 employers with talented young prospective employees. As GenA client Aaron Peecheemow recently said: "The GenA Employment Placement Specialist (EPS) was essential in helping me with my current unemployment situation. The EPS was invaluable in helping to fine-tune my resume and find work. Needless to say, I got the job."

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Labour: given that social media and technology have changed how youth communicate, how will your ministry ensure that young Albertans are aware of this program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By partnering with Prospect Human Services on GenA, we're working with a successful organization that has a track record of getting young people into the workforce. Albertans in the Calgary or Edmonton regions between the ages of 18 to 30 are able to get career guidance and placement assistance through this program. That being said, I would encourage all members of this House to point their constituents to this important tool. More information is available at gena.works.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

2:40 Energy Industry Reclamation Costs

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lately there has been a lot in the news about the problems of orphaned wells in Alberta. The orphan well fund is funded by oil companies, as it should be. Lately there have been hints by both federal and provincial governments for programs which would basically amount to a taxpayer subsidy of the oil companies. To the Minister of Energy: what programs are you contemplating, and will tax-paying Albertans be footing that bill?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. We continue to work with the federal government on this. Our plan is to create jobs and tackle a long-standing environmental problem. Previous governments did not tackle this and sat back and admired the problem. Our current plan is to work with industry, work with the federal government, and come up with a plan that's going to fix this problem.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like another cost to Albertan taxpayers.

Given that last week the minister refused to provide Albertans with an answer about why she hasn't done anything about the doubling of the liability management ratio that the AER imposed in June 2016 as a stopgap measure and given also that this measure reduces asset liquidity and thereby contributes to the problem of orphaned wells, to the Minister of Energy: why haven't you accomplished anything on this important file? It's been nearly a year.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Again, thank you for the question. As I mentioned before, we are working with industry and we're working with our federal partners to do a holistic plan for this issue, that has been left for a long time. Traditionally we've had a polluter-pay or duty-to-reclaim policy, and we're continuing with that. Our plan is going to make life better for Albertans by creating more jobs and also in tackling this environmental problem.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta has some measure of an orphan well fund and given that the government is pushing forth renewables projects with little thought of ramifications and given that the government has voted down our amendment to create an equivalent reclamation fund for these projects, again to the minister: who will be saddled with the reclamation costs should these renewables projects fail, as they have in so many other places in the world?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, renewable projects are quite different from subsurface access. Certainly, they are located on private land, for starters, and are arrangements between the private landowners and the companies.

But it is very interesting to me that the members opposite, in the Wildrose in particular, talk down renewables investors at every available opportunity. They want to slam the door on all of those jobs throughout southern Alberta, certainly, and throughout all of Alberta, and that's not our approach on this side of the House. You know, Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Lethbridge-West I'll take those jobs.

The Speaker: Hon. minister, thank you.
Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Canola Industry Development

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The canola industry continues to be an innovative powerhouse. The industry has been increasing its value-added production for decades. Alberta now exports not only raw canola but also ready-for-the-shelf products such as canola oil. Alberta's canola industry has made innovations in production of not only value-added foods but also health care, nutraceutical products as well as biolubricants, biodiesel, and

bioplastics. To the minister of agriculture: how are you helping the canola industry to further its efforts in value-added production in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. There's been a recent announcement from Richardson in Lethbridge to expand their production there. The Cargill plant in Camrose – it's been open for a while – has room to expand there. Too early to tell yet, but there is going to be an opportunity for a new plant even in Olds. There are hopefully going to be shovels in the ground this year.

So the canola industry does look good. It's robust. I'm happy to say that the markets around the world are also expanding: in the United Arab Emirates, India, China, South Korea, around the world. The canola industry looks good for this province, and I encourage those producers to put that in their rotation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that China is concerned about blackleg and has again threatened to slash dockage to levels of 1 per cent and given that China and Canada have been in talks for a long time to come up with a mutually agreeable trade deal and given that there's huge growth potential for canola exports to China, to the minister: can you please update this House on your progress in discussions with the federal minister of agriculture?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the question. Last November the federal government – the federal agriculture minister, the Prime Minister – had an opportunity to talk to the Chinese government. They were able to stay the concerns that he had around blackleg. It's been stayed till, I believe, the year 2020, but those conversations continue on what more we can do to ensure that that situation doesn't arise again and making sure that China and the rest of the world enjoy our good products, including canola and canola oil.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that at the end of 2016 Alberta canola had committed \$3.46 million towards 28 active research projects and given that every dollar was matched by \$3.24 million from research partners and given that these important projects further strengthen and diversify this important Alberta industry, to the minister: how does the government plan to strengthen and support the good work that the canola councils are doing?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I for one am very proud of what the canola producers in Alberta have done. They've made great strides with the product: being able to have higher production on the same number of acres, being able to have it more resistant to all these other, different kinds of chemicals, being able to market their product around the world. I'm very happy to be able to support them in their efforts in trade and research as they continue to grow their industry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: In 30 seconds we will begin Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

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

Progressive Conservative Party Convention

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the MLA for Calgary-North West I was elected to this Assembly as a moderate, centrist Albertan. The events on the weekend are a clear reminder that my decision to sit in the NDP caucus was the right one.

My former party was disappearing in the wake of a hostile takeover and, with it, everything that was important to me. An increasing number of Albertans now feel politically homeless as a once strong party decided that power was much more important than principle. We have seen one incident after another, from campaign operatives charged with assault to fines for breaking campaign rules and candidates leaving due to harassment and intimidation. Add to that a campaign with no actual policy, and we can see that this exercise was all about winning.

The new Conservative leader bragged about endorsements from individuals who called for a coup d'état and others who pronounced that a woman's place was in the kitchen making sandwiches for the boys. Unite-the-right delegates booed at the convention when the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster cautioned that such a merger would only lead to more bozo eruptions from supporters who believe feminism is a cancer and that members of the LGBT community belong in a lake of fire.

I've heard from many Albertans who say that that kind of thinking belongs in the past. They are concerned about the values of a leader whose voting record clearly demonstrates a lack of respect for human rights. So, Mr. Speaker, I have found my new home in a caucus that embraces a modern, pragmatic approach and vision for Alberta, who knows that diversity is a strength and won't tell you what your Canadian values need to be.

2:50

Castle Parks Management Plan

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, the Castle region is arguably the most picturesque location in all of Canada. The region has been blessed with immense natural resources, including coal and timber, but its greatest resource is the people who call the Castle home. They are hard working and straight shooting. When you say you're going to do something, they trust you'll do it. Go to any local A&W, and you're as likely to see a sightseeing tour sealed with a handshake as you are a cup of coffee.

So when the environment minister suddenly announced in 2015 that the government would be designating a large portion of the Castle as a provincial park, Albertans had questions. What about OHV access? Would random camping continue to be allowed? "Don't worry; trust us," the government said. "The department will be conducting thorough consultations." Remember, the government's own permitted-use document released in 2015 committed to maintaining OHV and random camping.

Fast-forward to January 2017 and that same government's release of the new Castle draft management plan. It suddenly ended access to random camping. It suddenly restricted permitted uses, including a complete phase-out of OHVs. There were no general public notices or consultations on either topic. The only general public consultation meeting that was held, however, was organized at Bellevue by the local OHV and fish and game associations.

Then came the public rally in Lethbridge. Another one was held in Calgary, and another is being scheduled here in Edmonton. Reluctantly, the minister finally took action, extending the consultation period, maintaining current OHV access this year, and

committing to holding, finally, some open meetings. All of this mistrust and ill will could easily have been avoided had the minister just been open and transparent before decisions were made.

Wildrose will continue to monitor this issue. But once again the minister broke Albertans' trust, and the saddest part is that this government doesn't seem willing or interested in repairing it. I hope the government will change their ways, actually, and commit to open consultations. But with all the stakeholders . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Social Democracy

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, my father, who would have been 110 years old this year, could have easily provided insights into what I call the rise and surprise of social democracy. At the age of 10, 100 years ago, he arrived at the port of Shanghai, after being forced to flee Russia, as a refugee with little more than the clothes on his back, the eldest of five children, with his mother, a widow of the revolution. Some 32 years later, in 1949, a similar fate beset him at the hands of Maoist revolutionaries, and once again he was forced to seek refuge from political and economic upheaval, again escaping with little more than a handful of prized family possessions.

Mr. Speaker, as we in Alberta drift further into the abyss of social democracy, I cannot help but be reminded of his fate. Indeed, I reflect today on the rise and surprise of social democratic dogma, something little known to Albertans after 44 years of free enterprise, prosperity, and pride in the Alberta advantage. With great sacrifice and fortitude my father ended up as a landed immigrant on the shores of Canada and found refuge, safe haven, and hope right here in Alberta, where I had the privilege of being born.

Mr. Speaker, I'm saddened to hear many long-time Albertans tell me what they might do and what they will recommend to their children to do if we suffer the misfortune of a second NDP term. I hear constantly at the doors of constituents in Calgary-Fish Creek – their words, not mine – “I am an economic refugee from one or another NDP province of the past.” I do not relish that, with many Albertans, we may one day utter the same words with sadness in our hearts as we watch our province drown in yet another, very different sea of red, or perhaps in this case orange, irresponsible ink.

Sadly, I wonder what my father, with his experience and infinite wisdom, would be saying to me were he with us today. I'm afraid he would caution me and his grandchildren to beware of the . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, thank you. Your time is up.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Parents Empowering Parents

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to speak today about an event in my constituency of Edmonton-Mill Creek. I recently instituted a monthly town hall in order to better hear constituents' thoughts and concerns. My second town hall was focused on the organization Parents Empowering Parents, also known as PEP. The Parents Empowering Parents Society, which was created by parents for parents, provides education, innovative programming, support, and hope for individuals and families dealing with or concerned about substance abuse and addiction. This organization is committed to improving effective, accessible treatment and positive outcomes for substance abuse and addiction.

For parents, Mr. Speaker, these are vital concerns. Many families are profoundly affected by having children struggling with addictions. Some of the needs of the parents that my town hall identified were to create clear paths from detox to treatment to recovery, with

enough spaces or beds to ensure that addicted individuals get the treatment and supports they need when they need them; to create access and support for treatment in our health and mental health care systems, which are both needed to provide help to these children and youth; to listen to parents and provide parents the ability to make decisions on behalf of their children and, at times, adult children to ensure that they get the treatment and support they need; more recovery facilities to provide faster access and longer periods of recovery where needed as one size does not fit all; to educate the public about addictions to change the culture; to recognize the value of groups like PEP and other NGOs as means of filling the gaps in the addiction treatment system.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Francophonie in Alberta

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. On this International Francophonie Day I want to first of all thank you, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk, and staff of the Legislative Assembly for the initiatives that have recognized and promoted the use of French in the Assembly. From the first day of the 29th Assembly the national anthem was sung in its bilingual version. The use of French in members' statements and speeches has been facilitated, and a number of members have used bilingual school introductions to introduce their immersion or francophone schools. We have come a long way since former Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche M. Leo Piquette was told by the Speaker not to speak French.

Merci. En tant que francophone j'ai eu le plaisir d'apercevoir l'ampleur de la Francophonie à travers le monde. J'ai enseigné le français à l'Alliance française en Thaïlande, pour la province du Québec dans un camp de réfugiés, parlé en français en Amérique latine, en Asie, en Afrique, et au Moyen-Orient. Aujourd'hui nous célébrons la vitalité de la Francophonie et son importance à travers le monde pour le commerce, la littérature et sa diversité culturelle.

Un exemple de la vitalité de la Francophonie en Alberta est le nombre de nouvelles écoles francophones dans la province. Une de ces nouvelles écoles se trouve dans ma circonscription, l'école Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif. La sénatrice Claudette Tardif et son mari, Denis, ont travaillé pendant des longues années avec la communauté francophone pour développer des services en français, des écoles francophones et le Campus Saint-Jean.

Moi-même, je connais bien l'importance d'étudier en français, car si je parle français maintenant, il est grâce au fait que j'ai pu étudier en français.

J'aimerais alors remercier tous les francophones qui ont travaillé pour assurer la vitalité maintenant présente dans notre communauté.

Merci.

[Translation] As a francophone I had the opportunity to see the reach of Francophonie throughout the world. I taught French at the Alliance Française in Thailand, for the province of Quebec, in a refugee camp. I have spoken French in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Today we are celebrating the vitality of Francophonie and its importance throughout the world for business, literature, and for its cultural diversity.

An example of the vitality of the Francophonie in Alberta is the number of francophone school boards, schools throughout the province. One of these new schools is in my riding, the Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif school. Senator Tardif and her husband, Denis, have worked for many years with the French community to develop services in French, francophone schools, and Campus Saint-Jean.

I know full well the importance of schooling in French because my ability to speak French now is because I had the opportunity to study in French for a large part of my K to 12 schooling.

I would like to thank all francophones who have worked tirelessly to ensure the vitality of our community, that has been demonstrated throughout this month.

Thank you. [As submitted]

Government and Opposition Policies

Mr. Fildebrandt: Nearly two years ago myself and 20 other members of the Wildrose caucus were elected to represent common-sense conservative Alberta values. When I ran, I told my constituents that if I was elected, I would always put Alberta first: Alberta first before myself and Alberta first before my party. Since the NDP came to power, they have undertaken a radical and forced remake of Alberta's economy, character, and culture. In increasing numbers Albertans are demanding that conservative forces in Alberta put Alberta first, before themselves and before their parties, to save this province.

In the coming months I'm optimistic that we will find a way to heal old wounds, to make new friends, and to lay the foundation of a coming common-sense revolution: a common-sense revolution that will peel the ideological claws of government out of our school curricula, a common-sense revolution that will end a tax on rural Alberta like Bill 6, a common-sense revolution that will repeal lock, stock, and barrel the carbon tax, a common-sense revolution that will cut taxes and regulation to make Alberta the roaring economy of North America, a common-sense revolution that would not commit the moral crime of saddling our children with a crushing debt but that will instead balance the budget and make us paid in full once again.

The NDP have sown the wind, and now they will reap the whirlwind. When we unite Albertans behind a single powerful force, we will not merely defeat them; we will erase the legacy of socialism from Alberta forever. In its place we will build a new Alberta advantage that will stand the test of time.

3:00

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Private Bills I request leave to present the following petitions that have been received for private bills under Standing Order 98(2):

- (1) the petition of Bruce Libin, Yannai Segal, and Lorne Paperny of the city of Calgary for the Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017, and
- (2) the petition of Paula Jean Anderson of Red Deer county for the Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act.

Thank you.

Statement by the Speaker

Tabling Documents

The Speaker: Hon. members, if I could just remind each of you again. I'm not sure that everybody heard it the first time, but I want to remind you about the good judgment that you use on a go-forward basis. I'm going to just read a ruling by Speaker Schumacher in 1995, and I'm only paraphrasing components of it.

The tabling should consist merely of a brief almost mechanical description of the document being tabled. Members should resist the urge to embellish, expound upon, decorate, editorialize about, emphasize, ruminate, extrapolate, annotate.

He said at the time:

I think members get the general impression of what the Chair is getting at in regard to their tablings. A member may always follow up on a tabling during question period.

That was intended for all of the House, not just the member who is about to speak.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table five copies of a recent article from the *Calgary Herald* on a new study from the Canadian Energy Research Institute indicating that the energy industry anticipates that they can reduce emissions intensities by as much as 80 per cent a barrel while also lowering supply costs by up to 46 per cent while still maintaining an increase of up to 5.5 million barrels within the next two decades under the emissions cap.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I promised the residents of Alberta, doctors who are practising that I'd be happy to table a document. It's called Advance Care Planning Goals of Care: Conversations Matter. The reason I'm tabling this is because about 60 per cent of Albertans surveyed said that they support having an advanced care conversation with their family members. Only about 20 per cent actually said that they'd done it. This is a very simple guide that I promised the doctors I'd be proud to table and urge all members and constituents to consider discussing with their families.

Thank you.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table the requisite five copies of an article in response to statements in the House. This article, from the *Globe and Mail* on March 11, explains that the recent increase in support for the development of the oil sands is due to the effects of the climate leadership plan of the government.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of an article from the *Edmonton Journal* on March 15 titled Wildrose Party Calls for "Fiscal Dragon's Den" to Find Savings in Government Books.

The Speaker: Any others? Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I just want to remind you – I'm not sure if all of the members heard it at the time, so just in case you might have missed it . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: It was a most excellent ruling, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Absolutely.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you. I have two tablings. I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of the 2017 Wildrose caucus prebudget recommendations.

And I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a letter I wrote to the hon. Government House Leader on March 9 citing statements from his caucus on the Public Affairs Bureau. Day 4 of 14.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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. Ms Hoffman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, pursuant to the Alberta Health Act the Alberta Health Advocate and Seniors Advocate 2015-16 annual report; pursuant to the Mental Health Act the Mental Health Patient Advocate 2015-16 annual report; pursuant to the Health Professions Act the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors 2015-16 annual report, Alberta College of Occupational Therapists 2015-16 annual report, Alberta College of Optometrists 2015 annual report, Alberta Dental Association and College 2015 annual report, College and Association of Respiratory Therapists of Alberta annual report 2016, College of Alberta Dental Assistants annual report 2015-16, College of Alberta Psychologists annual report 2015-16, College of Podiatric Physicians of Alberta 2014-15 annual report, College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta annual report 2016; pursuant to the Health Disciplines Act the Health Disciplines Board annual report 2014, Health Disciplines Board 2015 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon members, I just would like to compliment the House. I hope it's a pattern for the future. There were no points of order today.

Statement by the Speaker

Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day Program

The Speaker: I would like to make a brief announcement to each of you, fellow members of the Assembly. As you know, the Legislative Assembly is holding Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day, which will be held May 7 to 9, 2017, at the Alberta Legislature. There is only one week left to apply to the program. This is an opportunity for high school students from all corners of our province, all of our constituencies to learn about what we do here, and we want them to learn the right things about what we do here. Please remind your high schools that this three-day program is fully supported by the Legislative Assembly Office, so there is no cost to the students. Transportation and accommodation details will be arranged by our visitor services office. The application form is available on the Assembly website until March 24.

I urge you to support MLA for a Day by promoting students' participation from your constituency and also through your personal involvement in the program. I must tell you that the students I met last year as well as the various MLAs were really appreciative of that, and I want to encourage all 87 members to encourage their young students to participate.

Orders of the Day

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 202

Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise and move second reading of Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act.

I am pleased to bring this act to the Legislature for debate today because I believe that the cyberbullying protections in Alberta have

not kept up with the challenging technological environment that schoolchildren and indeed all Albertans face. Schoolchildren today face a very different environment growing up than many of the members here faced when they were younger. Today many, maybe even most people have a camera phone that is constantly connected to the Internet whereas even as recently as 10 years ago this just wasn't the case.

We've seen recently some high-profile, tragic cases where nonconsensual distribution of intimate images of young women were shared in Canada, with very devastating consequences. In both Amanda Todd's case and Rehtaeh Parsons' case the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images was a key contributor in their decision to end their own lives.

3:10

Mr. Speaker, the facts of these cases are tragic and horrific. Allow me to talk about Amanda's case. When Amanda was only 13 or 14 years old, she began chatting online on a video chat to meet new people. A stranger convinced her to bare her breasts online, and an intimate image was captured. It was just that easy. This individual later blackmailed Amanda into giving him a show. That show was also recorded, and the police informed Amanda and her family that they had found the video circulating on the Internet. Amanda wrote online, in a video released shortly after her death, that this discovery was devastating for her, and the fact that she had been sexually exploited online led to anxiety, depression, and a panic disorder.

Amanda changed schools, but this individual made a new Facebook profile featuring her breasts as his new profile. Then he began contacting her new classmates. Amanda changed schools a second time, where things briefly improved for her. However, one of her peers began to contact her and even goaded other students into harassing her at school. A group of students assaulted Amanda while other students filmed the event. This led Amanda to her first suicide attempt, which she attempted by drinking bleach. Amanda survived, but the harassment at the school continued. Amanda attended counselling and had antidepressants prescribed, but the wounds she had suffered were too deep, Mr. Speaker. Amanda Todd ended her life on October 10, 2012.

Simply put, this is not and should not ever be accepted as an outcome for this country. I am pleased to note, Mr. Speaker, that the man who began this malicious pursuit of this terrible torment of Amanda was sentenced last week in the Netherlands to 10 years and 243 days in jail for exploiting Amanda and other young women. This man may also be extradited to Canada, where he may face further charges. While I am pleased to hear about this sentence, it is far better that we prevent such acts from happening in the first place.

Particularly in response to this case the federal government passed Bill C-13, which amended the Criminal Code to create the new offence of nonconsensual distribution of intimate images along with other, related things such as the recovery of expenses, the forfeiture of property used in the commission of an offence, and the restriction of computer use by the offender. C-13 was a start in the right direction in regard to updating the laws to prevent such tragedies from happening in the future.

The bill I have presented here, Bill 202, will build on where Bill C-13 left off at the provincial level. This bill does two simple things. The first thing this bill does is to create tort law which protects not just children but all Albertans against nonconsensual sharing of intimate images. Even though adults may consent to their intimate images being shared by someone they trust, that person who received said image would then in turn be prohibited from distributing that image to other people without the consent of the person in the image. If the receiver of that picture were to violate this, they would

be eligible to be sued under tort law, and this action could be brought without proof of damage. What that means in plain English, Mr. Speaker, is that the victims do not have to prove that they have suffered a financial loss in order to sue the distributor of the image for damages.

In addition, under section 7 courts may impose other conditions such as no-contact orders, restricting the Internet, and other such injunctions that courts can and sometimes do approve. Lastly, if the distributor were to post this intimate image online on a paywall or some such thing where they charge for viewing a video or an image, the profits shall be awarded to the plaintiff. Doing this will remove some of the incentive for this type of behaviour should this bill become law.

The second main portion of this bill is aimed at protecting children when an intimate image is shared of a child. This will provide children with firm protection in their schools to safeguard them from perpetrators. In the past, Mr. Speaker, in the cases of Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons, students within these girls' respective schools disseminated nonconsensual intimate images of these girls. This is not acceptable behaviour, and we should ensure that we all take on an individual responsibility to teach our children these things. However, as a parent well knows, kids don't always do what they're taught.

That is why this legislation proposes that school principals who become aware of one student sharing another student's image have not only the right but the obligation to suspend the student that is sharing the image. Spelling this out in such concrete terms will ensure that sanctions and punishments are fairly, consistently, and evenly applied to students throughout Alberta. This legislation will avoid a scenario where students in one school are punished more or less harshly than those in another school. It also gives school principals a clear tool to suspend students on explicit grounds through legislative authority to carry out their duties in administering discipline for this clear breach of privacy. School trustees will still retain authority to hear appeals on suspensions from the students and their parents.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, we here at the Wildrose believe that this bill will update our legislation so that those who are victimized by online exploitation have recourse in provincial courts. It will also clarify that this is a form of bullying and that students should face strong consequences for encouraging this behaviour. If one student torments another, the bullied student should not have to face the tormentor at school day to day. My hope is that this bill puts the rights and health of victims first and will lead to the reduction in the number of students who have to face this situation. I hope all members on this side and the members in the other parties will join me in supporting this very important piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member, could I ask you to read into the record that you're moving second reading of Bill 202.

Mr. Cyr: That is correct.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure to rise today. This will come, I think, as no surprise to members opposite since we have been working with them – and this is very similar to legislation proposed by the NDP government in Manitoba a couple of years ago – that I am rising to support this legislation. I think the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake has done a fantastic job in setting this up. I want to thank him for his dedication to this issue and his willingness to work with us and with our colleagues in Education to make sure that this would fit with our overall scheme, I think, of legislation. The bill will create a cause of action, which is, I think, really very important.

You know, times are not, I suppose, as they were when I was growing up here in Alberta. Young people have access and the ability to send images immediately, and that puts them in a position where one wrong decision could essentially punish them for the rest of their lives. I think everyone in this House knows that that's not right. I think that many people here who have children or grandchildren, you know, would fear to have such an image of their loved one distributed, and I think putting this in place will really help to signal our support for both young people and adults who might find themselves in this position.

I think this legislation, Mr. Speaker, does a really good job of putting blame where it belongs: that is to say, on someone who is bullying or harassing or someone who is circulating intimate images of another person without their consent. It puts the blame on that individual, not on the victim, who has had the picture taken for whatever reason, and I think that that's a really critical piece of this. You know, a lot of young women and men are taught to be ashamed, and I think that that's wrong. It's not the fault of the young person that the image got out. It's the fault of the person who is using this to bully and to harass and to try to make the individual feel small. I think this is a fantastic bill. It goes a long way to supporting those individuals.

3:20

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to one more time thank the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for bringing this matter forward. I think it's something that's really important. I know he had acted as my critic for a number of years, and we've had a very good relationship through that time, so I'd like to thank him generally for his service in the House.

Thanks.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in this House to speak to Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act, put forward by my hon. colleague from Bonnyville-Cold Lake. I'm so encouraged by the work that he's done in putting this bill together, and he should be very proud of the work that he's put forward and the discussions that stem from what has been presented here today.

Mr. Speaker, the sad thing about this bill is that it's actually necessary to even pass it. The world has changed so much that sharing of intimate images without consent has gotten completely out of control. In preparation for this debate, I looked up some information on the Internet. I don't know if you know this, but what I found is that 1 in 25 people – 1 in 25 – are victims of revenge porn. That means that we could expect three MLAs in this room to be a victim as well. We could expect roughly one victim in every classroom, two or three children on every school bus. Alberta has over 165,000 small businesses, businesses that employ fewer than a hundred people. That's four people in every one of those businesses. That's over half a million people. Every single one of those victims and potential victims is one too many.

What's even worse is that 1 in 10 women have been threatened with that possibility. Let's revisit some of those numbers I gave earlier, Mr. Speaker. That would be the equivalent of nine members of this Chamber being threatened, at least two in every classroom, seven on a large school bus, and over one and a half million in small businesses right across Alberta. That doesn't even take into account the medium or large businesses, where I'm sure we'd see an increase in those numbers. We need to do whatever we can to try and stop this hurtful and damaging practice.

I'd like to read for you a few comments that I found from victims of nonconsensual image sharing. I'll quote for you some comments made by a victim in an article that she wrote for the *Guardian*, which was published on November 19, 2013. It's somewhat lengthy, so sit tight, but it's very important for us to hear about the trauma that this woman endured. This began in February 2010. I will start.

For over a year thereafter, even though the auctions were down, and I blocked Joey's email addresses and phone numbers, I oscillated between panic and persistent anxiety. I would wake up at 3 am and check my email, my Facebook page, eBay, then Google my name, a ritual I performed three times before I could settle back down. In September 2011, I was thrown into panic again after I read an anonymous email alerting me to an online profile that featured nude pictures of me.

I Googled my name, and there I was, on a porn website. The profile included my full name, the city and the state where I live, the name of the college where I teach and the campus . . . My stomach hurt. I held my breath and printed every page of comments, all seventeen of them.

Afraid to be in public, I raced home and called the Maryland state police and the Baltimore division of the FBI. I left messages explaining what happened. Then I called my therapist who was treating me for symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder for the past year and cancelled my session. I was too scared to leave my house. She insisted I go on medical leave from work.

. . . I sunk into despair so deep that I felt nothing. Because of the permanence of the internet, and lack of legislation, this torture was never going to end. I seriously contemplated ending my life. I would have been successful if it weren't for three things, my dog needed to be let out, my mom called, and the pills I took weren't fatal.

This is heartbreaking, Mr. Speaker. This is just one person's story, one of thousands. Even after reading those words, I cannot begin to imagine the depths of pain that are experienced by such victims. Such cruel actions affect one's work life, family life, social life, and, of course, one's personal life and well-being. They are left trying to pick up the pieces after such hateful actions have been taken, most often by someone who they were once in a close, intimate relationship with but sometimes by someone who has hacked into their computer or somehow gained access to their images.

This bill seeks to create tort law to protect all Albertans regardless of age or gender from the vicious acts of others. There is likely nothing that will completely fix and heal the pain caused when someone is betrayed by the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images, but this bill does take a strong step forward towards helping someone repair their life and their public image. It could help a victim move forward on the path to recovery and regaining control of their life, and it holds the perpetrator responsible.

This bill also seeks to protect children, Mr. Speaker, from school bullies intent on making life difficult. This bill carefully balances the needs of students, teachers, and schools to take appropriate action. It would be so difficult for a child or youth to attend school after having their privacy so completely breached. It would be even more difficult to have to sit in the same classroom as that person who shared those images. This bill amends the Education Act so that it is very clear that the sharing of someone's private images is considered bullying under the School Act and that is an offence that will likely result in the offender being suspended or expelled. This is great news.

Before I finish, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back to the *Guardian* article that I referenced earlier so I can quote from it further. Earlier I read some of the writer's comments about the panic and the pain she felt and how she felt so out of control in her own life. This brave woman has gone on to become a force in the fight to protect victims.

This is to punish offenders of nonconsensual image sharing in order that the victims may achieve some level of peace. She wrote:

Since I don't have that peace, I still face some of the fears I did the day I first brought my case to law enforcement, but I have embraced my role as the voice for those who have yet not found their voices. And I will speak up.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that every member in this Chamber will speak up for victims of nonconsensual sharing, victims of revenge porn by supporting this bill. I thank my hon. colleague again, and I urge all members to support this bill as well.

Thank you.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking in English this time, in case anybody was wondering.

I, too, would first of all like to thank the hon. member for putting forth this bill. I know that he's a caring person and that he has put much thought into how to stop the victimization of persons due to the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images, so thank you.

This issue is one that has been on the minds of many in our communities, mine included. Many have wondered how to stop the victimization of young people these days, when young people are glued to their phones and exchange photos through a number of apps and websites. I have a couple of young persons in my life, and I know how addicted young people are to taking pictures and just without thinking sending them out and not understanding the consequence of the picture. I'm lucky because I have one son who's a teacher, and through his education at the university he's been cautioned against doing that, but most young people have not.

3:30

In these days of immediate diffusion of images this bill will make people think as to the damage their action might cause and the consequence to themselves, and I think this is really, really important. I also know that those involved in the education of young persons – teachers, principals, and youth workers – and those who work with those fleeing domestic violence and anyone involved in counselling will welcome this law.

This proposed Bill 202 fits nicely with the intent of Bill 2, introduced by the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, and is consistent with our government's commitment to supporting survivors of sexual violence. I also appreciate the member's co-operation with the government in terms of his approach to the legislation because I think this bill is going to be consistent with other legislation which the government has brought forth. Thank you.

Bill 202 actually does a number of things. It creates a tort, a specific ground for a civil lawsuit, to make it easier for survivors of nonconsensual sharing of intimate images to sue the person who distributed the images. In some cases this type of behaviour may be called revenge porn, and I think it's so sad that this is the kind of thing that is happening in our society. It also sets out that punishment in schools can result from a student distributing pornography. These are good steps that should give pause to people who might consider the extreme violation of trust that occurs when someone distributes intimate images without someone's permission. These types of violations of privacy and trust often make survivors feel unsafe in their work, schools, and communities.

This bill also largely follows a bill that the Manitoba NDP passed in 2015, and I'm assuming that the hon. member consulted that bill before drafting his. The bill uses similar language, bringing in clear grounds for a lawsuit based on the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images. It also follows in the steps of federal legislation, which makes it a criminal offence to distribute these images without consent. So far only one person has been sentenced to jail time under the federal act.

Albertans need to feel safe and comfortable in their work, schools, homes, and communities, and this bill will go a long way towards making that happen. The distribution of intimate images can have devastating effects on individuals. This has been particularly true for youth and members of communities that have historically been marginalized, and we all know some of the names of the victims. I really don't want to repeat their names because I think their names have been told so often. I'm so glad that today we're going to be doing something in this Legislative Assembly to stop this kind of victimization, young people taken advantage of by others to the extent that they feel so uncomfortable, so devastated that they took their own lives. I'm sure those victims, that we well know, are not the only ones who did so, except we never did talk about them or they weren't known to the public or died without telling anyone why they were committing those acts.

Anything we can do to help prevent this type of devastating tragedy from striking another person or family is a positive move, and I know that this bill will go some ways towards helping to comfort survivors of this type of behaviour and discourage others from those terrible violations of trust and privacy. I think this whole issue of discouraging others is going to be the most important consequence of this bill because as we speak about it, hopefully many will hear us and will know that there are consequences for this kind of behaviour.

Where an image is shared by someone under 18, the bill protects parents from a lawsuit unless the parents themselves were somehow complicit in the sharing of the image. I think this is really, really important.

It also allows the court to issue a publication ban on identifying information, and this should provide some comfort to those coming forward after such a blatant violation of their privacy that seeking justice will not result in further loss of privacy. I know that this is something that's really important. Any time someone has been victimized, every time their name is said publicly, it really very often revictimizes them.

It also creates some explicit power for schools and school boards to discipline students involved in the sharing of these images. I think it's going to really strengthen the role of teachers, principals, and school boards to take action when they see this is happening. They should protect youth and send a clear message to the young people that sharing these images is not acceptable. It is bullying, and there will be consequences.

I would like to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I'm so glad that the hon. member drew a low number on the bill roster, that you were so lucky that this bill could come forward so that as an Assembly we have the opportunity to vote on this and to support the hon. member in making this bill law.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say that when we were elected here, it never occurred to me that any of us would be receiving some of the feedback that we get through Twitter and the trolling that happens on there. It's small by comparison to what some of these folks have gone through, but even then your heart rate starts to go faster when you know that that person who usually trolls you on your Twitter feed is going to attack. These are small by comparison to what we're speaking to. It is, then, my privilege to speak to this bill. It's of critical importance. I would like to applaud my colleague and friend the MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for tabling this bill and shining a much-needed light on this issue. His attention to a truly frightening form of bullying is unbelievably important.

Up until recently it seemed that while this form of digital harassment was regrettable, it was not ultimately punishable. Cyberbullying harassment has been sort of a subcategory of bullying, and it requires extra attention. But it's much more. It is a form of harassment that can follow a person, and it follows them and exploits them across the world. There's no protection from a predator who chooses to use this technology as the medium to betray intimacies, to get revenge for a breakup, or just to display an intimate image that was taken without the victim's knowledge or consent. It is absolutely critical, Mr. Speaker, that we change this reality to one that protects and that protects those who may be victimized by having intimate pictures splayed across the cyberworld. I think we need to provide clear consequences for those who abuse the privilege of privacy.

In discussing this issue with family, I had a family member who told me that when she was going to school in the 1970s, even then they would make rules about what pictures could be taken at social events and what would be done with those pictures and destroying negatives and all of that kind of thing. With the way that the world has changed – and there are so many more people, people of all ages, that are at much greater risk in so many ways, Mr. Speaker – the one thing that has stayed the same is that in the heat of the moment people do not always use a lot of common sense when they're more concerned about things like popularity or notoriety or they're experiencing jealousy or anger or frustration. When these images are sent around online or digitally, there are humongous, humongous implications.

My colleague eloquently spoke of the horrifying victimization of Amanda Todd that led to her suicide. We've heard and read about the horrifying rape of Rehtaeh Parsons and the sharing of those horrific images, that caused so much devastation and trauma. The thing we need to realize, Mr. Speaker, is that these images are quite often taken with the expectation of privacy and absolutely can be taken without the knowledge or consent of the person.

We know that it is a frequent occurrence for people, especially youth, to be targeted by stalkers on the Internet. The PREVNet site, which is Canada's authority on research and resources for bullying prevention, actually describes this type of cyberbullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying, the harassment, humiliation, intimidation and threatening of others through cyberbullying occurs 24 hours a day. It is relentless... [It is] aggressive, reaching kids at the dinner table while [they're] sitting with their parents, or in the privacy of their bedroom. There is no safe zone.

3:40

Bill C-13, Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, amended the federal Criminal Code to provide for a new offence, the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images, with some accompanying provisions. This federal legislation changed the Criminal Code, and Bill 202 now allows the victim to seek damages from the person responsible.

In the Education Act I am pleased to see that the definition of bullying is expanded to include "the distribution of an intimate image of another person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not consent to the distribution, or being reckless as to whether or not that person consented to the distribution." It is absolutely important, Mr. Speaker, that students understand that they are accountable for their actions if they choose to distribute pictures without consent and that they can face suspension and perhaps even be put on the list of behaviours for which a student may be expelled.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about protecting victims. The importance of including amendments to the School Act and the Education Act is that we have an opportunity to actually increase awareness in the

youth in our schools of the seriousness of distributing intimate images without consent. I hope it will continue the conversations around creating and maintaining safe and caring schools, specifically in the digital environment.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I really hope it raises awareness of the pervasiveness of the dangers of cyberbullying by actually describing clearly specific actions that are offences under the law. This is something that all Albertans are concerned about. This bill will mean that victims – victims – can now seek damages, and that will make it clear that this behaviour in schools will mean consequences for students who engage in this insidious form of bullying and harassment.

We've all said this a few times, but I'll repeat it. We live in a new world. We live in a world where there is no limit to the reach of predatory behaviour, and this behaviour would flash images of personal information across the world in seconds. To my colleague I would like to say that I fully support this bill, which may prevent further victimization and, just as importantly, may spark conversations in our schools, Mr. Speaker, about cyberbullying through invading a person's privacy and distributing it digitally and how that will not be tolerated.

Merci.

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and speak to Bill 202, the Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act. Let me be very clear. Bill 202 is a good bill. It's a bill that emphasizes how absolutely unacceptable it is to exploit someone's right to privacy. It's a bill that talks about absolutely how wrong it is to take someone's trust and harm them that way. Bill 202, I find, ties in very nicely not only with Bill 2, as some of our members here today have already spoken about, but also with last session, when I moved Motion 507. I moved a motion on increasing the awareness of cyberbullying in schools, and I think that what the hon. member has crafted here ties in very nicely with that, and it's something that I can support because it's something that all students need to be aware of and supported with.

Mr. Speaker, what Bill 202 addresses is when we have students who break the trust of other people. What that means is that Bill 202 allows us to not only address the issues as they arise, but I think that it will allow us to increase education and awareness of these types of issues in schools because we know this type of scenario: perhaps you share an intimate image with your significant other, and six months later, 12 months later, a year later, two years later – you don't know when – that image may become shared through some means that you weren't expecting.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's very important that when we talk about these issues, we also talk about things like consent-based education, that we talk about things around educating people as to what is and what isn't okay for you to do with your partner. When do you need to ask for consent? What does consent mean? What does yes mean? What does no mean? I think these are questions that we really do need to be raising awareness in schools about. They're questions that we really do need to be educating our students about. It's one thing to say: if you break this law, if you do the wrong thing, we're going to punish you. Let me be very clear that it's absolutely the right thing that we should be doing. If people share non-consensual images through the Internet, through other mediums, whatever it is, we should absolutely be protecting those victims.

[Ms Woollard in the chair]

But on top of that, we also need to be educating the people who are doing that sharing. We need to be educating people who are

breaking that trust and that privacy. If they don't know why they shouldn't be doing this, if they don't understand what the concept of consent is, then we have failed in our duty as educators, and we have failed in our duty to be able to inform people on how to move forward with this.

Madam Speaker, I think that Bill 202 is a very good initiative. Bill 202 is something that should be applauded in this House. It's something that we can work together on. I'm very happy that the member across was so open and collaborative with the government in moving forward with this so that it could have all the components, I think, that make a good bill.

Madam Speaker, I'm very interested in the pieces that do amend the School Act in this bill. I think that the pieces that amend the School Act and give the ability for administration and for teachers and principals to move very quickly to react to cases where intimate images are shared is very important. I think that being able to move swiftly allows us to catch these instances immediately and allows us to protect the privacy of individuals and protect those victims as quickly as possible.

I won't get into any of the details of some of the tragedies we've heard about, Madam Speaker. I won't get into the details of any of the instances and examples because I think hon. members here already have done a very good job of explaining it, and I don't think that we need to keep bringing this back. But I think that what we do need to talk about is how these victims and these people who have been subjected to sexual harassment – and it really is that. It's sexual harassment. It's sexual assault. It's an absolute core violation of these people's rights.

[The Speaker in the chair]

When government and administration and teachers and schools aren't able to react, when people aren't able to move quickly enough, and when we sort of leave our most vulnerable – the people who have been exploited, the people who have been hurt – out to dry because we didn't have the framework in place, I think that is where you have the opportunity to do the most harm. By being able to support our victims, by being able to move forward and say, "We are here for you; we are ready to help you; what do you need?" by being able to do those types of things, Mr. Speaker, it is very valuable. It allows us to help our victims more.

Mr. Speaker, the very specific objectives of Bill 202 – creating the grounds for things like a civil lawsuit, setting the framework for immediate suspension or other types of school supports for our victims – I think are a step that moves us in the right direction. It's a step that moves us in the right direction, and I think it's something that all members of this House can support and can applaud. The fact is that the distribution of these images will have devastating effects on individuals. It will violate and make survivors feel unsafe in just their everyday environment.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, just imagine for one second that, perhaps with a significant other, you were to share an intimate image. You took that image in your home, and you shared that with somebody through whatever medium you would like. But just imagine that now every single time you look at that mirror that you took the image through, that every single time you look at that computer that you sent that image through, that Facebook account, whatever it is – they pop up in your newsfeed. Imagine being brought back to the pain. Imagine being brought back to the instance and suddenly remembering that your trust and your hope and everything that you believed in in that second and all those feelings and those emotions are right back to the forefront, because that's the reality of what

happens when this type of crime goes unpunished. That's the reality of what happens when this type of crime isn't addressed effectively.

I strongly believe, Mr. Speaker, that for every single Albertan, whether you are young, whether you are less young, whether you are in school or not in school, you deserve a safe space for yourself, whether that is in your work, in your school, in your home. Wherever that is, you should be able to feel safe. You should be able to feel as though you have nothing to be afraid of. Because you made a decision to share an intimate image, because you made a decision to trust somebody else, that feeling of safety shouldn't be compromised. You shouldn't lose your ability to be trusting, you shouldn't lose your ability to be safe, and you shouldn't lose your ability to care because somebody violated your trust and somebody violated your safety.

I think that as members of the Legislature and as people who sit in this House, as people who proclaim being honourable members, we have an obligation to help prevent this type of devastating tragedy. We have an obligation to help support and comfort survivors and discourage this type of behaviour and discourage this type of violation. Mr. Speaker, I think that this bill is a good bill. It uses good language, it's very clear, and it makes it very simple to know that distributing an intimate image without consent is the wrong thing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very excited that we're able to work together with the opposition on this bill, but I do have one concern around some of what came up around the press release for this bill. I did have a concern around the headline that warned that a picture lasts forever. Now, this is certainly true, and the warning is actually very appropriate for youth. I think it's something that was drilled into my head when I was younger and in school, and it was something that we've heard over and over again. I think the focus of the bill itself is right, and I think the contents of the bill itself are right. My concerns around this headline are that I think that it doesn't do what we need to be doing with empowering survivors. It doesn't do what we need to be doing with educating people on consent-based education and consent-based work.

I think I'm running out of time here, Mr. Speaker, and I will leave it at that. I would gladly support this bill, and I'm excited that I think we're going to be able to pass this with members opposite.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am happy to support and speak to private member's Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act. As other speakers have said, this bill certainly does fit well with government Bill 2. It provides additional tools for victims, creating grounds for a civil lawsuit, and sets out punishment in schools for those who distribute images without consent. This bill creates powers for schools and school boards to discipline students engaged in this activity while protecting parents who are not involved from lawsuits.

This bill correctly seeks to avoid and prevent victim blaming as it is not about the photo or the reason the photo was originally taken, but it's about the distribution of the photo without consent. I think we can all agree that revenge porn is about public shaming, creating mental anguish, causing harm, and violating a person's sense of privacy and well-being. This is about stopping, punishing, and preventing extreme violations of trust and privacy.

I would like to note that this private member's bill does follow a bill created by the Manitoba NDP in 2015. You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to give kudos to the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for bringing forward this very progressive bill that is squarely focused on people, protecting people, preventing abuse and hardship. I

didn't hear from this member directly, but I think I heard a story that some of the inspiration for this came as a result of a discussion with his young daughter. I think that is a beautiful story, so I'd like to thank him.

In preparation for this bill I did some research on the topic and was a little surprised at how widespread this type of abuse is. In a paper written by Samantha Bates of Simon Fraser University, I learned a number of disturbing facts, and I just want to give you a little snippet. Her paper is called "Stripped": An Analysis of Revenge Porn Victims' Lives after Victimization. She noted that the first revenge porn website was created in 2010 by someone named Hunter Moore. She also noted that during a three-month period in 2011 the revenge porn website received 10,000 photo submissions, and the website's owner received advertising revenue of approximately \$30,000 per month. Although this particular website has since shut down, more continue to pop up in its place.

It always astounds me how adults who themselves behave like bullies online act shocked when young people follow suit. We in this House need to set an example. Manage your social media pages. Act, or you condone and normalize this behaviour. This sets the stage for further abuse and more harmful abuse. Just rampant, even on the Twitter feeds related to this House, we see every day, probably every hour, name calling – disgusting name calling – and body shaming.

You know, I was particularly disturbed at – I can understand that some people were offended by some of the statements made in this House, and I was happy that there was a heartfelt apology, but what stunned me was just how for days and days and days the feeds were filled with the most disgusting body shaming of the person that chose to make that statement. It was all over pages that are supposed to be managed by the opposition parties, and they were not. It wasn't taken down. There wasn't a statement released. There wasn't any sort of intervention to stop it. I think that we have a responsibility to be role models. We have a responsibility to stop online bullying.

This past Sunday I attended an event, actually just yesterday, in St. Albert called Beautiful Me. I think this is about their fifth or sixth year of hosting this event. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. It was held at Bellerose composite high school. They had different stations set out, and it was for young people who are typically marginalized, whether it is young people that struggle with a mental illness such as an eating disorder or a personality disorder of some kind, young people that have disabilities. There were some young women there that were obviously pregnant and were about to be young moms. There were people that had been bullied in school.

There was a collection of young people there, and they got to go through these stations. They had their hair done, they had makeup done, and they had professional photographs done. They got to write out some information about what made them beautiful, not beautiful just on the outside but on the inside. At one of the last stations they got to sit in a small group and have conversations with a couple of people. I did attend the event and sort of saw the stations, and then I found myself in the room listening to some stories. I'd like to share with you a couple of those stories.

One of the first stories that I heard was about a woman. She talked about her life as a youngster growing up in the Maritimes, and she was surrounded by a really, really dysfunctional home. She grew up in poverty. She had one of her parents who was abusive and had substance abuse problems. As a result, there was a lot of acting out and a lot of issues for her. She found herself at the age of 17 pregnant with her first child. Fast-forward to yesterday, and at age 39 she's a mother of five and a grandmother of I think it was three.

4:00

However, you know, she had a rough time as a young mom, but she made some choices years back to turn things around. She went to school. She had a job. She started being an engaged parent and mom, took care of things. She was clean and sober. She moved her family to Fort McMurray to start a new life, from the Maritimes to Fort McMurray.

Things were not going too badly until one of her young daughters started to have trouble at school. She saw her daughter at age 12 struggling with a black depression, just a deep depression, that she had not seen before. She didn't know what to do. She tried all kinds of things. One day after a really bad day she decided to look into her daughter's social media accounts, and what she found astounded her. She found messages on social media accounts and online from people in her school that were just tormenting her. They were making fun of how she looked, how she sounded, how she dressed. They were telling her to harm herself, to kill herself, that she was worthless, and it just went on and on and on. I can't tell you her whole story. She certainly did try to get help for her daughter and tried to stop the online abuse, but it didn't stop. She found her daughter at age 13 – she had died by suicide. She ended her life at age 13.

The second story is of a young woman who was at the event yesterday. She laughed because she said that the first time she went, she was one of those tough girls that said: you know, this isn't going to do anything for me. It turned out that she is a bit of a poster girl for that now, and she is actually mentoring young girls. She told her story. She talked about being in junior high and also looking a little bit different than the other kids. She was maybe taller. She was going through a little bit of a goth stage, she said, and she started to be tormented by bullies online as well. After the online bullying, it sort of spread into everyday life at school, that they, too, were telling her to kill herself, to cut herself, that she wasn't worth anything, that she was ugly, she was fat, she was useless. Her life was hell.

She actually took the advice she was given by those bullies, and she started to cut herself. She didn't think that her parents noticed. There would be blood on the sheets and things in the morning, but she didn't think that her parents would notice until one day the abuse got too bad. She said that it was like a movie – it sort of freaked her out a little bit – and all of the abuse that she had received, a lot of it online and on social media, just sort of started playing itself like a movie, so she picked up a knife. She went to cut, but that particular time she cut deeper than she ever had before, and the bleeding was profuse. Luckily, her mom was in the next room. She screamed. Her mom took her to the hospital. She was stitched up, she was cleaned up, and that was the first day that she was ever able to speak to a professional about her mental illness and about some of the bullying that was going on. But what happened after that is . . . [Ms Renaud's speaking time expired]

Thanks.

The Speaker: The Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this very important bill, and I'd also like to thank the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for putting this forward. You know, I think that this bill also fits very well with our Bill 2 to make life better and remove the limitations for reporting sexual and domestic violence. When we have these kinds of complementary bills, that work with one another to support everyday Albertans, this is what we mean when we say that we're making life better for Albertans. I think investing in our children, investing in women and girls is something that we can be really

proud of and also be really proud of working with our opposition colleagues across the floor to make things better for people.

I was listening to the Bill 2 debates the other day, and I was blown away by the stories that were shared here, Mr. Speaker. I think that all the members in here would agree with me that the courage of the members who spoke on that bill and shared their personal stories – it was profoundly moving. It takes a lot of courage to do that and share your own personal stories.

I also thought it was interesting. The Member for Calgary-Lougheed asked a really good question, I thought, as well. You know, again, this is where we have great people in the opposition who are putting a lot of thought into this. The question he asked – I think it was to the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill – was not only just “what's your advice to people who may be victims?” but also “what's your advice to people who are thinking about committing these kinds of crimes; how do we help those people and stop this from happening in the first place?” This bill is great for protecting potential victims. If we can avoid having people put into these difficult situations in the first place, then we can avoid a lot of other negative outcomes.

I know that in the Bill 2 debates some members were talking about how being abused at any age is terrible, especially at such a young age. It changes your body and your brain, and even though you survive and move on – I know that the Member for Lethbridge-East talked about survivors and thrivers. People who've been affected by this: it takes time for them to come around, to be able to feel that they can speak out about this. But at some point in time we need to be there for them and give them the supports so that they feel that they have support from the government and that they know that when they come forward, they will have justice and things will be better for them.

I also think about my niece. I've got a four-year-old niece in Toronto. My sister and my brother-in-law are fantastic parents, and I know they do everything that they can for my niece to ensure that she's safe. But I also think about, you know, when my sister and I grew up, we didn't have cellphones and these digital recording devices. Parents nowadays face a very different kind of environment, where everybody's got at least one camera on them at all times. There's so much more possibility, I suppose, just having access to the device. It's right there. And people can sometimes act without thinking and do something that they would otherwise regret. You know, when I was growing up, we didn't have these kinds of devices.

I want to share a story of my own, and by no means do I think my story – my story pales in comparison with those that have been told before, but it's my story, so I'd like to tell a little bit about that. When I was in high school, I was really good friends with a buddy, and we had a falling-out, but we'd see each other often at parties and that kind of thing. And, like I say, we didn't have these kinds of devices back then, but we had, you know, those big cameras that you put on your shoulder, that you needed to plug into the wall like those old camcorders. We were at a party one night and, you know – we were in high school – drinking too much and having too much fun, and I had too much to drink, so I was being sick at my friend's house. It was terribly embarrassing. I mean, when you're that young and you've only had a few drinks on different occasions, it's hard to know what your limit is. Mr. Speaker, I figured out what my limit was that day.

That was a big mistake, but here's what happened. My ex-friend took the big video camera and filmed me being sick. I actually had been sick on my friend's kitchen floor, and I got some paper towels to try to clean it up, but it appeared as though I was swimming in my own sickness. I was trying to be responsible, even though I had had too much to drink, and clean up after myself, and this friend

who wasn't a friend came in and took advantage of my vulnerability. You know, even though we weren't friends, it's kind of a bullying scenario. Then, subsequently, what he would do with that video was have screenings at high school during lunch. It was pretty embarrassing. Like, everybody knew what I had done.

I was ashamed of myself, but that's what kids do, right? You know, we learn and we move on. But I hesitate to think, too, what – and I know my situation wasn't about pornography. I know the bill is more about pornography, but I'm just trying to use an analogy that when people violate your trust, it's hard to know how to trust people again. That's why when I think about my niece, I think about bills like this and how great it is that we've got people who are thinking about our children and our women and girls and protecting them.

4:10

What else, Mr. Speaker? I think that by supporting this bill, we're sending a very clear message that these kinds of extreme violations of trust and privacy are completely unacceptable, that this isn't something that we tolerate.

I think maybe part of the problem is that it's difficult for people to talk about this in public. We heard some very powerful stories, like I said, during the Bill 2 debate, and it's difficult for people to come forward and talk about that. So I'm really proud that we can put our political differences aside and talk about this very difficult issue. I think, you know, it's been said here before, but Albertans deserve to feel safe and comfortable in their schools and in their homes and in their communities.

You know, oftentimes we hear about abuse when children are very young, and they may not even know that this has happened to them. They may not understand the consequences and that this is something that could affect them for their entire life. I think that having legislation like this to protect kids so that they don't get into these situations, and we tell the perpetrators that society will not accept this – there is help available for these people. The Member for Calgary-Lougheed said: how do you prevent this? Well, we also need to help people who may be suffering from mental illness or addictions who might be tempted to perpetrate these kinds of crimes, so having a social safety net, having supports available for people who may be, like I say, tempted to perpetrate these kinds of acts.

I found an article online just the other day that really resonated with me, and I think it's very similar to what we've been talking about. I'll table the article tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. The article is from *Wired* magazine online and the title is Why There's No 'Silver Bullet' for Ridging the Web of Revenge Porn. Sure enough, I'm sure there's no silver bullet. While this bill is very good, there is more that we can do and more that needs to be done, but this is an excellent first start. So I'm really proud to support this. But I'd like to just read this to you. Because I don't have any personal experience with the topic of this bill, I wanted to look at other examples that are out there. [Mr. Westhead's speaking time expired]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my honourable colleague for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for working so hard and bringing this important and, in my humble opinion, historic bill. Thank you very much, sir.

I believe that this is an area that needs to be addressed by the Legislatures of the entire country, all the provinces and the

territories, so that we can stop this kind of bullying and we can stop this kind of behaviour to protect our children. I'm proud that Alberta is taking a step, and it seems like all parties are supporting it, which is, you know, great news.

Listening to all my colleagues, I remember that when we were growing up – you know, I'm older than a few of my colleagues here – we didn't have these digital cameras and these iPads.

Mrs. Pitt: Did you have a computer?

Mr. Gill: No. There was no power in India – right? – so it wouldn't work even if we had one.

On a serious note, like, we didn't have that technology. The children of my era weren't threatened by who's recording it or who's sharing it. Now once we put anything on the Internet, there's no way you can delete it and stuff like that because it changes hands so quickly.

You know, with this technology the world has changed so much. Everybody has cameras and iPhones and all those digital devices. Every household has it. It seems like every child has it. I know that my kids have all the iPads and stuff like that, which sometimes I think I should take back from them. But sometimes I have to bribe them because I'm never home.

Mr. Rodney: You're busy working.

Mr. Gill: Yeah.

You know, there are fewer and fewer things in this day and age that we can protect from the world, like, when it comes to privacy. As I said, with digital media and social media it's so quick, especially all those trolls on Twitter and Facebook and all those social media things. People just change, they alter, they share, and we can never recover those things, especially when these images are targeting children. That's just sad. I mean, no children should be exposed to bullying when it comes to the sharing of these kinds of images. If somebody is sharing these images with or without consent, somebody is breaking that trust.

One thing that we can all agree on is that images of an intimate nature deserve the expectation of privacy, whether these images are taken with consent or without consent. Again, if they're shared against the wishes of the victim, it's a breach of trust with each other.

We've heard the stories about the young girl Amanda Todd. This happens all the time. I've seen it on TV, in newspapers. Perhaps it's even been with someone that we know, the devastating toll that the sharing of these images can take. Relentless cyberbullying leads to serious, long-lasting emotional scars. I believe that if we can somehow pass this legislation in this House, it will prevent these kinds of horrendous crimes against these vulnerable children.

I want to thank all members of the House and especially, once again, my colleague from Bonnyville-Cold Lake for bringing this forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members of this House for supporting this great cause.

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

4:20

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join in the congratulations of my colleagues to the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for presenting this private member's bill, Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act.

I rise, really, to speak as a father, an uncle, a brother, a husband, also on behalf of colleagues who've been subjected to this sort of thing as well as, actually, students. During my 40 years of working at the university, I've seen students damaged by similar things. It's

obvious that it's only over the last perhaps 10 years that the technology has existed that's described in this bill.

You know, it affects – it isn't just young girls. I think that's an important point that we've got to make here. These are intimate images of any gender. It can affect young women. It can affect young men. It can affect people that are transitioning. The key thing is: is it an intimate image, and has there been consent?

Now, I think that's something that I want to spend a little bit of time talking about, but before I do that, I actually want to congratulate the spirit of this debate. Once again we are actually working together to try to craft something that is going to be useful. It's similar to the spirit that was shown, for instance, on the bill that I spoke to about education for vaccination in the last sittings. I congratulated all of us, and I hoped that that spirit might be inoculated into the House, and I think it has been. I like seeing this collegiality and co-operation.

You know, it's also been evident in the discussion of Bill 1. I mean, there's some carping about the fact that we can't spend as much money as we'd like to spend and actually don't have to raise taxes as much as the opposition would to accomplish the same thing, but I think that in general we're in agreement that cutting school fees is a good thing, and all of us are working together. Similarly, with Bill 2; that's an act that all of us agree on. There may be some fine details in it that cause us some discussion, but we are working together. This is a good use of our time as members here to discuss this private member's bill.

I want to turn to the point about consent. I think it deserves a lot of discussion. You know, it isn't just consent for the transmission of intimate images that I want to talk about here. The concept of consent, particularly in the sexual relations context, is vital. There's been evidence just over the last couple of weeks that there are judges that don't really understand that concept very well and that need to be educated about what true consent is or when a person is unable to actually give that consent.

It's one of the things that I congratulate the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake on. In the bill it says:

A person who distributes an intimate image of another person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not consent to the distribution, or is reckless as to whether or not that person consented to the distribution, commits a tort against that other person.

That sort of language needs to be applied to other situations of consent. I think that if it were, there would be a lot of victims of this sort of behaviour that would actually see justice.

In that case that I'm referring to, where a judge thought that an inebriated woman could give consent, that woman has not seen justice and will never see justice and will live with that for the rest of her life, suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, I'm sure, and shame in the community and all these other things. So I really congratulate the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for putting that kind of language in this act.

I'm going to comment on consent from another point of view. I'm not sure why we have to go to these lengths, actually, to do this. I've been practising medicine for 40 years, and for 40 years if I wanted to take a picture of somebody's parts, I had to get a signed consent. I didn't have to be taught that. That's common sense. I mean, the Member for Strathmore-Brooks was talking about common sense in the budget. This is common sense on consent. If you take somebody's image and you want to use it, as I would use it, for instance, to teach about the medical problem or to document it in the medical file, I know that I have to get written consent for that and that I have to be able to produce that consent if I'm asked for it. I think that's really what the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake is talking about.

Similarly, I've been doing clinical trials in hematology and medical oncology for 30 years. There's a thing called good clinical practice rules for that. The number one rule in good clinical practice is that you have to get an informed consent, informed consent meaning that the patient that signs that consent actually has been told about the benefits and risks of this treatment, and I have to document that the patient has actually understood that information and that the consent was not obtained by any form of coercion. For instance, I could not say to that patient: if you don't sign up for this trial, you're not going to get this treatment. That's forbidden in good clinical practice in clinical trials. I realize that, you know, in the Member for Banff-Cochrane's experience it might have been difficult to get an informed consent from him for the video there.

Anyway, yesterday I was at a fantastic event at the Boyle McCauley community centre. It was called the inner-city roast beef dinner. I was there with my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Centre. There were Edmonton Eskimos there. There were actually some Conservative Party of Canada, CPC, MPs there. We were happy to have our pictures taken. But, actually, I noticed that some of the attendees of this dinner actually had red dots applied on their coats. I overheard somebody say: well, that means that your image will not be taken by the TV cameras. So the professional videographers know about informed consent. Even when we're taking pictures of schoolchildren down here on the steps, some of them have FOIP waivers that mean that they don't actually go in the pictures. So this idea about consent for image use I think is very prevalent.

The other one that's really been striking to me is that I was the medical director of the blood transfusion service for many years. I actually had to testify before the Krever commission because Justice Krever made a lot of inquiries into the blood transfusion system of the '80s. You know, everybody thinks about the HIV and hepatitis C and hepatitis B infections that, unfortunately, happened in the '80s and early '90s. It was a very evocative time. Justice Krever did opine that there were things that the blood system needed to be doing to protect Canadians from those infections. But he also made a very important observation: up until that time one did not have to consent for blood transfusion.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

4:30

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to have the opportunity to stand today to speak to such a thoughtful and timely private member's bill. As many others have, I'd like to echo my thanks to the member across the aisle for bringing forward this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to get a bachelor of arts in professional communications. As part of that study one of my favourite portions of what I studied with that was the history of communications technology. That started all the way back from when we first moved as a human species from an oral culture to a written culture and looked at the implications of what making that kind of change does. The fascinating thing when you study the evolution of communications technology is that it doesn't just change what we do as individuals. It changes every aspect of how our society functions.

A change from traditionally having communicated mainly orally to all of a sudden communicating in writing meant a drastic change in how we communicated information. All of a sudden we didn't have to tell things in stories or in rhyme or other things like that that made it easier to remember. Suddenly we could communicate in different ways, in briefer ways. We could tell stories in different ways. Information could travel so much further. All of a sudden we

found that, you know, people could share thoughts and ideas over great distances. Suddenly people could communicate more, so far-flung groups became closer and more connected. You see that as time goes on. You see that as other things evolve. Over time that evolution of technology, that communications technology, happens faster and faster. The interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is that you can never predict the result that a new technology is going to have until it's too late to actually remove that technology, until it's become so ingrained in our society that it can no longer actually be removed.

That's the interesting thing when we sort of come up to our present day, when we have technology that's moving so fast, so quickly. Certainly, with the evolution now of the smart phone and a camera built into every device, all of a sudden then we had a new technology that came in. It was adopted very quickly, and we were all very excited about it, but we didn't know the full ramifications of embracing that technology and it becoming ubiquitous in society until we reached a point where it's too late to put that genie back in the bottle.

Certainly, having this technology and having these opportunities confers a lot of benefits on us as a society. Certainly, for us as politicians the opportunity to be able to very quickly access social media, to snap a picture and send it out to thousands of people, to immediately be able to communicate is an amazing thing.

Mr. Fildebrandt: I might not agree with that.

Mr. Shepherd: At times we may regret that we've done so, indeed.

At the same time, you know, it's opened up a whole new area of intimacy in relationships. The ability to text, to send photos quickly, to be able to go back and forth, and to be able to share things. It's a great thing in many respects, but we certainly recognize that with it now has come new opportunities for abuse. That's a challenging thing because, again, Mr. Speaker, we cannot put this toothpaste back in the tube. It's out there, it's part of our lives, and we have to deal with the challenges and the possible consequences that can come from the use or misuse of this technology.

As I said, this is an incredibly timely bill from the member to give us the opportunity to address one of the issues that has come up. It's a combination, Mr. Speaker, as others have noted, of things that have always happened to some extent. We've always had bullying. We've always had, sadly, abuse. Frankly, that is what this comes down to. When we have people who are sharing these kinds of images nonconsensually, without permission, to attack another person, it comes down to control, whether someone is trying to control another person by blackmailing them over images that they may hold or whether it's someone that's angry and acting out of anger and rage and for revenge because they've lost control over another individual over whom they felt the right to have that control. This is a very smart and prudent step that allows us to move forward to ensure that that kind of abuse is not allowed to continue, that there are strict consequences for when it occurs, and that allows for immediate and important action.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of talk today about the need for better understanding and better education, and that's another great benefit of this bill coming forward, the opportunity that we have to stand here today and have this debate in the Legislature; the media that this will generate; the opportunity that this is going to give to schools to educate students, to parents to have the kind of conversation that the member had with his daughter, that sparked this bill. It's an opportunity for us to raise awareness and through that to educate our young people about what healthy relationships should be.

Mr. Speaker, as others have noted, far too often currently we see that our young men and women do not always have a healthy

understanding of relationships, and particularly our young men do not always have a clear understanding of the kind of relationships they should be having with women, of how they should treat them, and of having a broad and inclusive view, frankly, a feminist view, understanding how to properly support women, not to exploit them, not to abuse them, not to try to take advantage of them or control them but to treat them as equals.

We've seen this time and again through social media, through recent things that have occurred. We've seen this. I don't bring it up in any way to get into partisan discussion or to bash one party or another, but we've seen the kinds of toxic world views that some young men in our society hold. Where they come from is that we're not setting better examples ourselves as leaders or as individuals, or they're not having the opportunity to have proper mentors who teach them how to respect women and build healthy relationships.

It's incredibly important that we have this bill, Mr. Speaker, to address the fact that we know that that occurs, that we know that this kind of misogyny, this kind of abuse is out there. Certainly, it does not happen only to women, but in a survey by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative they did find that 90 per cent of victims who reported to that survey were women; 93 per cent said that they suffered significant emotional distress due to being a victim of this sort of abuse; 49 per cent reported having been harassed or stalked by individuals who saw the illicit material. So as others have noted, this is not something that merely stays in cyberspace. It has very real impacts on women, the others that suffer this abuse or this form of harassment. It affects them emotionally, psychologically, can leave very deep scars and damage and can lead to real-world threats on their life. So it's entirely reasonable and appropriate to consider this bill.

I understand that as of last summer about 34 states in the U.S. had brought forward laws against nonconsensual sharing of images and revenge porn, most of those outlawing the dissemination of intimate images when there is a lack of consent. Of course, we heard that there was a similar bill that was passed by the former NDP government in Manitoba, and this aligns with the federal government's bill, Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act.

I particularly appreciate that the member took steps to give schools an opportunity and a route by which they can deal with this because, as I said, Mr. Speaker, it's incredibly important that we use this not just as a tool for punishment but as an opportunity for education. Certainly, we've seen in the cases that have been noted, Rehtaeh Parsons and others, that we had young people who did not seem to fully comprehend the scope and the effect of their actions. So perhaps by schools having the ability to take direct and swift action to address these problems before they spread out further in the community, before we have students that have had to endure months or years of shame, by being able to act quickly, set an example for other students and help them understand, help them, frankly, build empathy – that's one of the most difficult things I found when I was reading coverage of some of these stories: young men who were involved in the nonconsensual sharing of these images did not understand the impact that they had.

Thank you.

4:40

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

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my deep pleasure to rise today to support Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act. First of all, I would like to thank the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for bringing forward such an amazing bill. I'm very much amazed to listen to the story of how it came out after the conversation with his daughter, and I

would personally like to write a note to her thanking her for this discussion on this.

I would like to begin by defining a few terms which are used very commonly and very often, but as a reminder I would still like to use the dictionary to define those terms; for example, the term “private.” When we talk about that something is private, it means that it’s protected from view or disturbance by others. When we talk about that something is safe, that means that it’s free from harm’s reach. This bill is basically providing assurance to an individual in society that through the use of media or through any other means, you are protected and you are safe where you are in society.

With this bill I would like to share a story. Throughout the time I was in school, in university, I have seen multiple situations where people have been targeted and their photos have been taken without their consent and shared on campus or anywhere among their families or friends. I have seen the consequences afterwards because these people will not be able to even show their face to their friends or even feel safe to step outside their homes. It’s a rejection, Mr. Speaker, that they experience. When we talk about inclusion, when we talk about justice, when we talk about peace, those ideologies or the steps that we take to promote those concepts – this particular situation, when the individual is not feeling safe stepping outside their house or home just because they’re exposed through technology, is basically not fair to that individual.

Also, research has shown that when somebody faces rejection, it activates the same pathways in the brain that are activated when we have a physical injury or when we have physical pain. Basically, the extent of the pain the person experiences at the time of rejection is actually no less than physical pain. Usually the treatment is the same: taking painkillers. So you can imagine that how much of an emotional impact that person is having is equivalent to physical injury.

When we talk about a situation like this, basically we are strengthening our community by basically allowing that person to sue the other individual who is using the images of the individual without consent. As an individual we have a right to make a choice. We have the freedom of choice as individuals in terms of what we agree to and what we do not agree to. Exposing the individual’s privacy or something that would damage or harm the image of that individual without their consent is basically a big damage to our society.

I would like to also mention that it’s a big social issue because when we are talking about strengthening our communities, the fundamental underlying concept behind building relationships and strengthening communities is trust. When privacy is breached, the trust is gone. And when the trust is gone, then how can we even move forward to ensure that we celebrate, you know, inclusivity, strong relationships? The fundamental concept that begins with one individual: when that does not exist, how can we build a bigger picture on that? We need to start with one individual, as we are talking about in this particular situation, which may sound a little minor. We’re targeting one individual and their consent for their photos to be used on social media or anywhere, but the importance of this concept in a bigger picture is so much, and it’s so significant that it’s oftentimes underestimated.

I’m very proud to say that I am Canadian. I belong to a nation where I enjoy freedom, where I enjoy safety, where I feel protected. This bill is actually in alignment with the federal government’s Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act. Basically, it is already something we have got on the federal level, and Alberta taking this initiative and discussing this in the Alberta Legislative Assembly makes me super proud, I would say. We are talking about the safety of our citizens in the province of Alberta as well as in the great nation of Canada.

Also, my other concern is that when we talk about the sharing of those images without consent, the problem is that oftentimes those images are edited. The era we are living in right now, through technology everything is possible. So when images are shared, they’re oftentimes edited and are not even true to portray that specific individual. It’s a very serious issue in our society. The consequences to that are – basically, it’s a false portrayal of that individual in the first place. That’s one thing that is not fair to that individual. Secondly, it is being shared with everybody and conveying wrong messages. It’s a target on that individual psychologically, physically, emotionally. By all means, it’s a target on that individual, and any type of target on an individual is basically a breach of safety and privacy.

Therefore, with great happiness and with great pride I would like to strongly support this bill. I’m very grateful to have this discussion ongoing in Alberta’s Legislative Assembly today. Thank you very much.

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

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my absolute pleasure to stand and speak in support of Bill 202, Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act. I don’t have much time, but I don’t need much time because it’s a great bill. It’s something that continues to send the message that we are supporting victims of sexual violence and sexual exploitation and that we want to make sure that the message is focused on that we’re not blaming someone for an image being shared, but we’re ensuring that the blame is rightly being put at the feet of the person who has actually shared that image without a person’s consent. That’s something that we need to continue to talk about: how we address consent through education in our province.

Unfortunately, when we have young people that are experiencing this new technology, we don’t have the legislation that can keep up with the decisions that they make. They have not developed the skills of being able to see what the effects of their decision-making are, those consequences. So it’s a good thing that we make sure that we can start talking about this more now and make sure that there are also rules in place to deter those that would do it.

It is something that disproportionately affects women. Ninety per cent of those that are affected, that have this done, that have revenge porn done, are women. As the Member for Edmonton-Centre was saying, 93 per cent of these people experience significant emotional distress, and as many as 51 per cent contemplate suicide. It’s that shame factor, that is still incredibly prevalent in today’s society, that makes this sort of sharing still so powerful even though we would hope that it would not be.

So it’s my absolute happiness that this bill has come forward from the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, and I know that I have total support on this side of the House. Thank you.

4:50

The Speaker: If there are no other members who wish to speak to the bill, I would go to the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake to close debate.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very much an honour to be able to stand in front of my caucus, the government side’s caucus, and the other caucuses and to hear their support for a bill that I’ve put forward. As mentioned, I do need to make sure that people understand that whenever we put a piece of legislation forward, it is important that we are going out to the different groups and ensuring that it’s the best piece of legislation that we can bring forward.

I do believe that cyberbullying is an unfortunate by-product of our technology moving forward. It is something that needs to be dealt with, and I believe that the bill that I'm going to be putting forward, Bill 202, will take a small part of some of the cyberbullying and give a second thought, if you will, to whether or not people want to pursue this terrible bane for all of our province and Albertans. For myself, I think that this is truly a nonpartisan bill that I'm bringing forward because we all have a loved one that potentially could be impacted with revenge porn. The fact is that when we're looking at moving forward, how is it that something so powerful can have so little legislation involved with it?

I do have to make sure that I acknowledge that the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education did both sit down with me and gave me the opportunity to discuss my idea on these bills. I also have to thank the NDP caucus whip for also hearing the idea being brought forward and taking that idea to the caucus and being able to make sure that if there were contributions they wanted to make to this bill, they were able to. I'd like to thank the third party, and, well, the independent parties, if you will, independent members, for their support as well for this bill being brought forward.

The fact is that the idea was something that my youngest daughter had brought forward in a discussion that I had because this is something that I was concerned that some day she might have to deal with. I mean, this is something that, I think, is an unbelievable thing that you have to talk about with your daughter. She's 11 years old. I can't believe that I needed to have that conversation, and there are several other conversations. I think we all can acknowledge that she is going to be exposed to technology. The fact that we all have a cellphone that's available to us that can take high-quality pictures at any time and distribute them in a second is a powerful tool that can many times be used in a good way, but it also can be used against mainly our young women and our women of Alberta.

Legislation like this, I believe, brings accountability to both the youth and the adults within Alberta. We need to make sure that we all are able to hold those accountable that share these pictures because it's all of our responsibility to make sure that, in the end, our most vulnerable circumstances, which is when our privacy is breached, are protected. It doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman. What matters is that privacy that we expect from our loved ones, whether they're our friends, our parents, our uncles, our aunts, our cousins, our best friends, or just a person that we know. All these people need to accept that taking a picture that is shared with them and putting it out for the rest of the world to see without your permission is wrong.

Now, I'm hoping that if there is some improvement that needs to be done to this bill, because I do believe that working together in all parties to ensure that this piece of legislation moves forward, that we have a good, strong . . . [Mr. Cyr's speaking time expired].

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 202 read a second time]

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to seek unanimous consent to move directly to private members' motions at this time.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Motions Other than Government Motions

Surgical and Diagnostic Wait Times

501. Mr. Jean moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to complete and make public within 120 days of

the passage of this motion a report relating to surgical and diagnostic wait times that identifies the following: barriers causing excessive wait times; estimated costs of wait times in terms of factors including but not limited to lost productivity, health deterioration, and opioid addiction; and cost-effective solutions including those used in other provinces to reduce wait times within the limits of the Canada Health Act.

[Debate adjourned March 13: Mr. Smith speaking]

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

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on Motion 501 to speak in favour of it. Motion 501 calls on the government to complete a report within 120 days of the passage of this motion that will look at surgical and diagnostic wait times.

We know that we do, on both sides of this House, support the concept of a universal public system of health care. The problem, however, is that sometimes that public system of health care does not provide timely access. It's important for us to identify the barriers that cause excessive wait times, it's important for us to estimate the costs of those wait times, and it's important for us to propose and evaluate cost-effective ways of dealing with these wait times. It's important for us to look at the best practices across this country and across the provinces and see what we can do about creating a more efficient system.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Albertans wait approximately three weeks longer than the national average for treatment, and Albertans wait at times five weeks longer to go from a specialist to treatment than, say, the citizens of Saskatchewan, our neighbours to the east. It's important for us to address the concept of wait times. Wait times mean that patients continue in their suffering. We know that access to wait times is not access to health care, so if we truly care about serving the needs of our fellow Albertans and improving our health care system, it's going to be important for us to address wait times.

Wait times mean that sometimes you can have a great deal of pain as you're dealing with whatever affliction it is that you're facing. Hip replacements can take 209 days for 90 per cent of the patients in this province. A knee replacement can be 224 days, Mr. Speaker, for 90 per cent of the patients that need a knee replacement. Those are 209 days and 224 days when they're in a great deal of pain. I was just talking to a friend of mine in my church on Sunday who's been dealing with knee pain. She is going to have to wait a significant amount of time before she can have anything dealt with.

If we just take a look at the cost that that means to our society, where people are incapable of working, incapable of taking care of their family because of the problems that they are dealing with, this is a serious thing. I think it's important for us to take Motion 501 and to apply the time necessary to study this to identify those barriers. Why is it that we take longer in this province to access appropriate health care?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

5:00

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members who would like to speak to Motion 501? The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion 501, put forward by my hon. colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition. In just a few short words there is so much offered by the Leader of the Opposition on ways that we can identify issues and challenges inside the system. I know and you'll know that he is passionate – passionate – about making a

positive impact on not just our province but our health care system as well. He has provided some comments earlier in the debate. As well, I'm sure he's looking forward to closing debate around just this very, very important issue.

This motion alone certainly isn't going to solve all of the problems within the context of our system. It's certainly not going to solve all the problems at AHS, but you know, Mr. Speaker, that knowledge is power. This is an opportunity for the government to provide that information. While I appreciate – and we've heard from the Minister of Health some comments earlier that much of this information is available, but what . . . [Mr. Cooper's speaking time expired] Oh, that's too bad.

The Speaker: The hon. member to close debate.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that all Albertans, all Canadians, for that matter, that have had a loved one, a member of their family in the health care system in Alberta or the rest of Canada are very concerned. First of all, they know that we have one of the greatest health care systems in the world as far as 90 per cent of the issues, but it's the 10 per cent. Many of the issues fall through the cracks because we're not paying attention or we don't have alternative options for those people.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I'm very disappointed, first of all, that if the members of the government don't support this motion, it's for political reasons. I don't think that's helpful because this motion simply asks for some basic research on how to reduce our terrible wait times and show Albertans the evidence of what they find. We know, notwithstanding that we spend a lot more money than any other major province in Canada, that we have some of the worst outcomes of all the provinces except for Atlantic Canada. In fact, for wait times in particular, Saskatchewan has less than half of the number of days of wait time that we do for most regularly known procedures: knee surgeries, hip transplants, those types of things. It's 90 and 95 days compared to over 200 and 220 days in Alberta in some cases.

There's no reason why this government shouldn't support this, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are suffering needlessly, and we know that other jurisdictions in Canada, other constitutional obligations that are in other provinces similar to ours have better wait times, in fact, half the amount of wait times that we do as far as real data goes. I think that what we need to do is to have this government focus on the question of how to do wait times better and why other provinces are getting better outcomes.

I believe this NDP government is more worried about other issues related to health care than they are actual outcomes. I know that we have to focus on technology. We have to focus on finding improvements in our health care system, but truly, Mr. Speaker, right now, today, with what we know is going on in the rest of the country, we also know that we can do a lot better than what we're doing. We know that other jurisdictions get better results, and they get it for less money, so it's not an issue of money. Even though this particular part of our system, health care, takes up over 40 per cent of our budget – some say as much as 50 per cent of our budget – the truth is that other provinces spend less and get better results.

These wait times that we currently have are unacceptable. Waiting causes more complications, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned last time in my speech how it costs people not just money but how it costs people and Albertans productivity, in particular family members. In the long run this means that we're going to have more problems, that we'll have less of a quality of life, and that we will have more family members supporting those people that our health system let fall through the cracks.

Even when you consider addictions, Mr. Speaker, whether it be for a month of painkillers or three months or six months of painkillers, the situation is – being on painkillers for that long, as we know, does cause long-term complications, sometimes addiction to these painkillers, including fentanyl and other things. I would suggest that the less time we have people on wait-lists, the better off not just their quality of life is but the future ramifications of trying times and helping those people that can't help themselves.

There's a situation, Mr. Speaker, that frankly means that we're losing the opportunity. Today we had an opportunity, for instance, to make sure that this particular motion would pass with all-party support. I know the opposition parties are supporting me on this motion. I think the government could have come forward and said: "Yes, we will do this. We will come back to Albertans with the report indicating exactly why it's taking longer in Alberta to see a doctor, why it's taking longer in Alberta to get a surgery or to see a specialist than it is in other provinces, and why it's taking sometimes twice as long in Alberta as it does in other provinces."

Again, many of these people in other jurisdictions are paying out of their pocket at clinics in B.C. or Quebec or even in the United States, and I don't think that's what the government wants. I don't think the government wants Albertans to go to other jurisdictions. I don't think they want us to go to B.C. or Saskatchewan or the United States.

I think that what they want is a better solution here in Alberta for Albertans, one that actually responds to Albertans and clearly understands, through a number of studies of empirical evidence much like I'm suggesting here, that we can do better, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that waiting lists are just so that rich people can get by and go and find their own opportunities. I think waiting lists are clearly something that is in the way of good productivity and good health care. To have an operation today doesn't cost any more than having an operation in six months, and that's why I think we need to clear the backlog and get to the real details of why we are taking so much longer to fulfill the needs of our citizens than other jurisdictions in Canada are doing.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that the government will change their mind, that they'll come forward and support us on this. We'll see what happens. The tinkering that this government is doing with health care is not going to help and solve the long-term ramifications of the system itself.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 501 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:08 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Cooper | Loewen | Smith |
| Cyr | Panda | Strankman |
| Fildebrandt | Pitt | van Dijken |
| Gill | Rodney | Yao |
| Jean | Schneider | |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|
| Babcock | Jansen | Miranda |
| Bilous | Kazim | Payne |
| Carlier | Kleinsteuber | Phillips |
| Carson | Larivee | Piquette |
| Connolly | Littlewood | Rosendahl |
| Dang | Luff | Sabir |

| | | |
|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Drever | Malkinson | Schmidt |
| Eggen | Mason | Schreiner |
| Feehan | McCuaig-Boyd | Shepherd |
| Ganley | McKitrick | Turner |
| Gray | McPherson | Westhead |
| Hinkley | Miller | Woollard |
| Horne | | |
| Totals: | For – 14 | Against – 37 |

[Motion Other than Government Motion 501 lost]

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seeing the time and the productive conversation that we've had today, I move that we adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m.]

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Prayers | 361 |
| Introduction of Visitors | 361 |
| Introduction of Guests | 361 |
| Ministerial Statements | |
| Journée Internationale de la Francophonie | 362 |
| Oral Question Period | |
| Budget 2017 | 364, 368 |
| School Fees | 366 |
| Mental Health Patient Advocate | 366 |
| Health Services for Transgender and Gender-diverse Albertans | 367 |
| Government Spending and Job Creation | 368 |
| Health Care Wait Times in Central Alberta | 369 |
| Castle Parks Management Plan | 369 |
| Emergency Medical Service Funding | 370 |
| GenA Youth Employment Program | 370 |
| Energy Industry Reclamation Costs | 371 |
| Canola Industry Development | 371 |
| Members' Statements | |
| Progressive Conservative Party Convention | 372 |
| Castle Parks Management Plan | 372 |
| Social Democracy | 373 |
| Parents Empowering Parents | 373 |
| Francophonie in Alberta | 373 |
| Government and Opposition Policies | 374 |
| Presenting Petitions | 374 |
| Statements by the Speaker | |
| Tabling Documents | 374 |
| Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day Program | 375 |
| Tabling Returns and Reports | 374 |
| Tablings to the Clerk | 375 |
| Orders of the Day | 375 |
| Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders | |
| Second Reading | |
| Bill 202 Protecting Victims of Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act | 375 |
| Motions Other than Government Motions | |
| Surgical and Diagnostic Wait Times | 386 |
| Division | 387 |

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