



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, March 23, 2017

Day 13

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),
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Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND),
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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)
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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)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W),
 Leader of the Official Opposition
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)
Kleinstuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)

Party standings:

New Democrat: 55

Wildrose: 22

Progressive Conservative: 8

Alberta Liberal: 1

Alberta Party: 1

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Deron Bilous	Minister of Economic Development and Trade
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Danielle Larivee	Minister of Children's Services
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Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 23, 2017

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect. As we finish our work for the week and prepare to return to our home constituencies, let us reflect on the positive things we have accomplished this week, and let us continue to always seek opportunities to make life better for the families and communities we serve.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two classes from beautiful Guthrie school, the grade 5/6 and grade 6. They are accompanied by Mrs. Colleen Tremblay and Mrs. Janet Quaghebeur, the teachers, and by parent volunteers Mr. Dave Parlins and Mrs. Cher Sherwood. Would the students and attendants please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you a group of grade 6 students from the more-than-extraordinary constituency of Edmonton-Glenora. These students go to Glenora elementary school and are joined by their teacher, Ms Craven. These students are hard working and smart. I had the honour of visiting them in October. We were at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of their school and the building and opening of their new playground, which is far more accessible than the traditional ones. I want to ask now that Ms Craven as well as the supervisors, Miss Leard and Mr. Kluthe, please rise with the students and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

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

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I actually have two introductions this afternoon. The first introduction is on behalf of you. I rise to introduce the Alberta Girls' Parliament group, who will be joining us in the members' gallery at 2 p.m. The group consists of 47 youth and nine adults and is led by Mrs. Shannen Hoffman. The girls are here today to see the interworking of the Legislative Assembly and to expand their knowledge of the parliamentary system. Please give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

For my second introduction it's a privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Alberta Hindi Parishad. Their organization was founded in 1985 and continues to provide regular classes to teach Hindi. I would like them to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other school groups to be introduced?

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly representatives from Festival Place in Strathcona county: Her Worship Roxanne Carr, the outstanding mayor of Strathcona county; Gavin Farmer, the executive director of Festival Place, the place to be to watch musical acts; Charles Rees, board member of the Festival Place foundation; and Ted Barris, award-winning author and military historian. Mr. Barris will lead a presentation tomorrow night at Festival Place to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Canada's most celebrated military victory, a pivotal moment in the formation of Canada's nationhood. I believe Mr. Barris is also doing a presentation at the Federal building tonight. I would ask them to stand to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to introduce to all members of the Assembly Mikhayla Patterson. Mikhayla is a first-year Grant MacEwan social work student who is completing her practicum in the Edmonton-Meadowlark constituency office. She has been an incredible asset to our community. Mikhayla is joined today by her classmates: Renée Hébert-Tomalty, Jennifer Nicole Burback, Louise Speakman, Jessica Silva, and Kevyn Hernandez. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three friends of mine who also happen to be constituents: Daniel Grynke, his daughter Wendy Lotholz, and Wendy's husband, Randy Lotholz. Daniel raised his family on a farm in the Vega area, just north of the town of Barrhead, and Wendy and Randy are currently farming in the southern part of the county of Barrhead. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Denise Walton. Denise is a first-year social work student at MacEwan University who has been volunteering in the Spruce Grove-St. Albert constituency office since last fall. Denise is passionate about helping others and is looking forward to a great career offering support to those in need. If Denise could rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Loyola: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly the Indian Students' Association of the University of Alberta. INDSA started small in 1991 and has grown to include hundreds of students and alumni. They preserve, nurture, and extend the cultural traditions and colours of India within the university. I would like them to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woppard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Alberta Gujarati Association. The AGA is one of the largest cultural organizations in western Canada, with thousands of Gujarati-speaking members. I had the privilege of attending their Navaratri celebration in October. I'd like to welcome their treasurer, Nipam Kotia, and the rest of the new executive. I'd like them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have two introductions for you this afternoon. First, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly executive members of the Council of India Societies of Edmonton from my home constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods: Krishan Chawla, Mrinal Mandal, Amar Bhasin, Dhirubhai Laowa, Pramod Kumar, and Ashok Sharma. The Council of India Societies of Edmonton is a not-for-profit organization representing and supporting Indo-Canadians throughout the capital region. I thank them for joining us today and ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

For my second introduction, Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Raeleen Minchuk. As a child Raeleen often visited her father, who was a construction contractor, when he was working, but it wasn't until 2014, at age 36, that Raeleen was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a deadly form of cancer caused by early exposure to asbestos at her father's workplace. The doctors told her she had months to live, but Raeleen is a fighter. Faced with this diagnosis, Raeleen and her son Tyce moved from Saskatchewan to Alberta for treatment at Calgary's Foothills hospital and the Tom Baker cancer centre. Since then she has undergone numerous surgeries, impacting every major organ in her abdomen, to fight this cancer and extend her life. Raeleen is using the time she has left to raise awareness of the dangers of asbestos so that no Canadian has to go through what she and her family have gone through. I want to thank her for her passionate advocacy and for allowing me to share some of her story today. I now ask Raeleen and her guests to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. [Standing ovation]

1:40

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you the members of the Hindu Society of Alberta. Congratulations on their 50th anniversary. Fifty years ago they were the first East Indian association in western Canada. I would now like them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Today I have the pleasure of introducing to you and through you members of the Edmonton Epilepsy Association. The province has declared March 26 Epilepsy Awareness Day. The purple ribbon is dedicated to spreading awareness about epilepsy and supporting people living with epilepsy. I'd ask that Gary Sampley, executive director of the Edmonton Epilepsy Association; Cheryl Renzenbrink, president of the association; and their association delegation please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other guests? The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise with pleasure today to introduce to you and through you a constituent of mine, Adrienne Webb. Adrienne is a community activist and a fighter for increased access to service dogs in the province of Alberta, and she's the secretary of Respect the Service Dog. She's been diligently working with my office in Edmonton-Rutherford and others in Edmonton in order to see a brighter future for those who need access to certified service animals. Alongside her today is her service dog, Jellybean. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

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

Serenity and the Child Intervention System

Mr. Sucha: Thank you Madam Speaker. This morning I was devastated when I saw the front page of the *Edmonton Journal*. I, like many Albertans, will never forget the first time I heard Serenity's story. I'll never forget the outrage that I felt that our system did not protect this little girl. I will never forget the passion I witnessed in this Assembly from all members.

Serenity's mother shared these photos because she doesn't want her daughter to be forgotten, and, Madam Speaker, I will not forget her. As many of my colleagues know, I am a father of three wonderful children, and as a parent these photos are particularly hard for me to see. It's up to all of us to work together and protect children we have a shared responsibility to care for.

For the past two months I have been a member of the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention, and it may be one of the most important jobs I have in this Assembly. As we focus on strengthening the Alberta child death review process, I am reminded of how important it is that we make sure this system does what it is intended to do, that it serves not only as a reminder of those children we have lost but as a call to action to improve our system in whatever way we can to prevent further tragic losses. It is a call to all members of this House to be united in our commitment to address poverty and historical injustices and to ensure families have the supports they need.

As we've seen an OCYA investigation into Serenity and heard various internal reviews into this case, it is clear that our system can and must be improved, and while we feel many things when we see these photos and hear these stories, we must never feel hopeless or helpless because we have work to do, all of us.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to stay committed to working together to make these changes to our child intervention system that have been needed for so long.

Thank you.

Electric Power Prices

Mr. Hunter: Madam Speaker, in Charles Dickens' story we read of Ebenezer Scrooge, who meets three ghosts: the ghosts of Christmas past, Christmas present, and Christmas future. An article in the *Financial Post* reminded me of the part where Scrooge meets the ghost of Christmas future. We have an opportunity to look into our future through the lens of Ontario's actions, and it's scary stuff indeed.

It once boasted one of the continent's lowest electricity rates. One business had their electricity bill double from last year, to over \$49,000. On January 1 Ontario brought in cap and trade, an environmental initiative that hikes energy costs for businesses that burn natural gas or fuel. Manufacturers in Ontario spent money

switching their plants to electricity from natural gas in order to access the government grants. Now electricity is so outrageously expensive that manufacturers are wondering how they can keep their doors open.

Mississippi and Ohio, to name a few states, are actively calling manufacturers from Ontario in an attempt to lure them south. And why not? Mississippi's power rates are about one-third of those of Ontario. The city of Toronto's statistics show that it has lost 20 per cent of its manufacturing jobs in the past decade. Twenty per cent, Madam Speaker. Every power bill in Ontario comes with a global adjustment charge that eats up over 50 per cent of the bill. Included in the charge are Ontario's payments to solar and wind energy makers at far more than the market rate. Even the cost of replacing light bulbs with LEDs are in there and – you guessed it – Ecofitt is right there at the trough.

Why would this government follow in the footsteps of that failed Ontario model? Madam Speaker, I am hearing everywhere I go that Albertans are happy that conservatives are working to get together because Albertans are so ready to send this destructive NDP government packing in the next election.

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

Women's Reproductive Rights

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the mid-90s I made one of the toughest decisions of my life. I was pregnant and did what thousands of Canadian women have done before me. I made the decision to have an abortion.

The morning I went to the Royal Alexandra hospital I was so lost and confused by the signage because there wasn't any. I was intimidated by the amount of security. It was over quickly, and at the same time it wasn't. My life went on; the stigma remained. It's important to talk about the stigma because even though women in this country have won hard-fought reproductive rights, those rights are still overshadowed by partisan misinformation. Dog-whistle politics.

It was only in 1969 that birth control and abortion were decriminalized. Until 1988 abortions were illegal. Chants of, "Lock her up" were real. Federal law dictates legality; however, the provinces set health care policy and influence access. We continue to see worrisome signals that women's reproductive rights are being questioned by those hungry for power.

Certain politicians hide behind spin on this subject, but we see their voting records. We are told not to talk about it, not to reopen debate. They say it is just an attempt to hijack the conversation. No. These are not lifestyle decisions. These are heart-wrenching and life-and-death decisions in many cases made by a woman and her doctor.

I chose to share my experience on social media, and so many women reached out to me after that. Not one regretted the decision. They were just afraid of abuse, so they keep their secrets. There is no shame in expressing and exercising our rights over our bodies.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Oral Question Period

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Federal Budget

Mr. Jean: Now, I know that the Premier has been busy auditioning for the job of Leader of the Opposition in Saskatchewan, but yesterday Ottawa delivered another kick in the teeth to our energy

sector here in Alberta. Even if she knows that Albertans are going to vote her out after the next election, instead of rubber-stamping Ottawa's massive tax increases that include jacking up taxes for Alberta's oil and gas industry, she could maybe stick up for our province for once. How could she possibly say that Ottawa's budget was good news for Alberta?

1:50

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In fact, with respect to the tax changes in the oil and gas sector that the member is talking about, what we've indicated is that we are studying the matter, and we are going to be doing more advocacy on them because the bad news with respect to those is scheduled to start in about 2020. In the meantime this year, though, we got \$30 million as a result of advocacy by this government in order to support orphan well reclamation. That came from working with members in the oil and gas sector, asking what it was they needed and what we could do to help, and we did that.

Mr. Jean: Wow, Madam Speaker. Can you imagine? Thirty million dollars: that's about the same amount as the GST on our new carbon tax that we send to Ottawa every year.

This is serious. Eighty-one thousand full-time jobs have been lost under the NDP's watch, and the Premier was completely silent yesterday. It's embarrassing. It sends a bad signal; it puts us at a further disadvantage to the United States: that's Tim McMillan from CAPP, and he's right. This will hurt our small oil and gas producers right here in Alberta and, ultimately, Albertans. I'll translate for the Premier. That means fewer jobs for Albertans, less investment in our province as capital flees to the United States. What does she have to say to the men and women in this province who will now lose work?

Ms Notley: Madam Speaker, what I can say is that our government has been hard at work standing up for our oil and gas sector and standing up for the people who work in it. I've been doing that, first of all, by ensuring that we can make real progress on the orphan well file in order to get people back to work right away. As well, what we've done is we've worked with the federal government to get approval on two pipelines – two pipelines – tens of thousands of jobs. That's the kind of work that we are doing each and every day.

Mr. Jean: Wow. We get approval, and Bombardier gets \$400 million.

What Alberta got yesterday was absolutely peanuts. It is barely more money than the GST Ottawa is getting on the NDP's new carbon tax. Albertans send \$24 billion more to Ottawa than we get back in transfers just about every single year. What do Albertans get for this generosity? Well, our Premier is endorsing Ottawa's plans for crippling carbon taxes, \$2,500 per household, Madam Speaker, and now tax hikes to our oil and gas sector while we have record unemployment. Who does she care about more, the Prime Minister's office or Albertans?

Ms Notley: Madam Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. I care about Albertans, and that is why I chose not to stand in the corner and yell at Ottawa. I chose instead to work with Ottawa in order to get Albertans two pipelines – two pipelines – which are absolutely fundamental to the economic growth and prosperity of this province, and that is what we will continue to do.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. Second main question.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

Mr. Jean: Talk is cheap, Madam Speaker. If the NDP ever had time to get back to governing in Alberta, here are some things they should actually start worrying about. Alberta will now have the highest business taxes in western Canada at the end of this year. The carbon tax is going up by 50 per cent this year and is only making things much more expensive for all Albertans in every facet of life. The U.S. has no carbon tax and is cutting their business taxes big time. That's less capital, less investment, and less jobs here in Alberta. Does the Premier even realize that this is a problem for the people of Alberta?

Ms Notley: Madam Speaker, what we know is what a tax on everything actually looks like. Thanks to the platform of the conservative party that was just released yesterday to the east of us, we now know that it looks like a 6 per cent tax on every bit of construction done in the province. You know what that does? It pulls money out of the economy, and it kills jobs, and that's the plan that the folks over there will not come clean with Albertans on.

Mr. Jean: Madam Speaker, why won't our own Premier focus on Alberta instead of some other province across Canada?

Alberta is quickly becoming the fiscal basket case of Canada. The NDP will have increased the size of government in Alberta by \$9 billion when it's all said and done. Nine billion dollars. If the Premier wants to compare budget plans, the NDP's looks a lot like Ontario's, a carbon copy I might add, crippling levels of debt, taxation, and green experiments. It's been a disaster in Ontario, and it will not work in Alberta. Debt means less for programs, higher taxes, and a weaker economy. Why doesn't the Premier get it?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Madam Speaker, yesterday the Saskatchewan government popped the opposition's balloon and released the Wildrose conservative platform. You know what? There's huge taxes on everything from job-creating construction to children's clothes, a 6 per cent tax increase, massive cuts to education, and taxes. And you know why? All so that they can give a tax break to the top 10 per cent of people living in that province. That's their plan, and I would like them to tell Albertans why they should support that.

Mr. Jean: I've never heard anything more hypocritical than what I've heard from the Premier over the last 24 hours. She's brought in a carbon tax that literally takes billions of dollars out of the pockets of hard-working Albertans every single year. Heating bills and gas prices at the pump will go up. Madam Speaker, her policies have helped destroy jobs and businesses, big and small. Coal workers, farmers, ranchers, energy workers in Alberta: all out of work as a result of their policies. How, then, can the Premier have the nerve to actually suggest that her policies are helping families in Alberta, with her record? It's disgusting.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, when the price of oil internationally went down, we had two choices. Two choices. We could stand up for Albertans. We could have their backs. We could support job creation. We could ensure more affordability for those families who are struggling, and we could support important public services. Or we could adopt the Wildrose conservative plan. We could jack prices and taxes up for everybody. We could slash education and health care. We could do that all so that we could give a tax break to the top 10 per cent of the citizens. You know what? We chose the first option, and that's what Albertans voted for.

The Deputy Speaker: Third main question. Rimbev-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Serenity and the Child Intervention System

Mr. Nixon: Let me quote Serenity's mom: reports can be hidden by the government; these pictures can't. The pictures she refers to show a dying 4-year-old girl emaciated with welts, cuts, and deep bruises that extended down the length of her leg. Madam Speaker, I will keep standing in this House and asking for answers and justice for Serenity and her family. I will keep asking until someone is held accountable and until Albertans get answers. Will the Premier tell Albertans when the people responsible for this heinous crime will be held accountable for raping, starving, and beating this precious little girl to death?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When I first heard the story of Serenity, my heart was completely broken. When I saw those pictures in the paper, same thing. My heart was broken all over again. Clearly, everyone in this House was outraged by what happened. It was not okay. Her death in 2014 identified major issues in our system, and that is why our Premier ensured that there was a Minister of Children's Services. That's why every member of this House committed to getting it right, and I'm thankful for the participation of all members of this House and commitment to the ministerial panel.

Mr. Nixon: Albertans are demanding criminal charges, but we also need answers from the ministry. Policies were broken when Serenity was placed in a home without all the adult residents undergoing a criminal record check. Warnings were expressed about Serenity's well-being, and we now know that no one followed up. A panel discussing policy is not helpful if the policies aren't followed. Will the minister tell us if anyone ever gets punished for ignoring policies, and if not, how in the world her panel's work is going to make a difference?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Once again, it was completely unacceptable, the outcome that happened for Serenity. Her story has touched all of us. Clearly, her death in 2014 showed us that the system was completely broken. There were clearly systemic challenges. Our staff did not have the support they needed to take care of Alberta's children. I'm committing to make sure they have every support that they need to do the work that needs to be done, that they are so committed to do, which is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children that they are responsible for.

Mr. Nixon: This minister has a responsibility to tell Albertans what happened and to make sure it never happens again. On March 14 the minister told the Member from Calgary-West: "Absolutely we are reviewing Serenity's death. Absolutely." Madam Speaker, there is no evidence that such a review is under way. Will the minister please confirm who exactly "we" is referring to, and will she tell Albertans what she – what she – is doing to stop this sort of situation from ever happening again?

2:00

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The reason that we know about what happened to Serenity – and I'm so very thankful to the Child and Youth Advocate for the report that he did as an independent officer of the Legislature. Also, the statutory director continues to do the internal review that's expected in terms of all

these situations. Everyone was touched by that, including all of the committed staff of Children's Services. We continue to ensure and move forward along with the Child and Youth Advocate, along with the panel, along with all of those interested to ensure . . .

Mr. McIver: Madam Speaker, like my colleague who sits on the children in care panel with me, I felt shock, anger, and profound sadness over what happened to Serenity, as detailed in Paula Simon's column. On the panel Serenity's case has been raised and each time immediately shut down by the chair under orders from the minister. Hiding the problem is no way to find a solution. To the Premier: will you instruct your Minister of Children's Services to allow questions related to Serenity's case to be asked and answered so we can work together to avoid a recurrence?

Ms Notley: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows that when he first proposed the committee, we sat down, and we talked about the mandate of the committee. It, of course, grew out of a collective concern, a collective shock about the tragedy of Serenity's circumstances and the need for all of us to work together on the solutions rather than trying to politicize and score political points and not make progress. We desperately want to try to make progress. The member opposite knows that the matter is being investigated by the RCMP. The member opposite knows that the matter is being investigated internally. The member opposite knows that the matter is being . . .

Mr. McIver: That was a difficult, difficult refusal to hear, Madam Speaker.

Serenity died not because established protocols are flawed, although they are, but because those protocols were not followed. In other words, one or more employees made a fatal error in judgment. Nobody wants a witch hunt, but I think it's important to ask the Premier how she thinks anything will change if we can't publicly examine what happened in the year up to Serenity's death. To the Premier: is the person or persons who made the errors in judgment contributing to Serenity's abuse and death still making judgments affecting children in care, and if so, why?

Ms Notley: Madam Speaker, as I was in the process of saying – the notion that the member opposite wants us to simply look at what happened after Serenity's death is troubling. In fact, if we're going to get to the fundamental issues that are going to solve this, we need to look at them holistically. We made a decision with respect to all the members of the committee to focus first on coming up with a better death review process, to get that done, and then to go into the larger considerations of the issues we need to manage, all of which would involve an opportunity to discuss the details of not only Serenity's tragedy but a lot of them. But we need to take time to do it carefully.

Mr. McIver: Again a refusal to say that the people who were responsible for Serenity are still not in charge of children.

According to the column child workers removed Serenity from a foster home where they were thriving and placed her with relatives who did not receive kinship care training. A woeful job was done on background checks on the adults living in the residence, and reports of potential mistreatment were not investigated, but that was given full legal custody. I know that working with kids in care is tough, but in light of the irresponsible actions around Serenity's death under your leadership, Premier, have there been or will there ever be any consequences at all for Serenity?

Ms Notley: Well, Madam Speaker, to be clear, the RCMP have the file. They are investigating it. They are speaking with the Crown,

and they will tell us what their recommendations are. It is not our job to direct the RCMP, nor is it our job to direct the Crown in terms of how they dispense with cases. I mean, this happened a year and a half before the last election, so the member opposite needs to understand that what we have to do together is to fix the system and not focus on trying to score political points. That is what the committee is trying to do.

The Deputy Speaker: Just a reminder, hon. members, that for the next set of questions there will be no preambles on supplementaries.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Tourism Promotion

Mr. Kleinstuber: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last year tourism was a big contributor to the Alberta economy. As a Calgarian this is great news, given that many of my constituents work in the tourism industry and at the Calgary airport as airline agents, ground staff, CATSA, CBSA, commissary, and cargo, and then there are those that work around the neighbouring hotels. To the Minister of Culture and Tourism: how is Budget 2017 supporting the tourism industry in Calgary?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We know that tourism makes life better for Albertans by creating good jobs and diversifying our economy. I'm very proud to say that Budget 2017 provides \$60.8 million in funding support to further grow Alberta's tourism destinations for domestic and international travellers. This includes getting ready for our inaugural direct flight from Mexico City to Calgary, which is scheduled by Aeromexico for June of this year. It also includes investments in world-class tourism infrastructure such as the Calgary Zoo as well as capital investments in Calgary's WinSport and other places around the city. We're very proud of the work that we've done.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Kleinstuber: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a former airline professional I think that the new direct flight from Mexico City to Calgary by Aeromexico is great news not only for the airline industry but for Alberta tourism as well. To the same minister: what effect will the newly scheduled flight have on my constituents working or seeking opportunities in Calgary?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm proud to say that as a former airline professional myself I, too, am very excited by this new flight. These flights will make life better for Albertans by boosting tourism in addition to creating investment, trade, and cultural opportunities for Albertans between our two countries. The new Aeromexico flight from Calgary to Mexico City is estimated to create about 300 new jobs and generate \$46 million in economic output for this province, something I'm very, very proud to do.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Kleinstuber: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given Alberta's diverse landscape are there any potential areas that you are looking at as new tourism hot spots outside the already sought-after mountain parks?

Miranda: Madam Speaker, we continue to make strategic investments and work with industry stakeholders to grow tourism

destinations across the province and make life better for all Albertans. Our focus will be placed on agritourism, cultural attractions, indigenous tourism development, and outdoor and nature-based tourism opportunities. We'll also continue to work with Travel Alberta and the tourism industry to encourage visitors to travel beyond the mountain parks and discover all the beautiful, hidden gems that our province has to offer.

Thank you.

Budget 2017

Mr. Fildebrandt: The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money. When a government runs deficits, it eventually has to pay the piper. To fix the problem, we can either rip off the Band-Aid, or we can peel it off slowly, prolonging the pain, potentially reopening the wound. We are entering our 10th consecutive year of deficits, and the minister has no credible plan to balance the budget within the next decade. Is the minister knowingly ignoring the deficit with an expectation that he won't be here in two years?

Mr. Ceci: Well, thank you very much for the question. Madam Speaker, you know, the deficit is an issue for us, of course. We're prudently and thoughtfully working to bring that down, and we're doing that because that's in the best interest of Albertans. If we want to see the problems that are created when you quickly pull down a deficit, look east, because the people of Saskatchewan are going to be suffering. Even Gainer the Gopher is not safe in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Fildebrandt: And rats are not safe either, Madam Speaker.

Given that the minister was not feeling very much love from the opposition, he went to meet with the Calgary Chamber of commerce on Monday, but there wasn't very much love there either. They said that they were disappointed with this government's . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, that sounds like a preamble to me. Could you please get to the question?

Mr. Fildebrandt: Madam, I said "given."

They said that they were disappointed with this government for failing to take any action. Given that the Calgary Chamber of commerce didn't like this budget and Calgarians don't like this budget and this government is out of touch with Calgarians, has the NDP written off Calgary already?

2:10

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much again for the question. Madam Speaker, you know, I did have a conversation with the president of the Calgary Chamber of commerce, and that person said that he's been rough on every government forever. He talked about being challenging to the Prentice government. He talked about the same thing with the Redford government, so we're no different. We're working. We've got the backs of Albertans. We are protecting services. We are working to bring down the deficit thoughtfully and prudently. That is in the best interest of Albertans and Calgarians.

Mr. Fildebrandt: They are no different than the Redford government, Madam Speaker.

Given, Madam Speaker, that this government has a lousy record of meeting its budget targets and that under this budget our debt is set to reach an incredible \$71 billion by 2019 in the best-case scenario and given that this scenario requires oil to be at least \$68 a barrel and GDP growth over 6 per cent and given that the minister is so keen to gamble with Alberta's future, let's make a bet. I'll give

the minister 2 to 1 odds on 20 bucks that by 2019 the debt will exceed \$71 billion.

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Point of order noted.

Mr. Ceci: Madam Speaker, I think that I'm always generous with money, but it's my own money that I'm generous with, never taxpayers' money. Although I do have some friends who would say that there's no truth to the first statement, they would say there's plenty of truth to the second statement.

Dr. Cooke Extended Care Centre in Lloydminster

Dr. Starke: Madam Speaker, long-term care is a major concern for people across Alberta. The residents of Lloydminster were very pleased when the new Lloydminster extended care centre opened in 2015, so they noted with some interest and puzzlement that \$6 million has been allocated for that facility over the next three years in the Health ministry's five-year capital plan. They asked me: why is \$6 million being spent on a brand new facility? Can the Health minister confirm for the citizens of Lloydminster what the \$6 million in the capital plan is being spent on?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd be very happy to get the specific details. Often what happens with contracts when a new facility is being built is that there are holdovers based on money being held back for finalizations to be done to achieve the contract conditions, so sometimes there are out-years where the contractor still needs to provide services to ensure that everything has met the criteria. I'd be happy to follow up with the specific details about the new Dr. Cooke in the community of Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, Madam Speaker, it's not, in fact, the new Dr. Cooke. It's the old Dr. Cooke that they're talking about. The fate of that extended care centre, specifically the central and south wings, has been a major concern of the citizens of Lloydminster for some time. Given that the minister visited Lloydminster in July 2015 and indicated that no final decision would be made on the old Dr. Cooke without fulsome community consultation and given that that consultation has not yet happened, to the minister: when will you conduct the fulsome community consultation that you promised the citizens of Lloydminster nearly two years ago?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The member is right that in my very first summer as Health minister I took it upon myself to visit the community and, alongside the member opposite, met with a number of people from the community. He is right in his iteration of the facts of that day. As a result, I've had the CEO of Alberta Health Services and my deputy minister both go and visit Lloydminster and meet with a number of individuals, and they are working on a further engagement plan. Absolutely, I signed up for this job to do things with community, and we look forward to working with them.

Dr. Starke: Well, Madam Speaker, we're certainly looking forward to that.

Given that the CEO of AHS as well as the deputy minister, as the minister just said, visited Lloydminster last October and given that those meetings were very short and occurred with only a very small,

hand-selected group of local individuals and given that the community still does not feel that the government has done the proper consultation with regard to the Dr. Cooke, to the minister: can you confirm whether the \$6 million will be used for repurposing the Dr. Cooke extended care centre, or is the money there to pay for some other course of action?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. I have followed up with both of the officials that were identified and said that I believe we need to have further consultation with the community. I can tell you, though, that when I had a chance to tour that facility alongside the member opposite, it certainly didn't appear to be the kind of place that would have longevity or a quality of life moving forward for residents if it were to continue as a long-term care facility. We want to make sure that they can get into the bathroom in a wheelchair, that staff can use a lift and take care of the patients in the facility. Certainly, this old facility is past its best-before date, but we're going to work with the community to figure out the best path as we move forward, and I invite the member opposite to help us with that.

Job Creation and Unemployment

Mr. Panda: Madam Speaker, last year the Minister of Economic Development and Trade introduced his 100,000 jobs plan for Alberta. Albertans were excited for this plan until we all found out what it actually meant. Now, a year later, Alberta has shed 81,000 jobs, well on the way to his goal of killing 100,000 jobs. How soon does the minister plan to reach his goal of killing 100,000 jobs, and why did the Premier give him this goal?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much for the question, Madam Speaker. You know, with regard to the challenging times that Alberta is in, the government is making life better for Albertans by continuing to invest in capital, by continuing to diversify our economy. We are supporting new capital coming to the fore by the Alberta investor tax credit, which is offering opportunities for tax credits for investment that will help diversify our economy. As well, once those companies have that money, they're going to be able to get some additional tax credits to buy capital so that they can diversify their capital needs.

Thank you.

Mr. Panda: Given that the NDP talking points accused the opposition of slashing and burning while they're the ones slashing and burning the economy with the carbon tax, increases to corporate and personal taxes, suing power companies, and shutting down clean coal mines and given that the 100,000 job-killing plan is not telling the private businesses to hire the masses of unemployed Albertans that need to get back to work, what is the minister's target for killing jobs next year? Why is he standing in the way of creating jobs?

Mr. Ceci: This side of the House is standing with Albertans, Madam Speaker. We are ensuring that there's an opportunity to invest across this province, and two pipelines will draw that money into this province for investment. We're also protecting services while Albertans are challenged. We have their back. That side would cut many programs and services just like Saskatchewan talks about. I want to say that with regard to investment it's starting to turn around: 2.6 per cent GDP growth in this province; 0.8 per cent in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Panda: Given that under the NDP 4,000 jobs were lost at Precision Drilling, 1,700 lost at Suncor, 14,000 jobs lost at Husky, 1,000 more lost at Shell, TransCanada, Cenovus and just yesterday, Madam Speaker, a thousand jobs were lost at Enbridge and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, to the question, please.

Mr. Panda: . . . given that there is the NDP fantasy and there is the hard economic reality, Calgarians and Albertans want to know: when will this government end their 100,000 job-killing plan?

Mr. Ceci: Madam Speaker, it just amazes me. The other side doesn't seem to understand that there's been a two-year recession brought on by the drop in world oil prices. That was not a plan from this side. That had been occurring before we got to office. We've been working to invest in this province, to diversify our economy, and to support Albertans. Why won't they support Albertans?

2:20

High-risk Offenders

Mr. Cooper: Last week repeat child sex offender Curtis Poburan was released into Edmonton for the fourth time, and the Edmonton Police Service has rightly warned Albertans that he's a high risk and a danger to society. Minister, Albertans have the right to know: if dangerous and violent pedophiles like Curtis Poburan reoffend, will backlogged courtrooms and failed NDP policies triage him out of facing a judge?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As the member is well aware, court backlogs that had built up over a long time were the case when we came into government. The Jordan decision came down, and it represented a marked change in the law. We had two options. We could ensure that people, exactly like the person referenced by the member opposite, saw their trial in a timely manner by focusing on serious and violent matters with our triage protocol and by investing resources that the other side wouldn't have invested, or we could have let the decision just take its course on its own.

Thank you.

Mr. Cooper: Given that the Alberta Justice website shows 85 high-risk offenders in Alberta, with 48 of those here in the Edmonton area, and given that victims who have suffered at the hands of those criminals are now forced to live in communities with those who have preyed upon them, Minister, who is responsible for monitoring high-risk offenders, and who is answerable when they reoffend?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We're actually very proud that here in Alberta our Crown prosecution system brings more of these dangerous and violent offender applications because those give us the ability to hold people in jail for longer. They give us the ability to monitor violent offenders when they are released by the system. So I'm very pleased that we make those applications, and I'm very proud of the job that our Crown does and that we do throughout our ministry to make sure that we're monitoring these offenders.

Mr. Cooper: Given that the tracking of dangerous offenders is critical to the safety and peace of mind of Alberta victims and since we've seen a steep increase in the rate of violent crimes in our province, what is the NDP doing to put the right tools into the hands

of law enforcement officers like ankle bracelets to ensure criminals that need to be tracked will be tracked?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am very proud of the work that this government has done since coming into office to ensure that our justice system is used in a proportionate way to ensure that the justice system can focus on the most serious and violent offenders. In order to ensure that, we need to do things like invest in mental health supports. We need to do things like invest in social housing. Those things take people out of the system who don't belong there and allow us to focus on serious and violent offenders. And they would cut them.

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

Mountain Pine Beetle Control

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Alberta's forest producers are working to stop the spread of mountain pine beetle. These producers are making concerted efforts to harvest affected timber first and through innovative processes make use of the trees that have been infested with the beetle. If not stopped, the pine beetle could destroy our forests and threaten the environment and economy. To the minister of forestry: to what extent are you supporting the efforts of the forest industry against the mountain pine beetle?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. Our government remains committed to the control of the mountain pine beetle. The member is right. The mountain pine beetle is prevalent still within the province. There are approximately 10 contractors that do work throughout the winter in taking out infected trees. That is our most effective form of control. This year, by the end of this month, they will have taken out and harvested about 90,000 trees, again, the most effective form of control that we have.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that the mountain pine beetle is threatening many forests in Jasper national park and given that these parks, although they are in Alberta, are managed under the direction of the federal government, to the minister: to what extent are you working with your federal counterpart to create a strategy for the pine beetle in the national parks of Alberta?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question. There's a bit of a good story, bad story here. The infestation that was happening in the Whitecourt-Grande Prairie area is actually about a 35 per cent decrease in what it had been, so our efforts there have been successful. As well, Mother Nature has played a role there. The bad story of that – the member is absolutely right – is that the infestation in the Hinton-Edson area has gotten worse. Depending on what area you are in, it's one to four times as bad as it had been. So we're going to be concentrating our efforts to control the mountain pine beetle in that area in particular. As for

the mountain pine beetles coming out of the national park, I'm afraid they have come out. They're infesting that area now.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that last year Alberta suffered devastating fires in Fort McMurray and given that the damage from the pine beetles leaves forests extremely vulnerable to fires and given that the national parks are not clearing out trees infested with the beetle, so these large areas are just matches waiting to be struck, to the minister: how are you ensuring the safety of Albertans in areas like Hinton when the beetle-damaged trees in Jasper national park could fuel another Fort McMurray fire?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the important question. My understanding is that there's a new superintendent in Jasper national park that is looking at this issue a little more seriously than perhaps another supervisor of the park had. Our staff continues to work with the staff of Jasper national park to see what more can be done. At the same time as a department what we do have control over is the control of the infestation in the Hinton-Edson area. Like I said before, we're going to concentrate our efforts there over the coming years as we see that infestation as amongst the worst in the province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Support for Seniors

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Families in Edmonton-Castle Downs rely on the seniors' facilities to provide the space and support that their loved ones require, so it is no surprise that a significant concern raised by the constituents is the wait times to get into these facilities. Given that Edmonton is currently in a seniors' facility deficit, to the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what approaches has this government taken to ensure that seniors are supported and have accessible, safe, and affordable housing options?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Seniors built this province, and they deserve to retire in dignity. That's why our government is investing \$1.2 billion over five years in the seniors' lodges and affordable housing. I'm proud to say that over 40 projects are currently on the go. Our government is investing in seniors. The opposition wants reckless cuts. We are making life better. They are making life worse for seniors.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Another concern among my constituents is programs that are offered to independent seniors. To the same minister: what supports are available for seniors wanting to stay in their communities, especially those who are single or widowed?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you. Seniors want to age in a community close to family and friends, and our government supports this. I'm

so proud that Budget 2017 is protecting and improving seniors' programs like the Alberta seniors' benefit. We also increased funding to the seniors' home adaptation repair program, a program that supports seniors with \$40,000 in low-interest home equity loans. Madam Speaker, when we introduced this program to support seniors, the opposition voted against it. Our government is protecting programs for seniors. They want to cut them.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that information about these programs and services is most easily accessed online and given that not everyone has access to computers, to the same minister: how is the government ensuring that information remains accessible to all Albertans?

Ms Sigurdson: Every Albertan receives an information package through the mail that provides full details of seniors' programs before they reach 65. The updated information guide will be available in July 2017. But, Madam Speaker, I want to tell you what the seniors' information package would look like if it were the opposition's. It would be much thinner than ours because they would be recklessly cutting programs. We're investing in seniors in this province. They would be cutting. We're building seniors' housing. They'd be cutting that.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Job Creation and Unemployment *(continued)*

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For the past quarter century Alberta's unemployment rate has not exceeded the national average, but all that went out the window when the NDP came to power. Now our unemployment rate sits at a daunting 8.3 per cent. On Monday the Economic Development and Trade minister said, "Our jobs plan is working." To the Premier: with more than 80,000 jobs lost, 100,000 on EI, and an unemployment rate that exceeds the national average, do you really think that your plan is working?

2:30

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Let me tell you about the Wildrose plan. The Wildrose plan is to cut \$9 billion from construction, which would mean construction jobs were lost in this province instead of supported and moving forward. The Wildrose plan is to cut operating funding, billions of dollars, which would mean that public sector, health care, education, all of these jobs as well as the services that families count on day in and day out would be lost. Our jobs plan is working. We're continuing to add more jobs and stimulate areas of the economy so that Alberta families know that their government is here and that we have their backs.

The Deputy Speaker: I may be mistaken, but I thought I heard someone on this side say: tell the truth. I'm hoping I was mistaken.

Mr. Barnes: Madam Speaker, given that employment is on the rise in energy-dependent provinces like B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and given that both Saskatchewan and Manitoba managed to keep their deficits below a billion dollars while B.C. is set to deliver its fifth straight balanced budget, does the Premier think that maybe, just maybe, her bad policies and not oil prices are to blame for the fact that under this NDP government's watch Alberta has fallen completely off the rails?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Wildrose cannot be trusted to support Alberta families. They're working to make life more expensive. They want us to cut minimum wage. They want us to jack up tuition for postsecondary institutions. They want us to pretend that we don't care. They don't want to move forward with child care. On this side of the House we've got Albertans' backs. We're making sure that even though the price of oil has dropped, we're not turning our backs on Alberta families. We're finding ways to make their life more affordable, not worse, as the members opposite keep lobbying for every day in this House. Enough is enough.

Mr. Barnes: Madam Speaker, we want Albertans back to work. This government has one plan: hope and pray for oil prices and GDP to go up. Meanwhile Albertans are suffering. Given that in February the number of people seeking employment dropped by 14,000 people and given that ATB Financial now advertises to assist Albertans facing hard times and notes this fall ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, to the question, please.

Mr. Barnes: ... indicates that those in search of work are starting to feel discouraged, is this NDP government ashamed that under their gross mismanagement of this province Albertans have lost hope?

Ms Hoffman: Madam Speaker, Albertans are strong. Albertans are resilient. Albertans are building a better country one day at a time. That's why we are supporting those young Albertans by hiring teachers to go into their classrooms. That's why we're supporting aging Albertans by making sure that we build 2,000 long-term care and dementia spaces so that they have somewhere to age with dignity. That's why we're increasing home care supports so that people can live at home in a respectful, dignified manner. If you want to talk about what's happening in some of those other provinces, bring it on, but I have to say that we're proud to have Albertans' backs.

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

Youth Transitioning Out of Care

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Madam Speaker. All Albertans know about Serenity's tragedy, and recently the office of the Child and Youth Advocate reviewed the tragic case of Peter, who was murdered nine months after child intervention involvement had ended. Quoting from the report, "Peter asked for help many times; and, many times he voiced his anxiety about reaching adulthood without a plan, alone and struggling with addictions." To the Minister of Children's Services: since those leaving the child welfare system are vulnerable and require resources, what specific initiatives are you undertaking to address the gaps in services found during transition?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The death of that young man was a tragic loss. It shows a number of things, including the impact of inter-generational trauma on our indigenous peoples and reminds us of the need to work towards reconciliation. It also talks to us about the importance of building caring relationships with the young people that we work with. It is so critical that we ensure that we are able to support them as they move to young adults. You know, moving to

adulthood is hard for anyone, but for these kids it is a mountainous challenge, and I commit to working with them.

Mr. Rodney: Given that the report highlights the horrors that this young man experienced, including the loss of his parents and grandparents before he was 15, his brother's fatal overdose when he was 17 and given the fact that he often did not have a stable, safe place to go and given that the previous report from December 2015 also called for the ministry to ensure that young people within the system who have experienced trauma are adequately assessed and offered proper resources, again to the minister: what is your government doing today to improve outcomes for children in care who have experienced traumatic events so that what happened with Peter just never happens to anyone else ever again?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, that series of traumatic events is the real life of many youth that I talk to in my own riding. What happens to these children, what happens to many of our indigenous youth is so traumatic, and they absolutely need support. We've begun implementing changes to better recognize and address the long-term impacts of grief, trauma, and loss on the youth that we support, and we will continue to work with the Child and Youth Advocate to strengthen the ways that we support Alberta's children and youth.

Mr. Rodney: Given that many stakeholders have called upon the government to give the office of the Child and Youth Advocate greater teeth in having their recommendations acted upon in a concrete manner by the government and given that following recommendations from the office in a serious and expedient manner would improve the system for all children, again to the minister. It is too late for Peter, but it's not too late for other children in transition. Are you considering expanding the powers of the Child and Youth Advocate to ensure that all recommendations are addressed and acted upon in a timely and meaningful manner?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly, in the report the advocate noted that transition policies were in place. However, every young person faces different challenges, and we need to recognize their unique circumstances. I met with the Child and Youth Advocate just this morning and had an incredibly productive meeting as we committed to working collaboratively together in full recognition of the fact that we both desperately want the same thing, and that is to improve the outcomes for Alberta's children in care. I commit to working as closely as I can with him to make sure that that happens.

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

Rockyview General Hospital

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Residents in my constituency of Calgary-Glenmore often raise concerns about the state of nearby hospital facilities, which can be congested with lengthy wait times. Given that the government has also earmarked \$600 million over the next four years for infrastructure maintenance on existing health facilities, what improvements can my constituents expect to see at the Rockyview general hospital?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker and to the member for the question and for her advocacy. You know, the folks on the other side like to raise the alarm about deficits, but I never hear their concerns about the serious infrastructure deficits left to our province's buildings and infrastructure. That's what massive cuts do. They leave our hospitals to crumble. That's not what we believe in on this side. We are investing \$143 million this year alone in infrastructure upgrades to help facilities. That means new floors, improved security systems, and an updated electricity generator for the Rockyview. That's not flashy, but it's critical to keeping our health facilities running and making life better for Albertans.

The Deputy Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, hon. minister, and thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that we know Calgary is facing a high rate of mental health crises, to the Associate Minister of Health: what resources are available for people needing mental health interventions and supports at the Rockyview hospital?

Ms Payne: Mental health is a top priority for our government, and we are improving the entire health care system to ensure that people have the supports they need in their communities. We are opening a new mental health assessment unit at the Rockyview general hospital to better help mental health patients get the timely care they need. This unit will get people out of the ER and into beds. Then, when they are ready, this unit will help connect people to Rockyview's excellent mental health day programs, community services, and social supports. We believe that the health of Albertans should be central, and we're working to put patients, not systems, first. That's part of our commitment to making life better for Albertans.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that much of the hospital investment in Calgary is going to our world-class cancer centres and to further research, can the Associate Minister of Health please elaborate on how this funding will support work on preventing and treating diseases like ovarian cancer?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

2:40

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We know that Alberta is home to world-class research in health and medicine, and this government is proud to support that work. Budget 2017 allocates \$25 million for cancer research and prevention, which includes innovative clinical trials targeting ovarian cancer through the Tom Baker centre in Calgary and the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton. This work will help detect ovarian cancer sooner and get people into improved treatments faster. I look forward to keeping the member updated as this work progresses and as we continue to make those investments to make life better for Albertans.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Truth and Reconciliation Art Project

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. After the election my constituency office was left with bare walls. As Spruce Grove-St. Albert contains several high schools, we began to co-ordinate with their art programs to host student artwork. This relationship has

provided the office with ever-updating artwork and the students with a great opportunity for public exposure.

In December we hosted one particular art project. The students of the Spruce Grove composite high school did an art project on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this mixed-media project students endeavoured to express what they learned of the realities of the boarding schools. The artwork represents the students' understanding of what truth and reconciliation means to them and a gesture of respect. After hosting this project into January, the project was moved to the Spruce Grove library. Following a blessing and a smudging several students voluntarily came forward to discuss their pieces, the inspiration, and their thoughts on the process.

Madam Speaker, there were a few threads that wove through each of the student's presentations. Images of butterflies having their wings shorn off, of the differences in one boy from the time he entered the school in traditional garments and the time when he left the school, and of the schools themselves were present in many of the pieces. The students spoke about the destruction of indigenous identity, about the challenges of being forced to redefine yourself down to your name, and about the years lost to families as a result of the residential schools.

Madam Speaker, I recently had a conversation with one elder, who said: we are very good at talking about the truth, but we have a lot of work to do towards reconciliation.

Madam Speaker, as we all work through the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and work to implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, it is important to remember that truth needs to be paired with reconciliation. The first steps are uncomfortable, and they are often painful, but projects like this provide a template for that first conversation.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Challenge in the Rockies Hockey Tournament

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I'm delighted to rise to talk about the fourth annual Challenge in the Rockies. This fun hockey event takes place in Hinton and Jasper from March 29 to April 2. It's the result of a vision to host an event that continues to enhance youth sport experience and raise funds for future programming.

This affair is a testament to the dedication of the organizers and the more than 200 volunteers who support the athletes, families, and coaches participating in venues in both Hinton and Jasper. It involves over five days of hockey, with 34 teams from novice to midget, and more than 500 players in more than 90 games. Girls and boys aged four to 18 face off on the ice with a focus on physical literacy and staying active. Games are played strictly for the love of the sport. The Saturday evening game features four Oilers alumni along with six celebrities, including the Hanson brothers, and others celebrating the 40th anniversary of the classic movie *Slap Shot*.

Proceeds from the challenge go to supporting minor sport and recreation across West Yellowhead. As 1,500 people converge in the area, book more than 2,000 hotel rooms, and support local businesses, they will bring thousands of dollars into the local economy.

I would like to thank the organizers, volunteers, and more than 25 sponsors that make this event possible.

Please come on out to West Yellowhead and join us at the Challenge in the Rockies, from March 29 to April 2. I look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you.

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

Violence against Women and Girls

Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On March 8 world-wide communities came together to celebrate the accomplishments of the struggle for equality. Millions marked International Women's Day sharing stories of accomplishments and of hope.

This year that struggle for safety and equality rubbed raw. Only a month ago my family and I lost my dear sister, Victoria, and it was a pain like no other. I know nothing can change what happened to her, but I vowed for her and for my nieces that I would do anything in my power to end violence against women and girls.

Madam Speaker, half of Canadian women have suffered at least one act of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16, and over a quarter have been assaulted by a spouse. Every six days a woman in Canada is killed in domestic violence. In the 66 days that we will sit here in this Chamber, 11 women will die.

Our government has taken action on the work to end gender-based violence, and I'm proud that my private member's bill, the Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015, became law. I have been flooded with messages of gratitude from women leaving violence. Since then 134 Albertans have been able to escape their perpetrators without financial penalty. And the work continues. Our government has introduced Bill 2, an act to eliminate limitation periods for launching a civil claim related to sexual or domestic violence. Survivors should feel empowered to come forward on their own terms when they are ready.

Madam Speaker, our government will continue to work to make change. We will continue to work to make the lives of Albertans better. We will continue to work to support those living with trauma. This is our government, a government for all Albertans.

Thank you.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have two tablings. The first is five copies of a document entitled Taxation Habit Bad for Health. It reminds us that "taxes are the arterial sclerosis of the economy."

Also, I have a tabling of five copies of a letter from a member of the Hotshots curling league. They're concerned about the AGLC's enforcement of the 50-50 rules, and they're requesting that the law allow for draws under \$500 to be exempt.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have the appropriate number of copies to table of a letter received from The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools expressing their concerns about being excluded in Bill 1 despite the fact that they are public schools.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other tablings today?

Hon. members, we had a point of order raised during question period. The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Madam Speaker, I was going to raise a point of order with respect to the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks' use of preambles, but it seemed to be somewhat widespread today, and I think you've dealt with it a couple of times. So I will withdraw the point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: All right. I appreciate you withdrawing the point of order.

2:50 Statement by the Speaker

Preambles to Supplementary Questions

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to offer a little bit of clarification, however, on preambles with the use of “given.” It doesn’t give you blanket permission to just string together a bunch of unrelated comments simply because you’ve said “given” in between them. I’d encourage you, hon. members, to please keep your supplementals relevant to the first question.

Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders
Third Reading

Bill 3
Voluntary Blood Donations Act

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

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s my pleasure to move third reading of Bill 3, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Bill 3 has certainly caused lively debate, and I’m very pleased with the support that it is getting. It’s clear to me that we can all agree that our public blood supply is an important topic that many of you are passionate about.

Bill 3 will ensure that our voluntary donor base does not become eroded. The legislation will ban payment to an individual donor, ban paid blood donation advertising, exempt Canadian Blood Services so they can continue with their current practices and any future activities, provide an exemption for blood given solely for the purpose of research, and provide for inspection and enforcement.

I acknowledge that there are some concerns raised by the opposition, and I would like to respond to a couple; for instance, the funding that Alberta provides for the collection and manufacturing of plasma. In 2016-17 Alberta Health budgeted approximately \$200 million for transfusible blood, fresh plasma, and plasma for manufactured products. Nearly 60 per cent, or \$120 million, of that line will be spent on finished plasma products made from plasma collected both domestically and abroad. This funding helped ensure that Canadian Blood Services could collect voluntary donations of plasma and ensured that there was an adequate supply of plasma in Alberta to meet the demand for transfusions.

In 2015-16 Alberta also spent \$111 million on plasma for manufactured products. This plasma was manufactured into drugs that treat fluid loss in burn patients, transplant recipients, and trauma patients. It treats immune disorders and severe infections, and it also treats bleeding disorders such as hemophilia. We don’t currently have the infrastructure to manufacture these products in Alberta or in Canada. Plasma is a perishable product, and if it’s not used or manufactured in a timely manner, it may go to waste, and we can’t allow that to happen.

The system that Canadian Blood Services has established helps ensure that we have the blood, plasma, and drugs manufactured from plasma that we need when we need them. They do this in part by purchasing plasma products from the international market to meet the Canadian demand. This is why the legislation helps to protect Canadian Blood Services’ ability to continue to manage the national blood system, and for this reason they will be exempt.

The ban on paid donations will help ensure that Alberta patients have secure and reliable access to donated blood when they need it. I need to emphasize, Madam Speaker, that donating blood cannot be viewed as a business venture. We cannot allow our system to be driven by individuals who are only donating to receive a payment. This is not how we protect our vulnerable population and not how we should ensure that products are available to those Albertans who need them when they need them.

Private businesses that pay for donations are looking to sell their product to the highest bidder. This may cause our blood and plasma to go to another country that offers more money for it. Bill 3 will help us support a national blood supply by preventing private clinics that pay their donors for blood donations from setting up in the province.

The legislation will also help prevent Alberta’s voluntary blood donor pool, that Canadian Blood Services relies upon, from being depleted. Supporting our national blood system, operated by Canadian Blood Services, helps ensure we can maintain a sufficient supply of blood and blood products in Canada. A blood donation system based on payment can lead to a disconnected and fragmented national blood system. In addition, financially motivated donors may choose to donate to a private clinic. This may in turn lead to a depleted blood supply as individuals choose private plasma collection clinics instead of donating to the voluntary clinics.

This legislation brings Alberta in line with Ontario and Quebec. These provinces have already banned paid blood donation to protect the voluntary donation system.

It is important to recognize that the World Health Organization also encourages countries to support voluntary blood donation systems. The organization has indicated that this system presents the safest, most reliable source of donation and does not exploit vulnerable populations.

Our blood supply is one of the most important resources we have. Donating blood should not be looked at as a way for Albertans to make money. It’s a valuable public resource that saves lives every day. This legislation is intended to make sure paid donations do not erode the voluntary donation base needed by Canadian Blood Services. With Bill 3 our government will work closely with Canadian Blood Services to ensure Albertans continue to have secure access to this resource when and where it’s needed. We support the voluntary blood donation system.

I’d also just like to add a few quotes from some research from the Ontario Legislature. I’d like to quote Christine Elliott, health critic for the Ontario Conservatives and two-time leadership candidate and wife of the late Jim Flaherty. Elliott said that

blood is a public resource. This value must guide the blood supply system, as voluntary donors are doing it for the benefit of other persons in Canada and not for any other motivations. For this reason, profits should not be made from donated blood, and the operator of the blood system should act as a trustee of this valuable public resource.

This is from the Ontario *Hansard*, March 24, 2014, at 16:40.

The Ontario bill went on to pass unanimously, with PCs, Liberals, and New Democrats all in agreement. Later that year the Ontario PCs went on to campaign unsuccessfully on the promise to abolish 100,000 public-sector jobs. So the notion that the Ontario bill they voted for, or our Alberta bill, is simply a favour to the unions is absurd on its face.

I would like to add my voice to all of the people that have gone before me and encourage every member of this House to support the Voluntary Blood Donations Act. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak on Bill 3 in third reading. You know, really, this boils down to one question and one question very clearly, and that is: should we pay Canadians for donating plasma, or should we continue to pay for plasma products derived from paid American donors, full stop? That is the question at hand here. To bring in other issues is to really cloud that fundamental question.

One of the things that concerns me in this – and we heard it in the speech that was just made – is that there is a concern about two factors. One is – and I'll use the term – "cannibalizing" the volunteer base. The second is risk of viral transmission. Well, let's put the second one to bed right away. In 25 years of collecting plasma and processing it for use in patient care, there has not been a single case of viral transmission due to a plasma transfusion, and that is with the use of a paid or processed plasma product. The safety is ensured by Health Canada, and after what we went through in the '80s, we have one of the most stringent systems in the world. It's one we should be proud of. That is what safeguards patients, and those standards apply whether we are talking about blood products that are collected from voluntary donors or from paid donors. There is no difference in the standard. So to suggest in any way that deriving products from paid donors is in any way more risky than deriving products from voluntary donors is simply false.

The Krever commission 20 years ago recommended going primarily with voluntary blood donors, but it also recognized that a lot of the problems we faced in the '80s were due to problems in the organizations that were doing the blood collection, not in the factor of whether we're using voluntary or paid-for donors. I know there are organizations that are very concerned and are still holding to the recommendations of the Krever inquiry report, a 20-year-old report from a time when plasma use and the use of plasma protein products, processed plasma, was in its infancy. Since that time that use is burgeoning. It's growing by double digits every year. So let's put that one to bed right away.

3:00

The second objection is the one about how it would affect the voluntary donor base. You know, at face value, if you were to walk into a coffee shop and say, "If we started paying people for plasma donations, do you think it would affect the voluntary donor base?" people might say: "Well, yeah. Why would I volunteer if I could get paid for it?" But there's a problem. There's a difference between donating plasma for the purpose of plasma protein products and donating blood or plasma for transfusion purposes.

When you donate blood, you can only do it once every eight weeks if you're a man, once every 12 weeks if you're a woman, and it takes about 20 minutes. If you're donating plasma, it takes 90 minutes, and you do it once a week. Because of those requirements, there is not a single country in the world that has been able to establish a self-sufficiency in plasma supply on a purely voluntary donor basis. Nowhere. It's just simply because of the difference in donation between plasma and blood.

You know, a lot of people aren't aware of that. A lot of people aren't aware that we're purchasing 70 per cent of the plasma products we need in Canada from out of the country, from donors who generally are paid. You know, it also ignores the fact – and we've heard a few times the statistics, one year old, from the facility that is now open in Saskatoon. That's fine, and that should continue to be monitored. But against that one single piece of evidence that it might affect the voluntary donor pool, we have 30 years of evidence in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, where there's been a paid-for plasma collection centre for 30 years, and both Canadian Blood Services and Health Canada have said that it does not affect their voluntary donor pool.

In addition, we have the evidence from countries like Germany, Austria, and the United States, where they have parallel voluntary and paid-for donor pools, and their voluntary donor rates are nearly double the Canadian donor rate of 3.6 per 100 people. Their voluntary donor rates run in the 5.7 and 5.6 ranges, yet they also have a paid-for system. The idea that you're somehow going to affect your paid-for system is simply not borne out by the evidence. Other countries have proven that.

Why would you be against this? Well, I'm going to put a very fine point on this right now. This government is protecting its union friends, full stop. They are protecting union jobs in CUPE at Canadian Blood Services, full stop. They are protecting Canadian Blood Services, which is a closed union shop, and they are trying to stop any development of any competition to Canadian Blood Services. That's the motivation here. That's who they're trying to protect. Instead of providing for plasma that could be collected and processed in a whole new biomedical – call it an industry. I thought you were in favour of diversifying the economy. I thought you were in favour of new jobs. I thought you were in favour of investment. You want to shut these all down. That is what you want by doing this.

Now, Canadian Blood Services say that they have a plan, that they have a plan to invest 100 million taxpayer dollars to take their current system from 20 per cent all the way up to 50 per cent of the required supply. Even with an investment of 100 million taxpayer dollars, they still wouldn't get us to where we need to be. We would still need to purchase additional supplies.

It ignores the reality that there is no country in the world that has achieved plasma self-sufficiency. To suggest somehow that Canada would be able to overcome that hurdle because of some factor that has yet to be identified by the proponents of this bill is simply not true. The people we should be listening to, Madam Speaker, are patients, patients that depend on these plasma products.

I would like to quote from an editorial by Durhane Wong-Rieger, who was formerly the president of the Canadian Hemophilia Society. This is what she said.

One of the most important things I learned from my four years as president of the Canadian Hemophilia Society during the public inquiry was that fear, prejudice and politics could trump science and reason in blood-related decisions.

This is a government that always says that they want to rely on science. This is a government that says that it wants to rely on the data. Well, it should look at the data surrounding blood transfusion and plasma transfusion specifically when we're dealing with patients.

I'd like to furthermore quote from the same letter:

Patients with rare disorders, as well as many others, rely on plasma-derived products... On the one hand, Canada can continue to rely on products made with plasma from paid American donors. Most of our patients whose lives literally depend on these products already know and have no concerns that the donors are paid. On the other hand, if Canada were successful in setting up paid plasma donor clinics, not only might we have greater security of supply but we would be contributing to a worldwide need for safe plasma.

But, no, Madam Speaker. This government wants to shut that down. This government wants to keep those evil blood brokers out of Alberta. It's okay for them to set up in B.C. and it's okay for them to set up in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and New Brunswick because all of those provinces have welcomed this because they were forward thinking and they understand that this is a way to diversify the economy.

They keep on pointing to Ontario and to Quebec. Well, the law in Quebec is nearly 30 years old, and Héma-Québec – that's the blood service in the province of Quebec; it's not Canadian Blood

Services – is desperately looking for ways to increase their plasma donor pool. They are looking at spending millions and millions of dollars in advertising to try to build up that pool because they cannot monetarily compensate donors. Doesn't it just make more sense to compensate the donors and not pay all those dollars to advertising firms?

Madam Speaker, that is the issue. We've got five specific patient groups who have come out – and there are others – but specifically the Canadian Immunodeficiencies Patient Organization, CIPO. In their brief they comment:

Not allowing paid plasma donations in Canada will encourage Canada's overreliance on the US for plasma. We are concerned that only three of some 30 plasma-derived products used by Canadians are manufactured in whole or in part by plasma collected from unpaid donors by [Canadian Blood Services] and Héma-Québec.

That, indeed, Madam Speaker, is the challenge we have. To simply walk away and to simply say no to the investment of \$400 million; to 2,000 jobs that include nurses, laboratory technicians, medical professionals; to not recognize what British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick have already recognized, that this is a medical reality and that the need for these products is only increasing, is to stick our proverbial heads in the sand, which, by the way, ostriches don't do, and ignore reality. It is to ignore the reality that the need for these products will only grow.

You know, in 2013 there was a national round-table on blood products and what should be done with regard to paid plasma transfusions, and one of the conclusions of that round-table, coming out of Justice Krever's recommendation, was that Canada should have an open blood system but that it should consult with the public before changing the voluntary system. Because it is a public policy issue that impacts all Canadians, there was a recommendation for a cross-country public consultation, and patients that use plasma products were identified as a key stakeholder group that must be consulted on this issue as they are the ones that are familiar with the safety issues and they are the most concerned with security of supply.

I ask the minister: were they consulted? Did you talk to this key stakeholder group? My bet is that you talked to the folks that you had at your press conference; yes, the president of CUPE from Canadian Blood Services, who was on the podium with you that day.

3:10

That is the crux of the argument, Madam Speaker. It is: who are you speaking for? Are you speaking for patients? No, you're not. The patients are very clearly saying that they want to see paid-for plasma donations in Canada. That is very clear. Are you speaking for unemployed Albertans, who could be employed in these operations, who could work in these plasma collection centres? Very clearly, you aren't because you're saying no to this potential source of economic diversification. You are speaking for your union friends, and that is it. It is time to speak and to broaden your perspective beyond just keeping your friends in the unions happy. That is your job in here when you come into this Chamber. You have a duty to all Albertans, and that duty extends beyond your friends in the unions. That is what needs to be done in terms of the decision-making here.

There is overwhelming evidence, Madam Speaker, unbiased scientific evidence, that shows that paid plasma donations are safe, that paid plasma donations do not cannibalize the voluntary donor supply, and that paid plasma donations would provide a source of economic benefit to our province and to Canada in general and would help secure our safety and security of Canadian supply from Canadian donors. But these folks want to shut that down.

Madam Speaker, in my view, Bill 3, which will close off that opportunity because Canadian Plasma Resources has said very clearly that they will go elsewhere, to where they are, in fact, welcome to set up, is one more example of how this government chases away the entrepreneur, the investor, the people who actually want to come to Alberta. Despite what they will tell you, that is what they are doing here. It is shameful, and I'm opposed to Bill 3.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll recognize the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Bill 3, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, is not just about promoting volunteerism and blood donations. It's the linchpin that will discourage the biomedical industry from developing life-saving drugs and adjuncts here in Alberta. The health industry promotes economic and health benefits. This is an industry that provides more than 11 per cent of Canada's GDP. Health is a major employer. Over 45,000 Canadians are employed in pharmaceutical, medical equipment, and medical supply manufacturing alone. Directly or indirectly this sector influences the careers of thousands of Canadians, all highly educated and who qualify as well-paid folks who pay taxes. They purchase goods and technology and services from every sector in our economy, helping to drive our economy. This sector is a major foundation of science and technological research. Advancements in the life sciences sector result in improved health for everybody.

Madam Speaker, did you know that at the beginning of the 20th century the average life expectancy was 50 years? In 1961 we could expect to live to 71 years, in 2006 to 80 years. In the span of a century we've gained 30 years of life for the average person. Some of this is due to benefits that come from more education and increased income, but more importantly it's the result of research and innovation that was translated into health care services and treatments.

We are a country that has been shifting the basis of our workforce. We are diversifying beyond the natural resource sector, where we fished and we farmed and we harvested trees and we mined oil and gold and diamonds, to one that is leading to more knowledge-based work, with science and technology as the base.

Canada produces great innovators in health. Pablum, the infant food, was initially developed by three Canadians to prevent and treat rickets. It is now helping hundreds of millions of children across the world. T-cell receptors and the gene that produces them was discovered by Canadians. Understanding how T cells work helped us develop drugs that fight infection, autoimmune disorders, cancer, and posttransplant rejection. Cancer patients receive radiation treatments from cobalt-based units as opposed to using radium. This allowed an affordable treatment that could penetrate deep tumors in the body, another Canadian contribution to health.

Stem cells. Stem cells are the master cells of the human body. It was a Canadian and Scottish research collaboration that was able to generate stem cells more easily from the human body. This process allows for the person's own cells to replace cells that cause devastating diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and diabetes. This research continues on, but it was innovation here that has enabled this research to progress. Need I mention Sir Frederick Banting, who helped develop insulin? Prior to this innovation diabetes meant certain death for children.

This is an industry that uses scientists, people from many disciplines like biochemistry, molecular biology, genetics, cellular biology, and medicinal chemistry. Of interest to note: each aspect of this industry requires human samples as the base to develop these innovations.

This bill isn't just about stopping greedy companies from paying for human products from disadvantaged citizens; it's a precursor to stopping any access to voluntary donors for biomedical companies, which, in turn, use these products to create medicines and for other life-saving measures. This is a sector that relies on human tissues to create solutions to disease.

Why does this NDP government hate science? Why does this NDP government not support industry that creates breakthroughs in medicine and diagnosis and treatment of disease? Why does this government not support the biosciences sector? Why does this NDP government choose to take the moral high ground yet choose to buy products from the United States, that collects and processes these things in the very same manner to which this government objects? Why does this NDP government choose to support international companies? Actually, on that point, we shouldn't be surprised. They're supporting an Ontario company over Alberta companies to buy light bulbs. Why does this government choose to exempt one organization from paying for this human product?

Is this government obtuse, or are they ignorant? Their superficial view demonstrates a lack of consultation, especially with patient advocacy groups that rely on medications and treatments born of these questionably ethical methods, groups like the Canadian Immunodeficiencies Patient Organization and the Canadian Hemophilia Society.

I'm pleading with this government to consider diversification of our economy instead of pursuing ideological beliefs. I am pleading with this government to reconsider this bill. If this government is simply trying to protect a few union jobs, that would be unfortunate because you're sending a message that will discourage an entire industry from blossoming here in Alberta, and that's the real crime here. This is an NDP government choosing ideology over practicality and reality. Keep your blinders on, NDP. Keep Albertans down. Keep your reliance on out-of-province solutions.

Let this vote on this bill be about the true issue here. Madam Speaker, to vote no to this bill is to say yes to the diversification of our economy. To say yes to this bill is simply hypocritical, narrow minded, and short sighted.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Turner: Well, first of all, I'm surprised that the member opposite would actually call this side of the House a word that starts with "I." I think it's actually unparliamentary. I take a great deal of umbrage at that, and I hope that he thinks better of it in future debate.

An Hon. Member: Did he call us intellectual?

Dr. Turner: He didn't call us intellectual.

An Hon. Member: Oh. Sorry. I missed it.

Dr. Turner: Right.

The other thing I take umbrage at is being called unscientific. How many of us on this side have actually studied science in high school or taken courses at university or even studied to be a nurse or studied to be a doctor or a psychologist? I think maybe only the bus driver on this side hasn't taken the course. I think this sort of debate really debases the collegial atmosphere that we're supposed to be enjoying in this. As I said, Madam Speaker, I really resent it. I do want to get back to my comments, though, on the gist of what was being said.

3:20

The collection of blood plasma by a private corporation goes against all of the precepts of the blood system that's been built up. Actually, Dr. Norman Bethune, who was a hero of both the Spanish war and the Second World War in China, was the originator, a Canadian who actually established the first mobile blood transfusion unit. I'm proud to say that I'm a graduate of the same medical school that he taught at. So we have a long tradition here in Canada of a voluntary blood transfusion service that is dependent upon the altruistic commitment of something like 50,000 Albertans a year as well as probably – I think it translates into half a million Canadians a year giving blood. What this bill attempts to do is to protect that voluntary blood system, and we should all be working together.

Now, there's a lot of vilification in some of the comments that were being made about the CBS and what a horrible organization it is. Remember that the CBS is a totality of 10 different provinces as well as three territories, that have come together to organize a voluntary blood system. As was said, Héma-Québec is separate. Otherwise, there is a common blood system that is actually run by the provinces. The province of Alberta has a seat on the board of Canadian Blood Services, and it is that board that determines the policies, not the unions, not the citizens of Alberta. The board of Canadian Blood Services determines the policies, and they have been charged with collecting sufficient red cells, platelets, plasma for transfusion as well as plasma for fractionation.

Again, that last point is what is being missed on the other side. We don't have a plasma fractionation plant in Canada, and we haven't had one since the late '80s, when Connaught labs closed, because it is not economic given the size of our economy to have that. We have depended for over 20 years on getting plasma fractionation elsewhere.

The exception to that is in Manitoba, which has been mentioned. Manitoba has a phenomenal private plasma collection system. It is called the Rh institute, and it was created by the Bowman brothers in Manitoba. It's actually owned by a company called Cangene now, and the so-called paid donors actually are women. There's a group of women who have become heavily immunized against the Rh factor that actually would donate except that they're paid for their time to come in and donate. That is a source of the Rh factor that prevents Rh disease. That's the disease where if a woman is Rh negative and has a baby that is Rh positive, that baby will die unless they get the Rh treatment.

The Deputy Speaker: We no longer have any time left under 29(2)(a). My apologies.

I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow, followed by Stony Plain.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. This bill is one I've really struggled with. I want to be clear that my instinct when I first saw the bill was to support it because I would like to be part of a province that has a voluntary system that meets all of our needs, that supports the principles of public health care, that supports the principles of accessibility and safety. These are things that I hold dear.

But as I looked deeper into this issue, starting with the premise that blood is sacred, that it is precious, far too precious or sacred to be bought or sold, that we ought to ensure that voluntary donations meet our needs – well, we've heard from previous speakers and through debate on this bill that that simply isn't true. In fact, it's hypocritical for us to say that we will never rely on paid donations for anything because we do. We rely on at least 80 per cent of our plasma supply coming from paid donors in the United States. So I asked myself: what's the difference?

I'm going to try hard not to make this too ideological an issue, and what I try to do on most occasions is to rely on the evidence. I've spent a lot of time doing research on this, and I want to acknowledge and recognize and thank the library staff here at the Legislative Assembly, who've done remarkable work on very short notice to find some journal articles for me. Val Footz and staff are remarkable. I want to acknowledge them.

I want to look at the impact, firstly, of incentives on what should be an altruistic transaction in the case of blood donation. What is the impact of incentives on altruism? I found that there's a long-held principle, dating back to the 1970s, that monetary incentives may crowd out altruistic donors because, ironically, altruistic donors will stop donating if there's a cash reward involved, which is, you'd think, counterintuitive. But people get what, believe it or not, the academic literature calls, quote, a warm glow from an altruistic activity. If that is replaced by a cold, monetary transaction, people who are motivated by intrinsic reward and that warm glow will stop doing it. Are we simply going to crowd out and displace voluntary donors by paying people? That is a principle called motivational crowd out. That is something from economics literature.

There was an article written in 2013 called Not All Incentives Wash Out the Warm Glow: The Case of Blood Donation Revisited. I want to quote a couple of lines from that. One of the most interesting points from this is that the intrinsic motivation that comes from giving may just simply go unnoticed if payment is offered. It's not that people do not feel that intrinsic motivation, but it's just not something that's noticed or recorded in the academic literature. What they found – I think this is an important point – is that there's "no evidence of potential crowding out when non-monetary rewards are involved," things like a lapel pin or a pen or a T-shirt or something like that.

So then we think, "Aha; that means that so long as we allow for nonmonetary rewards, people will continue to volunteer and donate altruistically," which is the way it works now, which this bill doesn't prevent. We think: "Okay. That's good, then. We can support Bill 3 in its current form. That would be fine." But not so fast because that refers, in this particular research, to whole blood donation, not to plasma donation.

Then we move on to finding: how can we reconcile that? Is it possible, then, to have a voluntary blood donation system alongside a paid plasma donation system? I did some further research into that, and it turns out that it is possible. One of the ways we can do that is to make the rewards optional. Now, I equate this, although the scale and the impact of these two things are very, very different, to when you bring your own shopping bags to the grocery store. They'll say: would you like a 5-cent bag credit, or would you like that to go to charity? Well, you can take the money, or you can feel good about yourself, and you can give that to charity. What if we had a system in Alberta where plasma donation was potentially rewarded through a monetary incentive or you had the option of saying, "No; I'd rather donate my portion of that incentive to charity"?

Unfortunately, Bill 3 prevents us from ever going down that path. We will never know in Alberta if maybe this parallel system, where we allow incentive for those who are rewarded extrinsically, who will do something that is rewarded through financial gain, alongside people who are rewarded intrinsically, who do it out of the goodness of their heart because they want that warm glow of knowing they did the right thing – how will we ever know that that may in fact increase the number of plasma donations? Now, as I think has been brought up in this debate on this bill – and if it hasn't, I'll bring it up – plasma donation is both more intrusive and takes longer, and it can be done more frequently than whole blood donations.

Allowing that incentive for some to donate, creating an external incentive is important.

3:30

There's an article which I'll refer to, When Extrinsic Incentives Displace Intrinsic Motivation: Designing Legal Carrots and Sticks to Confront the Challenge of Motivational Crowding-out. I would be lying to you if I told you I read all 68 pages of this article, but there are some very, very interesting and, I think, important elements that I have just indicated there.

Another option that this particular article talks about is simply providing information about the nature of the task. In the case of plasma donation, that may address the concern. For example, as I've just said, a plasma donation is inherently a different thing than a whole blood donation. It takes longer. You have a needle in your arm for a longer period of time. It can take up to two hours, but that's a substantial impact. If we tell people, "You can donate plasma. It will take longer. It might be a little more uncomfortable, but in exchange for that we're willing to pay you," people may say, "Oh, I see. I'm getting paid because there's more involved. I feel okay about that." So people who feel intrinsically motivated to give blood because it's the right thing to do will not be put off by the fact that they may get paid for plasma donation. What if we paid people for plasma donation but not whole blood donation?

There is some evidence, then, that I found further on in that same article that shows that it is possible – and I won't quote the specific article, but that basically makes the point I have just made there – to have those two side by side. So if we have that option to retain financial incentives, we can – oh, sorry. Another point I want to make before I get to safety. I do want to address safety because I know that's a very important point.

If we pass Bill 3, we do not have an option to provide a financial incentive in a time of high need. What if there is a financial incentive at times of holidays, where there's a time of high demand but a time of low supply, one of those holidays being the Christmas season? What if people needed a few extra dollars at Christmas to get themselves through that season and they were able to accept that reward or that incentive at that time only because perhaps that was the only time that reward or incentive was offered? It's not always offered, but it's only offered in times when we really need it. That helps smooth out the ups and downs of the supply and demand for blood and blood products. But under Bill 3 we're no longer able to do that. That is not an option, so we continue to procure plasma and plasma products from paid sources in the United States.

Let's talk about safety. When I looked at the evidence about safety as to whether or not paid donations impact blood safety, the simple answer is that in the 21st century it does not. We've heard from previous speakers about that fact. There was a 2008 German study that showed voluntary and paid donations are in fact the same in terms of safety, which is primarily because of modern testing methods and screening methods which keep our blood and plasma systems safe.

As a result of all of those reasons, Madam Speaker, I will vote against Bill 3 because I think it's important we retain the option at least to provide incentives to donate plasma. Thank you.

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

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Stony Plain, followed by Calgary-Hays.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When I was a nurse working in acute care, we saw people every day who may be in need of a blood transfusion. I never had to fear that the blood my patient

needed wouldn't be there when I went down to the blood bank, and I never had to tell a family that we couldn't save their loved one because we didn't have access to blood products needed, thanks to the CBS.

Blood transfusion is a core service within our health care system, and individuals who donate their blood provide a unique contribution to the health and survival of others. Protecting our voluntary blood donation system is paramount. Albertans will have secure and reliable access to donated blood when they need it most under this proposed legislation. This bill will also prevent Alberta's voluntary blood donor pool, which Canadian Blood Services relies on, from being depleted. This bill will create a barrier to the establishment of private pay-for-plasma clinics and ensures they will not operate that business in this province.

Every country faces an ongoing challenge to collect sufficient blood from donors to meet national requirements. The donation of blood by voluntary, unpaid blood donors is recognized as being crucial for the sustainability of national blood supplies, as shown in Saskatchewan, where CBS reported a 14 per cent drop in overall donors in the first year that the paid CPR clinic was open, which especially impacted the youngest generation of donors.

Internationally there are systems based on replacement donation by family and friends of patients requiring transfusion, which are rarely able to meet clinical demands for their blood. The World Health Organization and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies aim to support national blood donor programs in building a stable base of the best possible blood donors to ensure sufficiency and sustainability of national blood supplies.

Part of the strategy to accomplish this goal is the formation of the foundation for the establishment of World Blood Donor Day, jointly sponsored by the WHO, the IFRC, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations, and the International Society of Blood Transfusion. That day is now celebrated each year throughout the world on June 14 to raise awareness of the importance of blood donation and recognize the contribution of voluntary, unpaid blood donors in saving lives and improving health. Analysis shows that countries with voluntary blood donation instead of just paid have a higher proportion of regular blood donors and that this has been maintained over a number of years.

Further, in countries where the percentage of voluntary blood donations has risen, there has also been an upward trend in the percentage of regular blood donations. This shows that voluntary blood donors are more likely to donate on a regular basis than any other type of donor. A panel of voluntary donors who donate blood regularly enables blood collection to be planned systematically to meet the requirements for blood by blood groups and components. This enables the blood transfusion service to maintain a constant and reliable supply of blood when required in every clinical setting practising transfusion. One paid donor equals exactly one fewer potential voluntary donor.

In systems based on voluntary blood donation, patients have improved access to safe blood transfusion in routine and emergency situations, without which their survival or quality of life may be threatened. The blood and blood products they receive carry a low risk of infection that may further compromise their health. They're not placed under pressure to find blood donors in order to receive treatment and feel a sense of being cared for by others who they will never meet. In turn, this may motivate the spirit of generosity and a desire for reciprocal volunteering in the future. Madam Speaker, you know that we all see that a little bit when we go to Tim Hortons in the morning and we do a pay-it-forward. It's the same kind of feeling you get, just a little bigger.

Voluntary donors are recognized to be motivated by altruism and the desire to help others. As could be the case in a paid plasma

scenario, donors are not there because they need the money; therefore, they have no reason to withhold any information about their lifestyles or medical conditions that may make them unsuitable to donate. They are not placed under pressure by hospital staff, family members, or the community to donate blood, and they entrust their blood donations to be used as needed rather than for specific patients. The only reward that they receive is personal satisfaction, self-esteem, and pride.

In well-organized blood donor programs, voluntary donors, in particular regular donors, are well informed about the donation selection criteria. If they aren't eligible to donate right now, they're more likely to make the decision themselves to postpone their donation. That reduces the need for temporary or permanent deferrals. Blood donation is the gift of life that cannot be valued in monetary terms. The commercialization of blood donation is in breach of the fundamental principle of altruism, which voluntary blood donation enshrines.

Voluntary blood donors themselves benefit from health education and encouragement to maintain healthy lifestyles as well as regular health checks and referral for medical care if needed. Provided that they receive good donor care when they donate blood, they often feel personal satisfaction, which provides a sense of social engagement and belonging that is recognized and valued by the community.

Voluntary blood donors serve as effective donor educators, recruiters, and health promoters. I know that the first time I went and donated blood, I was taken by a friend of mine who was a regular donor. Studies have shown that the influence of active blood donors is one of the most effective strategies for donor recruitment. Voluntary donors also play a valuable role as active agents in health promotion. They help us build healthy communities through their influence among their peers and their families. Even donors who are no longer able to donate due to age or medical conditions can still play an important role in promoting voluntary blood donation in their families, workplaces, and communities. In my constituency of Stony Plain there is a family in which three generations are actively donating blood. The matriarch, Mrs. Hennig, has donated well over 800 times in her life. As she says: there is so much blood needed, and we can give the gift of life; it's gold, liquid gold for people who are in jeopardy of dying.

3:40

The commitment and support of the government for an effective national blood program is a prerequisite for the achievement of 100 per cent voluntary blood donation. The community must have confidence in its blood transfusion service. Without trust in its integrity and efficiency and the safety of its procedures, few people would choose to donate their blood. This trust is earned over a long period of time but can be undermined very quickly, resulting in a negative effect on the loyalty and continuing support of individual blood donors, the community, and partner organizations. Canadian Blood Services has earned our trust. Alberta has a long and proud history of support for the blood system. Donating blood is a valuable public resource that should not be a business. Donating blood saves lives.

This is what it comes down to, Madam Speaker. We know that for-profit, paid blood donation drives out voluntary donation, and that's why this bill is so important. It's about protecting our blood supply. Voluntary donation means that when you or someone you love needs blood the most, it'll be there. Voluntary donation means that you know that blood or blood products will be there for you in satisfactory amounts. Voluntary donation saves lives, and it helps to build a culture of trust and community.

I'd like to also mention, Madam Speaker, that, as we've stated numerous times in this debate, this legislation has absolutely no

bearing on the ability for private businesses to come into Alberta and be part of the fractionation process or further processing. It will not stop that. We encourage that. I would remind the members opposite also that we did consult with patients. BloodWatch, which is the advocate and watchdog comprised of patients and survivors from the '80s who support the Krever report's firm stance that blood and plasma collection remain public, have implored all members of this House to please support this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you once again, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my colleague for a very reasoned presentation on the importance of a voluntary blood donation system. I'm very impressed with that discussion. It was one of the things that Justice Horace Krever said in his report. I would actually commend the reading of that report to this Legislature. It's actually three volumes, but his commendation of the voluntary blood transfusion system that we have here in Canada was one of the most important recommendations that he made.

He made that recommendation because at the time – and he was looking at the blood system from 30 years ago – the blood system had been under a great deal of stress because of the appearance of new viruses like the human immunodeficiency virus as well as hepatitis C, which had previously been called non-A, non-B. The blood system had been dealing with hepatitis B, and it's interesting that the blood system is still dealing with problems with infection with hepatitis B. With all of the technology that there is in the system now, the most common blood-transmitted viral infection is hepatitis B. It's hepatitis B, actually, that we want to be most vigilant about in terms of preventing.

A person is at risk for carrying hepatitis B for lots of different reasons, but one of those reasons could be substance abuse. As we all know, substance abuse is prevalent in populations that are vulnerable, that may be affected by poverty or may be affected by mental health issues. It's exactly those populations that might be attracted to a paid plasma donation system. These are populations living in inner-city parts of our larger cities. They are populations that are perhaps transitioning from a First Nations environment to the urban environment, any population that's severely affected by poverty. Then when you compound this problem with the inducement of a payment for donation, there's a real concern.

I do want to tell an anecdote that came up at the Krever commission, and it's often thrown up in the face of us so-called left-wingers because it was Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas that actually organized a form of paid plasma donation in the prisons of Arkansas and actually sold the plasma that he collected. There are some analogies to what is going on. I don't want to make those analogies too close, but there are some analogies to that, to the blood brokers who then basically said: oh, this blood is very safe, and you can go ahead and use it. In fact, many Canadian hemophiliacs and other persons dependent upon plasma products got infected in the 1980s, and I've never actually forgiven Bill Clinton for that. In fact, if I'd had the opportunity, I would have abstained from voting for him largely because of that even though he is a good left-winger. So Justice Krever was very clear that we need to be vigilant in terms of protecting our blood supply.

Another comment that I want to make – and it was mentioned in my colleague's comments – is that we do not have a plasma-fractionation industry here in Canada. The plasma that's being collected by this private company is currently in storage, and it's going to be sold to the highest bidder. That plasma isn't necessarily

going to help Canadians become more self-sufficient in our plasma-fractionation products. I think that what we need to do – and it's actually up to all of us that are involved in the system – is look at how much of these plasma fractionation products... [A timer sounded] Sorry.

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've been trying to listen carefully to the comments here, and this is what I've heard: that through Bill Clinton blood came from the U.S. that was paid for, and it wasn't very good, or it wasn't safe. What this bill will end up if it goes through, that the government has put on the table – it will virtually guarantee that a lot of blood that comes into the system will come from the United States because that's where it comes from now. This will block Albertans' ability to replace some or all of that blood that comes from the United States with blood that's here in Alberta.

So what conclusions could one draw other than the fact that the NDP government seems to think Albertans' blood isn't as good as Americans' blood, because they're really only saying that everybody can get paid to give blood except Albertans. They must consider Albertans and their blood to be inferior in some way to the rest of the world, not much of an advertisement for someone who is governing Albertans and probably has a pipe dream of being re-elected by them one day.

Madam Speaker, it just does not stand up to scrutiny. You know what? The good doctor that just finished speaking really made the case for me that you cannot say that Albertans' blood is less safe than what we're getting from the United States right now. In fact, as my learned colleague from Vermillion-Lloydminster pointed out to the House, there haven't been any examples of a problem with blood that is known, so if you look at that – and I think even my friend, the doctor from Calgary-Mountain View, agrees – this kind of indicates that Albertans' blood isn't as good as what we're getting now, because that is what the government is saying. What else could they be saying? What other conclusion could you draw when the government says: we'll take anybody's blood in the world except Albertans. That's essentially what this legislation says.

3:50

In fact, at the very least it says: Albertans can't give blood that we need but Americans can. Somehow this government has decided that blood that comes from the United States is of a superior quality, safety, and content from that which Albertans have flowing through their veins. I reject that, Madam Speaker. I completely reject that.

Further, the government-side members, unfortunately, are twisting themselves into pretzels to try to make excuses for what this really is. The hon. member who's a nurse spoke a couple speakers ago and said that every donation that's paid for is one less donation that's donated. She said that we know that, when, in fact, it's been demonstrated here that we actually know exactly the opposite, and the hon. member knows that, too. Again, my learned colleague from Vermilion-Lloydminster quoted a whole bunch of research that indicates that. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, my friends on the government side are making it up. So you have to ask yourself why they are creating statements that they know are not true on this topic. They absolutely know it.

You know what? The other thing that this does for a government that has had three failed jobs plans in a row – you would think, when they've got an opportunity knocking on the door for someone to provide investment and jobs here in Alberta, that they would be rolling out the red carpet or the orange carpet if they prefer and saying: come to Alberta. They should be rolling out the orange

carpet to people that want to get in the blood business, rolling out the carpet and saying: please bring in that \$400 million worth of investment; please bring in those 2,000 jobs. That'll be 1,999 more than their jobs plans have produced in the last two years. They should be saying: come in.

The government should be saying: we are so confident in our incredible ability to administer things that we'll make sure that when you're doing this business, we'll inspect you and make sure that you are as safe or safer than the blood that's coming in from the United States today. Yet, Madam Speaker, this particular government caucus has chosen to say none of those things. You know what? They are talking about things that – they're trying to raise bogeymen about hep B and hep C. We should be afraid of hepatitis B and C and all those things. I agree with that, but for some reason it's not to be feared from the United States, yet it's to be feared from Albertans.

It's just the way this legislation is written. It's what it's done. All it is meant to do is lock Albertans out from the ability to get paid for giving their blood. It's meant to lock Albertans out of a couple thousand full-time jobs, not the part-time jobs that are replacing the full-time jobs that were in Alberta before we had this NDP government.

When you think about this, Madam Speaker, when all the other arguments that my friends on the government side are making are self-defeating, even with what they say themselves – they've said things that prove their arguments aren't true – what's left? What's left is protecting their big-money friends that are in the business now. They want to maintain a monopoly for those who actually pull the chain of this government and that this government dances to the tune of. That is what this legislation is about. It's His Master's Voice from, you know, the old record player company. They've heard their master's voice.

Mr. Mason: RCA.

Mr. McIver: RCA. Thank you, hon. Government House Leader.

You know when the dog is listening in to his master's voice? That is what this government has heard. They've heard their master's voice, and their master says: "Keep us in the monopoly of the blood business. Don't allow new jobs into Alberta because that will hurt our monopoly. Don't allow new investment into Alberta because that will hurt our monopoly. Tell Albertans their blood is dirtier than Americans' because otherwise that will hurt our monopoly." That is what this government is doing with this legislation, and that is why I will boldly and proudly vote against it.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) if I may.

The Deputy Speaker: Under 29(2)(a).

Mr. Mason: I was listening intently to the last member but also to the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster when he was speaking. He talked about the American system, and one of the things he said, which I found interesting, is that notwithstanding that they have this for-profit collection system in the United States, they also have a parallel voluntary donation system and that they have a higher rate of participation in the voluntary system than we do in Canada. I thought that was interesting.

Then he went on to argue, as did the hon. leader of the third party, that this is an attempt by the government to simply create or protect union jobs. But if the American model was implemented, then it would seem to me that it doesn't threaten the Canadian Blood Services if, in fact, it's quite possible to go ahead. But the

opposition is making this real leap of logic, Madam Speaker, that the only motivation here is not to protect the voluntary blood system in our country but to protect union jobs. Clearly, it's the case that if we had the American system, the union jobs or the Canadian Blood Services voluntary system would not be threatened. Can the hon. member explain that contradiction and how he reached this far-out conclusion that the only motivation left for this legislation was to protect union jobs at the expense of the interests of the public?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member. Well, the hon. member seems to be making an argument that if we had paid blood donations, you would actually also have more voluntary blood donation, like the U.S. That's what he has just suggested. [interjection] That's what he just said. But that's not my argument; that's the hon. member's argument. If that was true, that would be another good reason to vote against this legislation. If having a paid system would actually create more voluntary blood donors, well, wouldn't that be terrific?

While the hon. member suggested that that may be the case – we'll call it his claim and not mine; I don't know that that's true – that's just one more reason to vote against this legislation, one more reason to vote against maintaining a monopoly forever and ever, one more reason to say no to this legislation and say yes to investment in Alberta, to say yes to jobs in Alberta, to say yes to the opportunity of expanding some industry in biology that could spring out of the knowledge that the additional professionals here in the blood business may have. It may spring into some other industry having to do with biology. Actually, I appreciate the Government House Leader making my case for me, that that's just one more reason to vote against this legislation. It doesn't add up.

The only thing, Madam Speaker, that adds up is that this legislation is purely and for no other reason designed to maintain the monopoly of the government's big-money friends, the master's voice, whom they hear constantly. The master's voice who tells them what legislation to put forward and what legislation not to put forward is the only thing that's left. In fact, what should be troubling for those on the government side is that their own arguments have debunked their reasons for supporting this legislation. There's not much more to say.

They have talked about how unsafe the blood is that potentially could be out of the United States, yet they don't want the blood from Alberta. They've said that having a paid system could actually spur more people to give voluntarily. I don't know whether it will or not. That was a suggestion that I just heard from the Government House Leader. It's a pretty interesting one, but one I could neither support nor go against. It's the first time I've heard that theory.

Madam Speaker, all the reasons that the government-side members have given when they've stood in this House to support this legislation, if you follow the logic through in a very simple and direct way, it's actually an argument to not support this legislation. So with the lack of logic and with the lack of support by science, the lack of support by everything else, it doesn't add up.

4:00

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for 29(2)(a).

Are there any further speakers to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for St. Albert on behalf of the Minister of Health to close debate.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. While it's been a pleasure discussing this very important bill and listening to story-time from across the floor, it is my pleasure to close debate on the Voluntary Blood Donations Act.

Thank you.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:01 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.	Goehring	Nielsen
Babcock	Horne	Payne
Carlier	Kazim	Renaud
Carson	Littlewood	Rosendahl
Ceci	Loyola	Sabir
Connolly	Luff	Schreiner
Coolahan	Malkinson	Shepherd
Cortes-Vargas	Mason	Sigurdson
Dach	McKitrick	Sucha
Dang	McPherson	Sweet
Drever	Miller	Turner
Feehan	Miranda	Woppard
Ganley		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Gill	Swann
Clark	Hanson	Taylor
Drysdale	McIver	van Dijken
Totals:	For – 37	Against – 9

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a third time]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 19(1)(c) the Assembly must vote on the motion for consideration of Her Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor's speech.

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Jansen moved, seconded by Ms Miller, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Motion carried]

Government Motions

Address in Reply to Speech from the Throne

11. Mr. Mason moved:

Be it resolved that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be engrossed and presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are members of Executive Council.

The Deputy Speaker: This is a debatable motion if any hon. members wish to speak to it. The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. I'll be brief. I will just say, Madam Speaker, that my concern with the Speech from the Throne – of course, I hold the Lieutenant Governor in the highest of personal regard and professional regard and every other form of regard that I can muster. Let me be clear about that.

4:20

I have to say that when you look at some of the main titles of the Speech from the Throne – Working to Make Life Better for Families, Building New Pipelines, and Creating and Supporting Jobs – unfortunately, the government hasn't really lived up to these things, particularly when you look at all the new burdens that they're going to put on families with taxes: personal, corporate, and carbon taxes. While the new pipelines that have been approved are a wonderful thing but done by the federal government, the fact is that at the same time a pipeline previously approved, the Northern Gateway, was killed under this government's watch. There are just too many things in the Speech from the Throne, Madam Chair, that do not live up to Albertans' reasonable expectations.

With that, I will cease talking, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak? Seeing none, the hon. Government House Leader to close debate.

Mr. Mason: One thing I just wanted to mention in closing: for those members that are curious, the definition of "engross" is to produce a legal document in its final or definitive form.

Having defined what we are doing, I am happy to close debate, Madam Speaker.

[Government Motion 11 carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you. In view of the hour and the momentous progress that we have made and the fact that we are all about to return to our constituencies to re-engage with our voters, with our citizens, I will move that we call it 4:30 and adjourn for the day, Madam Speaker, and wish everyone a great constituency week.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:22 p.m. to Monday, April 3, at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 3rd Session (2017)

Activity to Thursday, March 23, 2017

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

Bill 1 — An Act to Reduce School Fees (Eggen)

First Reading — 6 (*Mar. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 105-10 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192-96 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 235-42 (*Mar. 14, 2017 morn.*), 269-71 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft.*),

273-74 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., adjourned*), 282-91 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 424-31 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 2* — An Act to Remove Barriers for Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence (Ganley)

First Reading — 67-68 (*Mar. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 110-11 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 314-22 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft.*), 336-39 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 455-59 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Bill 3* — Voluntary Blood Donations Act (Hoffman)

First Reading — 208 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 323-36 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 394-400 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*), 421-24 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 472-80 (*Mar. 23, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 4 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2017 (\$)

First Reading — 191 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 306-07 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., adjourned*), 322 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 389-93 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 449-52 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 5 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 266 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 310-14 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 393-94 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 452-55 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 201 — Justice System Accountability Act (Jean)

First Reading — 127 (*Mar. 8, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 208-20 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202 — Protecting Victims of Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act (Cyr)

First Reading — 245 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 375-86 (*Mar. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 203 — Alberta Standard Time Act (Dang)

First Reading — 253 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft, passed*)

Bill 204 — Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Stier)

First Reading — 444 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed*)

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