



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, April 20, 2017

Day 24

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
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Party standings:

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 20, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and through to the rest of the members of the House two classrooms from St. Augustine school in beautiful Ponoka. Their teachers are Mr. Ken Hackett and Mrs. Sharon Hackett. There are also some chaperones: Stephanie Gartner, Amanda Henderson-Kada, and Jennifer LaForge. I'd ask that they'd all please stand, the students included, and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I assume they must be sitting up behind me. It's my pleasure to stand and introduce to you and through you the grade 6 students from Glen Avon school. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Karen Kendel. Although she doesn't look it, she's counting down the days to retirement. She actually taught both of my kids in grade 4. She is accompanied by teachers Terri-Lynne Nickason, Tanya Fontaine, and Nadine Silver and chaperones Pat Ryning, Shelley Hawthorne, Dwayne Girard, and Brian Reaney. I would like them all to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

She aged much better than you, hon. member.

Are there any other school groups today?

Seeing and hearing none, the Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Blessed Oscar Romero Catholic high school cheer team and their head coach, Melissa Kolodenko. They won the 2017 Alberta provincial division 1 senior cheer championships for the second year in a row earlier this month in Athabasca. In the constituency of Edmonton-McClung we are very proud of the accomplishments of these student athletes, the coaching staff, and parent volunteers.

I'd like to thank Mr. Speaker for agreeing to pose with us earlier today for a photograph in the rotunda. I'd ask all the students and staff and teachers to rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House the fine, hard-working volunteers of the Canadian Transplant Association who have organized today's organ and tissue awareness event in the lower rotunda. I'm going to read their names: Hirde Paul Jassal Singh, Jaspal Singh, Neil Folkins, Malkeet Singh, Rakesh Apra, Harmanpreet Kaur, Arsh Singh, Ashok Kumar, Jack McJannett, Barb Esdale, Amandeep Singh Dhanju, and Jageer Singh Dhanju.

On behalf of all recipients and from the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you to you and your wonderful organization for saving lives. My guests are in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you it is my honour to introduce several guests who have been integral parts of the health care teams at several Edmonton hospitals for many years. I'll be highlighting their service in my member's statement coming. Brenda Shim and Peggy Teixeira are with volunteer services at the Misericordia hospital. Patricia Fields is a key member of the all-volunteer team that has operated the gift shop at the Royal Alexandra hospital for over 100 years, not Pat herself. Shirley and Alan Gaudet are long-time Cross Cancer Institute colleagues providing patient information and rides to and from the Cross. I ask them all to please rise and receive the warm welcome of my colleagues.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly a good friend of mine, Mr. Jason Green. Jason and I met in the last election, and he is now the CFO of the Wildrose Drayton Valley-Devon Constituency Association. He's doing a great job, and I predict that he could give the Minister of Finance a run for his money as he seems to be able to not only balance our constituency budget, but he ensures that we have a healthy, positive bottom line. It's my pleasure, then, to introduce Jason to the Assembly. I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a valuable constituent of Edmonton-Ellerslie, Greta Gerstner, the founder of Strategic Alliance for Alberta Students with Learning Challenges. This group was born out of Greta's strong desire to change the education system to help all students with learning challenges. I've been working closely with her as she hopes to change how the system works, specifically focusing on how to eliminate roadblocks. She hopes to bring awareness to all Albertans that by not providing the students with learning challenges the help they need to succeed, we will add a long-term cost to the health care, justice, and social services systems. However, if we invest in appropriate supports now, these students can be productive and contributing members of society. I ask her to please stand and for all of us to welcome her with the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ministerial Statements

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Miranda: I rise today to speak about Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, a most solemn day in Jewish history, a day observed in memory of the 11 million people who died during the Nazi genocide, 6 million of whom were Jews. The Shoah was a

crime where the elderly and the young, over a million and a half of them innocent children, were systemically and with both extreme cruelty and savagery starved, experimented on, shot, buried alive, strangled, given lethal injections, gassed, burned, and reduced to ashes only because they were deemed guilty of the crime of being different, a crime without parallel in human history.

This Monday, April 24, Jews in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world will commemorate by recalling the darkest period in our collective memory. Two days ago we marked the end of Pesach, the Passover, celebrating our ancestors' freedom from slavery in ancient Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus. Generation after generation of Jews have experienced oppression. In fact, history is plagued by examples where anti-Semitism has taken up roots across cultures, faiths, and generations. However, despite the worst machinations by emperors, czars, pharaohs, kings, Caesars, kaisers, and führers, the Jewish people have endured and remain as testament to the belief in an ancient promise found in the Book of Genesis foretelling that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.

But why is it important to remember? In the words of Holocaust survivor, renowned writer, and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel: "Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future."

Many years ago I had the opportunity to visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. During my visit to the Children's Memorial we were reminded that entire families were annihilated, with no one left to say Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, in their memory. It was there that I and many others committed ourselves to each remembering one name and performed what I see as a sacred duty to remember. So today I remember Alvaro Coen. He was a Sephardi, a Spanish Jew. He was born in Rome, Italy, in 1936. During the war he was deported to Auschwitz, Poland, where, still a child, he was murdered.

1:40

Mr. Speaker, no matter how difficult it is to remind ourselves of the horrors of the Holocaust, no matter how unimaginable it seems, Yom ha-Shoah implores us to remember. It is only by remembering that we can work together as a society to prevent such tragedies from ever happening again because as difficult as it is to remember, what is even more difficult is the realization that the ignorance which colluded with hatred and the indifference that turned its back on human compassion and the most basic of human decencies, those seeds of hatred, the ones that paved the way for the Shoah in the first place, still remain with us today.

This is most evident during times of change, of anxiety, of uncertainty, of economic troubles, where there appears to be a willingness to give in to a base desire to find someone else, someone different to blame for those struggles. Refusing to forget helps us to take concrete action against the hate and discrimination which pose the greatest dangers to an inclusive, peaceful, and accepting way of life. We must remain vigilant against anti-Semitism and indeed all forms of discrimination, be it homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, misogyny, or racism. We must guard against the hatred and bigotry and give them no room to take up root or even grow in our province. Alberta must continue to be a welcome and inclusive place for all those who seek a better home and a better life.

As Hillel the elder once wrote: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation. Now go and learn."

As Jews around the world mourn and remember, let us all join with them. As legislators let us continue to build a society where people from all backgrounds, religions, cultures, sexual identities,

and gender expressions are celebrated for those differences because let us not forget that alongside the victims who were forced to wear yellow stars, there were victims who were forced to wear pink triangles.

Let us remember and use that memory of the Holocaust to inspire our efforts to make this world free from all forms of discrimination. When we can all fully commit to this, we will have rightfully honoured all who died during those very dark times. As we put this into practice, we actually do practise one of the underlying values of Judaism, *tikkun olam*, Hebrew for "repairing the world."

Because it is not enough to remember, we must also act. One way to act is by continuing to work together in building a world of peace and tolerance for all. In the words of Yehuda Bauer, "Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander."

Mr. Speaker, to honour this coming Yom ha-Shoah, I encourage all Albertans to learn about the Holocaust, to find out what steps each of us can take to support our province's Jewish communities and to stop anti-Semitism wherever it occurs.

In closing, I want to pay tribute to the Yiddishkeit, or the Jewish spirit, and hold it up as an example of the human capacity for resilience in the face of the most inhuman savagery that the world has ever seen.

They came for us. They did their best to try and destroy our spirit, and through it all here we are. We remain. Never again.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pause and reflect in solemn remembrance of the atrocities committed against Jewish men, women, and children sometime ago in the Holocaust, also known as Shoah.

Holocaust Remembrance Day is an opportunity to honour those people, the 11 million people, humanity, whose lives were taken and, of course, the 6 million Jews amongst those that were systematically murdered at the hands of the brutal Nazi regime. Days like Holocaust Remembrance Day are important. The lessons learned from the Holocaust must guide our actions today and into the future.

Anti-Semitism or discrimination of any kind is not acceptable. It has no place in our society. We must combat fear and exclusion with acceptance and understanding for everyone. Canada and Alberta are home to a very proud Jewish community. We must work with this community as we must work with all communities to share their stories, to understand their history.

We must also as a whole work together to reflect on the horrors of the Shoah so that it can never be repeated and never happen again to anyone, no matter what the choice. Together we must recognize the unspeakable atrocities committed, honour the survivors, and also recognize those who showed such bravery in risking their lives to save others.

I did attend the Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Israel, and it was very moving. I also had the opportunity to visit a concentration camp in Europe. Unacceptable. Yom ha-Shoah allows us to reflect on the strength and the perseverance of survivors, those people that do survive. The innocent men and women and children who were killed and are no longer with us: we must remember their legacy. We must honour their legacy as we reflect on one of the darkest moments that I think could be possible in human history.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day let us always remember the individuals around the world that continue today to face persecution and discrimination simply for who they are. This cannot happen and

must not happen here. We must be a shining beacon to the world of what can be, with peace and acceptance and understanding and tolerance.

This injustice must be a call to action. We must never sit on the sidelines, be complacent. The Holocaust must be a harsh reminder for all of us on how far humanity can take persecution and how much the human spirit can actually accept the unacceptable, terror and injustice upon humanity. We must preserve the record of one of the darkest chapters and never forget. We must share the message and never forget.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The acting Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent of the House to allow responses from the third party and the two independent members should they so choose.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to observe 16 years of Holocaust Memorial Day, or Yom ha-Shoah, in Alberta. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to recognize the memory of the sponsor of this act, former MLA for Calgary-Glenmore Ron Stevens. On November 16, 2000, when this legislation was passed, the hon. Mr. Stevens said:

There are voices calling out to us from history, and they have much to teach us if we listen . . . They teach us about the dangers of simply being bystanders and of remaining silent . . . The voices of history teach us the need to commit to a legacy of remembrance, education, and conscience.

Today we pay homage to the more than 6 million Jews and many others targeted and brutally slaughtered by Hitler's Nazi regime. Included in this gruesome figure are 13,000 killed during the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Mr. Speaker, in April of 1943 the Warsaw ghetto bravely resisted Nazi attempts to transport them to their deaths in the Treblinka concentration camp. The resistance lasted just under a month and ended when the SS ordered the ghetto burned to the ground. Block by block all remaining residents were either burned alive or suffocated in the fires. This act of defiance was the single largest Jewish revolt against extermination. It exemplifies the bravery with which every Jewish man, woman, and child faced the horrors of the Holocaust.

Then there was the Łódź ghetto. Over 200,000 ghetto residents died or were exterminated in the nearby Chelmno camp. On September 4, 1942, the fateful "Give me your children" speech led to the methodical extraction of over 15,000 Jews. The sick, children under 10, and the elderly were exterminated, mostly in mobile gas vans, forcibly separated from their families.

1:50

Mr. Speaker, my father was a Polish-born Jew from Łódź. His fateful refuge in Shanghai in 1917 saved his immediate family, now survived by my family. Among the victims of the Holocaust, as far as we know to this day, were all of the members of my father's extended family – grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins – an entire bloodline wiped off the face of this Earth. These are the stories of horror and blind hatred that few are left to tell.

Mr. Speaker, there are thriving Jewish communities across Alberta established in large part by refugees from senseless genocide and brutality and Holocaust survivors who sought refuge in Canada during and after the war. Names such as Aron Eichler and Bronia and Sid Cyngiser come to mind for sharing their stories with all Alberta. Their stories are inextricably linked to Alberta's

story; their past traumas, our traumas. Their grief is our grief. Remember, this happened not just because evil people did evil things but because good people did nothing and said nothing. At sundown on Sunday, April 23, all Albertans will stand in solidarity with Jewish communities across the province to remember all who have perished at the hands of such evil.

As we face an uncertain future in a world that struggles with terrorism, mass refugee migration, and extremism, let us renew our vow to never again stand idly by as such heinous crimes as those perpetrated during the Holocaust are committed because, Mr. Speaker, the single greatest act of remembrance we can engage in on behalf of victims and survivors amongst us and around the world is to do our mitzvah, our good deed, and do all we can to reaffirm our commitment to upholding human rights, to fight for and protect freedom and democracy, to value diversity in all its forms, and to help those fleeing violence and persecution in a way which embraces the multicultural richness we enjoy and cherish in Alberta as a tolerant, respectful, and inclusive society.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This coming Sunday marks Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and today we stand in the Legislature to remember the millions of Jewish children, women, and men brutally murdered by the Nazi regime. We acknowledge that this is one day after we recognized the genocide of Holodomor, Stalin's Ukrainian genocide. The only crime of this Jewish community was being what Adolf Hitler and his government hated and feared, being different. Because of their religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation they deviated from the Nazi ideal of a pure Aryan nation and so were exterminated.

The official name of Yom ha-Shoah translates to Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day, and while we remember humanity at its darkest and mourn those lost, we also acknowledge the incredible strength of the human spirit. Opposition to the Nazi regime took incredible courage, and obviously millions lost their lives in resisting. Nevertheless, resistance was widespread once ordinary men and women became heroes as they fought back in countless ways. Their bravery gave others a glimmer of hope, a candle in this darkness.

As the Holocaust fades into the past, we risk forgetting the consequences of not being vigilant against racism, hatred, genocide in all its forms and must be prepared to act when we see evidence anywhere, any time across our world. "Never again" is more than a hope; it's a promise to act. When we say these words, we promise that we will to the best of our ability follow the example of those who stood up and resisted to fight to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are never repeated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, it's not often or not often enough that we get unanimous consent in this House on certain issues, I believe. The presentations, the last four I heard – we have a responsibility to never forget and to never let this happen again.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

GST on Carbon Levy

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we asked some very simple questions about the fact that Ottawa is plucking hundreds of millions of dollars more out of Alberta as a direct result of the

NDP's carbon tax on Alberta workers and Alberta businesses. Talking to the press, the Finance minister seemed completely clueless that this particular issue was even a problem, saying that he wants to "get a little more information." Well, he does manage a \$52 billion economy. It's very important. I think that answer is simply not good enough. It's been 24 hours. Does he have the information? How much is this tax on tax costing Alberta families?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by setting the stage about exactly what we spoke about yesterday. This is not a surprise. This tax-on-tax situation that the member speaks of was something he lobbied that he would change when he was in Ottawa. Then what happened when he got to Ottawa? He didn't change it. So guess what? This happens in Alberta. This happens in B.C. This happens in Ontario. It would be great if it could be changed, and the member opposite had the chance to do something about it. Instead of putting our head in the sand, we're going to move forward. Guess what? We got two pipelines for Alberta.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the minister is aware, but we did have an actual reduction of the GST by two percentage points, from 7 to 5 per cent. That was a promise made and a promise kept.

The NDP, however, brought in a \$5 billion carbon tax and never did their research on it. They had no idea, none whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, that their plan meant asking grieving widows to give money back to the NDP government coffers. They said that they'd fix it, and they haven't, twice. They didn't have an economic impact study done at all when they passed the carbon tax. They had no idea of the ramifications. Since I know the Deputy Premier wants to answer this question, I'll try the Finance minister anyway, even though she'll probably pop up. If the Premier . . .

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are sick of an opposition that claims that the only way to move forward is by moving back. Let's move back, though, and acknowledge the record. He wants to talk about promises. He made a promise to fix the situation where the GST is charged on other levies and taxes, and he failed to do that. We're not going to make excuses. We're going to move forward and get real results for the province of Alberta. That's what we're doing. We are reinvesting revenues from the price on carbon right here in Alberta's economy, and we're proud to do so. [interjections]

The Speaker: Someone remarked that my tension sometimes escalates. I'm really working on finding positive ways to enjoy this place.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, here's another tax hike the NDP never thought through. A new report from the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy shows that labour earnings for the average two-income household will drop by – wait for it – \$830 per year as a direct result of this government's 20 per cent tax hike on business taxes across Alberta. Now Alberta will have the highest business tax among the western provinces, and it means less money for families to put bread on the table. To top it off, we collected almost a billion dollars less in revenues last year alone. Will the NDP admit that this tax hike has failed Albertans, and will they ask Ottawa to fight for an exemption to the GST on the tax?

Ms Hoffman: I know the member opposite is used to getting direction from Ottawa.

We worked to bring in a made-in-Alberta solution, Mr. Speaker, and we're so proud to do that. Let's talk about what's happening in the economy. Yesterday a chief economist with the Business Development Bank said that this is going to be a year of turnaround, that we're going to build on that from this year on. This is going to take some time before everybody sees it, but this is a first step. It's going in the right direction. He's talking about Alberta, Alberta's economy, and the great efforts that are moving forward. That's why last month we got 20,000 new full-time jobs, and we are so proud of that. [interjections]

The Speaker: Could I ask again: keep the volume down.
Second main question.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would appreciate it if we got an answer to a question.

Energy Efficiency Programs

Mr. Jean: I wish a light bulb would go on over the Premier's head to make her realize that Albertans don't need Ecofitt from Ontario to come into their houses to change their light bulbs. The fact is that the Premier is throwing Albertans' hard-earned money, that they are syphoning off through carbon taxes, at these programs to see what actually sticks. Now that the NDP have introduced Ecofitt 2.0, a more reasonable energy efficiency program, I would suggest, does that mean that the Ecofitt 1.0 boondoggle is going to be cancelled? Obviously, we know it's redundant, wasteful, and needs to be done away with. Does that mean that the Premier . . .

2:00

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. As of April 4, Mr. Speaker, 98,576 families had signed up for the Energy Efficiency Alberta program. I am so proud that our government is there to have the backs of 900 Fort McMurray residents who are accessing this program. We're helping them to ensure that they have \$112 they can put back into their own pockets. The members opposite want to scrap this plan. Instead, we want to make sure that we're supporting Albertans and saving money, and we're not going to apologize for expanding on opportunities to do that.

Mr. Jean: Of course they're going to apply for getting their money back, Mr. Speaker. It's their money. That's what the NDP forget. They're just getting a refund.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government is hoping they can pull the wool over Albertans' eyes about having two programs doing the same thing – exactly the same thing – but Albertans are savvy. They understand what's going on, and they know that this Ecofitt program, where salespeople actually go into your house, believe it or not, to upsell products, doesn't make any sense. They know that the NDP government is actually using their own money to try to bribe them. If the Premier won't listen to me, will she listen to Albertans and scrap this Ecofitt 2.0 boondoggle?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the more than 350 local Alberta contractors who have already signed up to help Albertans save money through this program. This is job creating. It's supporting local families and saving money, and we're not going to apologize for making sure we have an opportunity to act responsibly on supporting the environment, supporting families,

ensuring that they can have greater efficiencies, the last jurisdiction in North America to finally catch up. I'm not going to apologize for standing up for Alberta families, working to make their lives better. We're going to keep doing that.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, the NDP are just showing a lack of respect for Albertans' hard-earned money. Why have one program when you can have two? That's, of course, the NDP way. Albertans deserve to know the price of installing these products by an Ecofitt salesman compared to an everyday Albertan buying one at their neighbourhood Alberta hardware store. Will the Premier release these figures, or does she not want Albertans to see how her government is actually wasting their money?

Ms Hoffman: It's no doubt that the Leader of the Official Opposition wants to turn the lights out. He wants to turn the lights out on Alberta families who are struggling to pay for tuition. We've capped that. He wants to turn the lights out on Alberta families who are struggling to pay their power bills. We've capped those, Mr. Speaker. He wants to turn the lights out on a climate leadership plan that brought us approval for two – two – pipelines. We're not going to turn the lights out. We're going to keep moving forward, and we're going to support Alberta families and our economy.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Electricity Power Purchase Arrangements

Mr. Jean: The NDP government's multibillion-dollar screw-up on our electricity system by first raising taxes and then trying to break contracts with Alberta-owned companies is something Alberta taxpayers will be paying a lot of money on for many years. Last fall we found out the Energy department asked the Balancing Pool to delete e-mails related to Enmax returning their PPA because they were, quote, sensitive. Now the Privacy Commissioner is investigating. Will the NDP release all of the documents for the investigation, and if not, why not?

Ms Hoffman: I'm pleased to tell the House and Albertans that we are happy to welcome the oversight provided by the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker, and we are pleased to talk about the government's plan to transition responsibly to a power system that takes care of everyday Albertans. We have been fully transparent and accountable, and we will continue to do so in every bit of the transition. We're happy to comply with and support the Privacy Commissioner in her work.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's why this all matters. The government is still fighting Enmax in the court for returning their Battle River PPA to the Balancing Pool. The government continues to make up stories that they had no idea that making massive increases to the carbon tax would break contracts that were long on the public record. Now, if the NDP forced this PPA back into Enmax, it means property tax hikes for Calgarians will go way up. Why doesn't the NDP start telling the truth to Albertans about this multibillion-dollar NDP screw-up?

Ms Hoffman: Want to talk about what screw-ups led to this situation, Mr. Speaker? It was the lack of transparent and accountable discussions, that happened behind closed doors, that were entered into in secret, backroom talks that off-loaded liabilities from businesses that were profitable onto the backs of

Alberta families. That's how we ended up in this situation. We're not going to move forward in . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: I cannot hear the answer to the question. [interjections] Hon. members, please.

Ten seconds to finish off.

Ms Hoffman: It's clear that the opposition has chosen which side they're going to be on, the side of their slow-dance partners, who put liabilities, in their opinion, back onto Albertans. Instead, we're going to stand up for Albertans.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, so many excuses and only one party to blame, them. They should take the blame. They're not serving Albertans.

We know that the NDP now has a history of stonewalling information to the Privacy Commissioner. If you have nothing to hide, why delete the e-mails? They are hiding over 466 pages that the Privacy Commissioner has asked for, and we know that they are in the practice of deleting sensitive e-mails when it comes to multibillion-dollar screw-ups. Let's face it. The fact is that no one trusts this NDP government. Their policies are reckless, they're secretive, and they continue to wage legal battles with Alberta-owned corporations and Albertans. How many investigations do Albertans need before we start hearing the truth from this NDP government?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the member of the opposition wants to hear some truth and he won't take my word for it, then let's take the truth from Brian Ferguson, CEO of Cenovus, who yesterday told the Calgary Chamber that the recent decision to invest billions of dollars more in Alberta was based in large part on the confidence in the government policies. That's this government. He said: it's my belief that the carbon policy in Alberta was one of the key reasons the federal government was able to get its mind around approving these two new pipelines. This is a good result. We're going to keep working with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, but we're also going to work with Alberta businesses and employers. [interjections]

The Speaker: A couple of members I could hear above the tumult. I don't want to draw, at this stage at least, individual attention to them. I think you might know who you are.

The hon. leader of the third party.

Residential No-charge Energy Savings Program

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in QP the environment minister admitted that someone would be selling things to Albertans while in their homes under the Energy Efficiency Alberta program. What the minister did not answer was who that would be. The Energy Efficiency Alberta people will have official identification, or so the website says. To the Premier: who will be doing the selling in Alberta homes after getting entry via your government program through Energy Efficiency Alberta? Their officials or somebody else?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me google that for you.

The Program . . . will introduce homeowners and tenants to the benefits of energy efficiency by delivering immediate energy savings at no cost to them. Engaging with residents offers opportunities to build trust and recognition of Energy Efficiency Alberta, cross-promote other efficiency programs, and can drive demand for larger investments and deeper energy savings.

This is if the homeowner so chooses. The program – it's very clear from the RFP, which is posted publicly – is about making sure that there is no cost directly to the individuals who are welcoming these people into their homes.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is still misleading Albertans. Beyond the minister's admission yesterday, the very website, on a page I will table today, says on the left side of the page that home improvements are for sale. On the right side of the page it says, "They are not selling anything, and they will never ask you for money." It can't be both. To the minister: since your webpage is obviously wrong on one side or the other, will you have it corrected today, or will you allow this misinformation to remain another day after it has been shown to you that you're giving Albertans false information?

The Speaker: I want to caution the member and the members. We've had many hours wasted on discussions about what's true, what's not true, misleading, false, et cetera. I want to caution everyone to be careful. The responsibility rests with all of you, not with me, with respect to that matter.

The Minister of Environment and Parks.

2:10

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have done is introduced now three programs, in fact. One is a residential installation that Albertans can sign up for. As we've heard, almost 100,000 Albertans are going to avail themselves of those savings, saving them about \$100 a year, a little more, with those installations. We've also unveiled the contractor installation program. Albertans who want to install new windows, insulation, or tankless hot water heaters may avail themselves of the over 350 contractors that have registered to provide those services. We're saving Albertans money. The previous government never got around to it.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Their website is still wrong, Mr. Speaker.

The government is asking Albertans to let Energy Efficiency Alberta into their homes to install electrical equipment and devices. Here is what the website says under terms of service. "To the full extent permissible by applicable law, we disclaim all warranties, conditions and guarantees, express or implied, including implied warranties, conditions or guarantees of merchantable quality, fitness for a . . ."

The Speaker: Hon. member, I have to be able to hear the question, and I can't. [interjection] Hon. member. [interjection] Hon. member.

Mr. McIver: I was reading, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry.

The Speaker: I just wasn't certain if you were reading in English or some other language because I couldn't understand it. I'm not sure if there was a question in there or not.

Mr. McIver: It's here. I'm not finished, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yeah, I know that, but it seems to me that you're taking advantage of the issue.

Would the government like to respond? Who may have heard a question?

Mr. Rodney: He has 10 seconds.

The Speaker: Okay. Then I've cautioned you before. You've got nine seconds.

Mr. McIver: I apologize for speed-reading.

To the Premier: don't you think you can give Albertans a little more comfort before asking them to open up their homes under your government's say-so?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, almost 100,000 Albertans have signed up for the residential no-cost program, which will save homeowners a little over \$100 a year on average. In addition, there are other programs that we have announced. In addition to that, there are the solar programs we've announced. Now, the previous government left us in a situation where we're the only jurisdiction in North America without an energy efficiency program. Of course, the Wildrose denies the science of climate change, so they, too, would not invest in such a program. Might I suggest that all of these goings-on about energy efficiency are designed to distract from the fact that we have an internal caucus revolt happening over . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hon. members, I'm surprised. I thought we would have a very friendly discussion today because everyone would be anxious to get home.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Gravel Extraction in Flood Plains

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, as a Liberal you might expect me to be asking some questions about marijuana today, but instead of weed I want to talk about rocks and water. Like human lungs, alluvial aquifers around rivers and streams are essential for exchanging surface water and groundwater, but gravel extraction in our flood plains is threatening to choke out our vital water supply. To be blunt, Alberta has the largest scale gravel extraction in the country.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I think your time has lapsed.

Dr. Swann: Impossible. Impossible.

The Speaker: I'm sure that the minister . . . [interjection] Hon. member, I think you need to sit down.

What a wonderful day in the neighbourhood.

I'm not sure if there was a question in there.

The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share the hon. member's concern about, of course, water quality and gravel extraction, as we all do. We all want to make sure that safe drinking water and riparian habitat are appropriately maintained in this province. That's why, for example, we've invested in more river and stream monitoring as part of our consolidation of monitoring in the province, and we're working with the Sand and Gravel Association and the municipalities on these matters of gravel extraction, ensuring they're done in the best way possible.

Dr. Swann: Well, to the contrary, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that there's a potential for permanent environmental damage when we continue to allow gravel extraction in flood plains. I'll be tabling photographs from all over Alberta later today. The Minister of Environment and Parks has taken action on science-based evidence in the Castle, so I'm sure that there's a commitment to using science to make better decisions. Why is science enough to restrict industry activity in the Castle but not in flood plains? Why the double standard?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. Certainly, our department along with Municipal Affairs is working with the Sand and Gravel Association and other stakeholders to ensure that sand and gravel and all aggregate extraction is done in ways that protect our air, land, and water. Certainly, the Sand and Gravel Association has been a good partner to us in that. In many cases we work on a case-by-case basis with the affected municipalities to make sure that we're upholding the highest standards.

Dr. Swann: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Sand and Gravel Association has a very cozy relationship with municipalities and Municipal Affairs, and they're the ones financially benefiting from the developments on flood plains. Allowing them to police is like asking a pot user to guard the brownies. What's needed is for the environment minister to remove the temptation and protect our water. When will you take real action and institute a total ban on gravel extraction in flood plains?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. We will certainly take his views under advisement as we speak to communities who have concerns about flood plains gravel and other aggregate extraction. We're always looking for a productive conversation with the communities that are affected by these projects.

Thank you.

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

Services for Seniors

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time my office will get calls from local seniors inquiring about benefits, and my staff will usually refer them to the information guide. This guide documents seniors' programs and services. It is a useful tool, but some of the information will soon be outdated. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what is the government doing to ensure that seniors get the accurate information they need in a timely fashion?

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

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's vital that seniors are aware of programs available to them. We've appointed a Seniors Advocate, Dr. Sheree Kwong See, who is assisting seniors in navigating government services. Last year we sent out 40,000 information guides, and we update printed materials annually. Seniors receiving provincial benefits are sent information each July so that they are aware of available programs and services. I'm proud that we're making life better for seniors by protecting and improving programs and benefits here in Alberta.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that transportation is often a challenge for rural seniors, especially for those with mobility issues, to the same minister: how is the government helping seniors in rural Alberta who need transportation, particularly accessible transportation?

Ms Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, seniors built this province, and they deserve to retire in dignity. We have supported the development of transportation tool kits for seniors in communities working to create their own programs. This tool kit helps communities create transportation alternatives that are more suitable to the needs of seniors. We continue to support the research and programs being developed by the University of Alberta's Medically At-Risk Driver Centre, and I'm proud that our government is also investing \$1.3 billion over four years in public transportation.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that my constituents have expressed concerns with the existing financial benefit for seniors travelling long distances to attend medical appointments, will the government commit to examining the benefits schedule?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for your advocacy for seniors' issues in your constituency. My ministry's special-needs assistance program currently provides financial support to low-income seniors. We are aware that some seniors incur significant costs travelling to receive specialized care in larger centres. It's an important issue, and we are looking at what we can do additionally to support seniors.

Agrifood and Agribusiness Carbon Levy Costs

Mr. Schneider: Recently it was moved by the Member for Leduc-Beaumont that the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future undertake a study of how to grow and diversify the agrifood and agribusiness sectors and that the scope of this study be focused on value-added production, small-business opportunities, and local food production and promotion, but now we have had numerous agri-related businesses telling us that this government's policies are doing just the opposite. To the Minister of Energy: why did you jam through carbon tax legislation, that effectively runs counter to motions proposed by your own MLA?

2:20

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, this province has been attracting a lot of investment and a lot of attention in the agribusiness sector. I'm thinking here of the \$120 million expansion to Richardson Oilseed in Lethbridge and a commitment from Cavendish Farms for the largest private-sector investment in Lethbridge history, which is going to be a great economic driver for southern Alberta, certainly, for both my constituency and the Member for Little Bow's.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Schneider: It's great that we got a minister there.

Given that many of these agrifood businesses are already in the value-added production business and given that you didn't run on the platform of a carbon tax and given that several of these value-added agribusinesses are now considering relocating operations out of Alberta, to the minister of ag. Minister, this is serious. If you

truly are supportive of the agribusinesses, will you stand up for them and fight your caucus to exempt agrifood producers from the carbon tax?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, this province has brought in a carbon pricing framework that is a made-in-Alberta solution such that a made-in-Ottawa solution is not imposed on us. You know, it's very clear that the Wildrose and their new frenemies over there in the PCs would rather a made-in-Ottawa plan. Given the rich, made-in-Ottawa pensions that both right-wing leaders are lining up for, I'm not surprised that they like things that are made in Ottawa.

Mr. Schneider: Given that this government was loudly bragging about the Cavendish Farms expansion and how it reflected well on this government and given that government MLAs leapt at the chance to tout this \$350 million private investment, Minister, and that we are hearing from multiple sources that the expansion is now on indefinite hold due to economic uncertainty caused by your government's poor policies, how can you claim that your policies are improving the lives of Albertans while investors are reconsidering business here?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the fact that Alberta's carbon pricing framework was so widely praised, certainly, by energy executives and others yesterday is simply because we have put in place a system of output-based allocations to ensure that all industries do not end up with competitive trade pressures as happened in B.C., and then B.C. moved forward with a different kind of framework similar to what Alberta is putting in place. Now, of course, the Wildrose would not like to welcome new jobs to Alberta, but on this side of the House . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. Time is up.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Springbank Flood Mitigation Project

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following intense flooding in southern Alberta four years ago there was a consensus that the government needed to do something fast to mitigate against another flood event, so we did. Several projects were examined, and the one chosen seemed to be the quickest, easiest, most affordable solution, but for many reasons local landowners, residents, towns, and the Tsuut'ina Nation are all allied to stop the dam from being built at this location. To the Minister of Infrastructure: please explain to all Albertans how exactly you came to the decision on the Springbank dam project versus other options.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of consultation done on the mitigation plans. Our government is focused on building strong, collaborative relationships with all First Nations. Just a little over a few weeks ago the minister did meet with the Tsuut'ina group and plans to continue meeting as the plans go forward.

Mr. Rodney: That is not what we're hearing at all.

Given that the proposed Springbank dam was expected to be the most viable solution to ensure Calgary and surrounding communities were properly protected from future flooding and given that I have heard grave concerns that this project will not be as quick or cost-effective as initially hoped and given that there has been a second option on the table for quite some time, which may actually be a better option now, again to the Minister of Infrastructure: has there been a significant increase in the cost estimates for the project, and if so, why?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member asks about what led to the decision-making around the Springbank project. Of course, it was the former PC government who began that decision-making process and the weighing of the two options. The other option was the McLean Creek option, which was an in-river dam that had many, many construction risks associated with it, a much longer timeline for its environmental assessments, many more environmental effects to take into account, and more long-term environmental effects given that Springbank is a dry dam.

Mr. Rodney: With respect, you're the decision-makers on this now.

Given that I along with all Albertans appreciate the commitment to flood mitigation and given that I've met personally with families who will lose their land, that they have ranched for five generations, along with Chief Crowchild, who fears that Tsuut'ina land as well as Redwood Meadows and Bragg Creek will be threatened by this potential dam, again to the minister: will you meet with the Premier personally, and will you commit to meeting about this specific issue with Chief Crowchild and affected landowners and residents to work towards a positive solution before construction begins?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the 2013 floods were devastating in Alberta. In fact, I was one of the people stuck in Canmore for quite awhile. We don't want that to ever happen again. It caused over \$6 billion in damage. We are working with the First Nations. As I mentioned, the minister met with them a few weeks ago. He plans on continuing to meet with the band as well as other people involved in this plan.

Interprovincial Relations and Pipeline Support

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, for decades the NDP and its ideological OSAG members railed against pipelines. The result: 60 per cent of British Columbia voters now support political parties opposed to pipelines. While the NDP in Alberta had a conversion on the road to government, their provincial cousins to the east and west would cause a train wreck to derail Alberta's economic recovery. Can the Deputy Premier explain how the NDP is rolling back decades of pipeline opposition to get British Columbians onside?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for an opportunity to talk about how proud we are of the great progress we've been making in getting approvals for pipelines to new markets. That includes, of course, getting new market access on the west coast. Right now our Premier is continuing to work to make sure that Asia Pacific markets are welcoming. She was in British Columbia earlier meeting with a number of individuals, and

we're going to continue to work to honour their concerns but make sure that we get new market access, which failed to happen under our Conservative governments both in Ottawa and Alberta.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that the NDP held a press conference to attack the Saskatchewan budget while erecting a tariff wall and sparking a trade war with Saskatchewan over beer and given that the Premier of British Columbia launched her re-election bid by lambasting the government of Alberta on how bad Alberta's finances are under the NDP, to the Deputy Premier. You have isolated Alberta in trade and created enemies out of allies. How are you going to repair our intergovernmental relationships?

Ms Hoffman: Every day we're going to stand up for Alberta families and work to make their lives better, Mr. Speaker. That's why we are so proud that with thoughtful, reasonable collaboration with a number of individuals, including oil and gas executives, they are onside. For example, this morning energy CEOs praised Alberta's carbon tax at a Calgary Chamber event. Business leaders speaking at the Calgary Chamber of commerce event were empathetic, saying that a carbon tax makes sense. They went on to say that this government is doing the right thing and that they're proud to invest in Alberta. We're proud that they're investing here and that we're getting new market access.

2:30

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that the Premier's appointees on her oil sands advisory group are busy trying to stop Alberta oil by making instructional videos on how to stop pipeline construction and given that industry uncertainty spurred by the NDP's cap on our oil sands development is stopping investment and killing jobs, when will the Premier deliver consequences to these radical, taxpayer-funded OSAG members who are trying to stop pipelines in B.C. instead of doing their jobs here in Alberta?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that I am so proud of our reputation and the work that we're doing to make life better for Alberta families, including Tim McMillan, who I have respect for, from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, who said: Canada's reputation as a place that can move projects forward took a step forward today; we have seen today that our governments support energy projects that meet the high standards here in Canada. We also have the Calgary Chamber and others. Berkshire Hathaway Energy said that Alberta has struck a nice middle ground on carbon tax and electricity generation. They said that we have a fund . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.
The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Unharvested 2016 Crops

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The situation in northern Alberta is beyond dire for many local farmers, and many are not getting help from AFSC. Last Thursday, when it looked like we might get in the fields to harvest some of the 2016 crop, we got hit with another foot of wet, heavy snow. It is now questionable if area farmers will be able to start seeding on time, let alone get last year's crops off. To the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Last year's remaining crop is a writeoff in many areas. When will you step in and instruct AFSC to get those assessments completed?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to thank the member for giving me the opportunity to highlight the good work that AFSC has been doing. It is true that it was a bit of a roller-coaster season last year. It started out dry, and it ended wet for many farmers. But as of March 24 over \$32.3 million has been paid to producers. Ninety-five per cent of all unharvested acre claims have been processed, so I would disagree with the member. We're actually very well on track. Our inspectors are doing a good job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that farmers are expected to pay their premiums on time and given that a local farmer, when calling in to the AFSC, was given the following response, "I could give you my supervisor's phone number, but she won't answer anyway; you will get put on hold and be given the runaround," and given that AFSC has only paid out 25 per cent of the insurance to some of these farmers, again to the minister of agriculture: when will you step in? This is a provincial program. Will this supervisor's attitude be dealt with, and how is this making life better for Alberta families?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I do know is that we have 120 inspectors, you know, working out there in the field right now, boots on the ground, making sure that the very few remaining claims are processed. As for the individual the member is talking about, I'd encourage him to give me more information, and we'll look into it. Otherwise, all farmers can contact their AFSC office or phone 310.FARM.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hanson: As a matter of fact, Minister, the lady sent the same letter that she sent to me to your office as well.

Mr. Speaker, given that there are still thousands of fields that need to be assessed and there is no time for a full assessment and given that we discussed this probability with the minister just weeks ago and it's now April 20 and the situation has only gotten worse, to the minister of agriculture. These crops are ruined, period. When will you instruct AFSC to do a blanket assessment based on a nominal site visit and pay out what is owed to our hard-working Alberta farm families?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. Again, I am proud of the work that the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation is doing, that the 120 inspectors are doing. Ninety-five per cent of those claims that he's talking about have been paid out on those unharvested acres.

As for the weather, I'm willing to inform the Assembly that I and this government have nothing to do with the weather, but what we do have is on those policies that AFSC is administering. They're going to continue to do a good job. We're going to continue having the backs of those farmers and continue having the backs of all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

Workplace Legislation Review

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has pulled a shroud of secrecy over its plans to change the Labour Relations Code and the Employment Standards Code. For instance, the Premier and the Minister of Labour have refused to tell Albertans if they will eliminate the secret-ballot provision. Minister, please come clean with Albertans. Are you planning to remove secret ballots? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for his question. Whether it's the MGA or workplace legislation, our government is working to get consultations right. We have heard from hundreds of stakeholders on both consultations, and we are going to be listening to what stakeholders have said while we are designing legislation. The consultations have only just closed. I am still reviewing what has been submitted. But it is important to us that we make sure we have fair and balanced legislation that is right for Alberta.

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

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I did not hear an answer . . .
Did anyone else?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Gill: . . . and given that all Albertans, including my colleagues on this side of the House, want an answer, Minister, let me ask again. Are you planning to get rid of secret ballots? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's very important to me that when conducting consultations, I review the submissions and then make any decisions about what legislation might be brought forward. We've heard from almost 5,000 Albertans, including over a thousand employers. We are looking forward to reviewing that and bringing forward legislation that makes sure we have a workplace system that is fair and balanced for workers and employers. Since we have legislation that hasn't been updated since 1988, it's very important that we make sure we are bringing forward legislation that works for everyone.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that on April 13 I asked if this minister was bringing forward legislative changes to the Labour Relations Code and the Employment Standards Code in the spring session and given that I wasn't able to get an answer to the question that day, I will ask again, and I hope she does not once again trivialize these changes with insulting and disgusting pop music references. Minister, do you plan to sneak through NDP-friendly legislative changes at the eleventh hour? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our consultation in engaging with Albertans brought forward letters from people like Susan, who was concerned about the lack of bereavement leave when her husband's brother passed away in 2015. She wrote to me and said that during this period it was especially difficult to balance grieving, rationing vacation, and arranging child care while maintaining workloads for when they returned. I am taking this seriously. We need to review what's been submitted, and then I will make any decisions about what makes sense for Alberta. The previous government had done reviews and done nothing. I will do something.

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

Employer Liaison Service

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the province's economy improves, it is crucial to get Albertans back to work, so I was glad to see that our government is taking steps to ensure that employers in Alberta get the support they need to connect with unemployed Albertans before turning to foreign options. To the Minister of Labour: how is the new approach to hiring temporary foreign workers going to help put more Albertans back to work?

2:40

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In tough economic times hard-working Albertans deserve a government that has their back. That's why our government approached the government of Canada to ensure that Albertans in 29 high-skilled occupations have the first shot at available jobs. I'm talking about plumbers, carpenters, industrial electricians. When employers apply for workers in these job categories, our dedicated employer liaison officers will reach out and help them connect with Albertans who are looking for those jobs. We want to help Albertans get back . . .

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

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this program is about connecting Alberta employers with Albertans and that it's also a new service, to the same minister: what is the expected cost to run this program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This pilot program has no additional costs for either the Alberta government or the federal government. Alberta Labour already has 19 amazing employer liaison officers across the province. They are already helping employers understand their responsibilities and connect with supports like the summer temporary employment program or the Canada-Alberta job grant. This is simply an expansion of their role. Over the next 24 months our employer liaison officers will be working hard to connect employers with high-skilled Albertans and put them back to work.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is a pilot project for which the government of Alberta and the federal government have high expectations, to the same minister: how is the government ensuring that Alberta employers are aware of the

employer liaison service and know where to get support to navigate the new system?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was thrilled to launch the employer liaison service pilot yesterday with the federal Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. We want to make sure that employers operating workplaces with workers in these 29 categories know that Alberta Labour can help them find highly skilled Albertans. This pilot will help job-seeking Albertans receiving EI benefits or those signed up for the job bank receive notifications that match their skills and experience. We encourage employers to contact us for support in creating a plan to help them recruit these Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Access to Information and Legal Privilege

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has now released three scathing reports on government openness and transparency in the last two months, yet this government has not seen itself as the main problem within the FOIP process. When I asked in December about the government's practice of involving lawyers from start to finish in order to invoke solicitor-client privilege, the Minister of Service Alberta said that the allegations were absolutely absurd. Does the minister still believe this is absurd, or is she starting to see that we were right all along?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It is true that the Information and Privacy Commissioner recently released a report into actions of the previous government. They were critical of some of the processes going on during that time. It is certainly the case that there were some concerns about the presence of counsel in some of those meetings. That process was set up under the previous government, but going forward we absolutely will examine it.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the government argues that Justice lawyers are only used to decide legal privilege in freedom of information requests and given that the Privacy Commissioner's April investigation report contradicts that by showing that a government lawyer counselling a FOIP co-ordinator is enough to invoke legal privilege to block information requests, will the minister admit that the government is using the presence of lawyers to be able to invoke privilege whenever the government is concerned about the records it is about to release?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was the case that when we took government, we felt that the way in which legal privilege was claimed was overly protective of the government. Therefore, last year I gave instructions to the lawyers throughout government to only claim legal privilege when it was actually necessary and to sort of walk that back a little bit because this government absolutely has an interest in ensuring transparency.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister. Given that the Minister of Service Alberta has insisted several times that the presence of government lawyers is not being abused and given that I will table a memo from Service Alberta that states that "counsel from Justice and Solicitor General Central Legal Services will be in attendance when the policy decision is finalized," to the minister: why do you continue to deny the role that government lawyers play in so-called freedom of information when your own deputy minister signed the memo to the contrary?

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I have no certainty . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Excuse me. There may be an acceptance of heckling in the House, but there will be no booing and also remarking upon the speaking style of any member. So please contain it.

The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what memo the hon. member is referring to. I'm happy to review it and happy to review same with my department and my deputy minister. Certainly, there are memos that are transported between individuals, that not everything goes through the minister. So I'm very happy to look into the matter and follow up with the member.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds we'll begin Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

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

Blessed Oscar Romero Catholic School Achievements

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cheerleading is an important sport for many young women and men in Alberta. It was recognized as a sport by the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association, the ASAA, in 1984, and it has grown to comprise dozens of events for both schools and individual cheer clubs.

Today I rise to celebrate a very special group of cheerleading athletes who are with us here in the Chamber and the gallery, the Blessed Oscar Romero high school Ravens. Training day in and day out and demonstrating remarkable athleticism and dedication to their sport, these students have shown what hard work is all about.

I was there in March during the Edmonton competition. Spectators in that packed gymnasium really gained an appreciation for the sport, with the athletes tumbling through the air, doing backflips or cartwheels with complete and unbroken concentration. The Ravens won that competition and moved on to the provincial championship, that took place in Athabasca on April 7 and 8. They won that competition as well, and the Ravens became the ASAA senior high division 1 Alberta provincial champion cheer team for the second year in a row. We in Edmonton-McClung are very proud of their accomplishment and wish to extend to the team members, coaches, staff assistants, and parent volunteers our heartiest congratulations.

I would also like to recognize the principal of Blessed Oscar Romero Catholic high school, Simon Pryma. Mr. Pryma will be retiring this year after over 35 years of working in the front lines of teaching, and I'm proud to be a part of a government that supports front-line educators, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Pryma has been a dedicated educator and exemplary school administrator. He extended to me

every opportunity to participate as the local MLA in Edmonton-McClung in the life and activities of the school in a very welcoming way, and I thank him for that and also thank him for his years of service. We hope he will visit the school from time to time to encourage his staff and students to continue their tradition of hard work and excellence and encourage the cheer team to do their best to compete for a championship each and every year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provincial Election Second Anniversary

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans have been absorbing shocks to their system for nearly two years now. The first shock happened on May 5, 2015. In my constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake the number of dazed expressions that I witnessed in reaction to the surprising NDP win is not soon to be forgotten. The shocks for not only my constituents but also Albertans didn't end there. Rather, it's just the beginning because the NDP took the opportunity presented for an immediate push to make changes that made an already shaky economy turn rocky. In came a 20 per cent business tax increase. In came a royalty review. Investors in my constituency looked for opportunities elsewhere.

To celebrate their win a year later, the NDP chose to introduce a new tax called the carbon tax. That was levied on every Albertan and every wallet. The surprise tax increase sent charities, schools, housing management bodies scrambling to find ways to pay their bills without sacrificing their services.

2:50

As the NDP are about to celebrate the end of their second year, in came the announcement of a labour review. My constituents and the people in Alberta are wondering: when will it end? They just want it to stop. We are out of work. We are relying on social assistance when we used to be relying on ourselves. We are losing hope. Will this confrontational NDP labour review send another shock wave that will put our local oil sands projects at risk? Why does this government choose to do this review just before Imperial Oil, CNRL, and Cenovus are working on a plan for their summer building season? Will this shock bring a prolonged deferral on building within my constituency? Only time will tell. As with everything, Mr. Speaker, a body can only absorb so many shocks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the economy. Now, we know that some members opposite are quite fond of quoting Thomas Hobbes and are especially fond of quoting the phrase "nasty, [mean], brutish, and short" in various contexts. It's interesting to note that Thomas Hobbes' venerable book, *Leviathan*, was actually arguing for a return to an absolute monarchy. It's also interesting that the opposition relies so heavily on a book that was written over 350 years ago.

Now, I would like to recommend some more recent publications to the opposition. As reported in the Edmonton *Metro*, a recent Business Development Bank of Canada report stated that Alberta's economy is turning around faster than other oil-producing provinces. According to the BDC chief economist Pierre Cl  roux: "Alberta is going to have better growth than Saskatchewan or Newfoundland. We are seeing more investment right now in Alberta."

Aided by the approval of two pipelines and by the construction of infrastructure, Alberta's oil and gas sector is set to rebound

stronger than other oil provinces. That, Mr. Speaker, is a direct result of actions taken by this government. This growth has been led by value-added jobs that are taking our agricultural product and creating a finished product right here in Alberta. Beer and honey production, in particular, are growing.

Mr. Speaker, the economy is diversifying, oil and gas is recovering, and Albertans are seeing the benefits of the investments in infrastructure made during this economic downturn instead of carrying out the reckless cuts that the opposition proposes.

Instead of relying on 350-year-old books, we are relying on organizations like the International Monetary Fund, who have come to question the long-term value of austerity measures. We are relying on the former governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, who recommended that investment in infrastructure during a downturn is good fiscal policy. We are relying on institutions and people who are firmly rooted in today's economies and today's economics.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Calgary-Bow.

Energy Industry Support for the Carbon Levy

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the great things about this Chamber and being an MLA is learning about Alberta's economy and how we fit into a world perspective. I have heard the opposition claiming that Alberta's climate leadership plan is destroying Alberta's oil and gas industry and putting them at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of the world, so I was very interested to hear about yesterday's event hosted by the Calgary Chamber of commerce.

Mr. Speaker, CEOs of some of Alberta's largest energy companies spoke in front of a crowd of businesspeople and said publicly that Alberta's carbon levy and related subsidies strike an appropriate balance. The CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Energy Canada stated that the carbon levy has not affected their company's view on Alberta and that they believe in the province and are bullish in investing.

Furthermore, the CEO of Cenovus, Brian Ferguson, was reported as saying that they have confidence in Alberta's carbon pricing policies, enough confidence, Mr. Speaker, that they felt comfortable investing billions of dollars more in Alberta's oil sands. He went on to reiterate that he believed the carbon pricing policy here in Alberta is a major factor in the federal government approval of the Trans Mountain and line 3 pipeline approvals and that these pipeline expansions would have a major benefit for Alberta and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we all welcome debate in this Chamber, and we all know that the opposition must take an opposing view on many issues. They've certainly taken an opposing view on the climate leadership plan. However, when I heard the leaders of Alberta's oil and gas industry stand up at a Calgary Chamber of commerce event and say that our government's carbon pricing policies have struck an appropriate balance and that we are doing a good job in this area, I know whose expertise I will trust, and I know who I will listen to, and it is not the members across the way.

Thank you very much.

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

Stop Abuse in Families Society of St. Albert

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This coming Saturday night I will be attending an annual fundraiser in St. Albert called the Red Shoe Gala. The Red Shoe Gala is hosted by the SAIF society of St.

Albert. SAIF is an acronym for stop abuse in families. Since 1989 this St. Albert organization has offered services to people experiencing abuse and the devastating effects that abuse has on families. SAIF provides individual and group counselling, prevention programming to schools and communities, offers workshops and an intensive 22-week program for women and children who have experienced and witnessed abuse.

I'm sad to report that the need for this kind of support is in high demand all over Alberta, including St. Albert. We have much work to do. Fifty-one per cent of Canadian women have experienced at least one act of physical and sexual violence since the age of 16. Twenty-nine per cent of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse or someone claiming to love them. Add to this the astounding and disgusting abuse, shaming, and threats women receive online from people they don't know, and the picture is clear.

This doesn't make me a snowflake, by the way; it makes me a feminist.

What I would like to say to all of you is: be an example. Be a role model. Monitor your social media accounts. Set a standard. There is much we can do in this House to contribute to this massive public health crisis. Prevention will always be vital, as vital as addressing the root causes.

It's estimated that the measurable health-related costs associated with violence against women in Canada is \$4.2 billion a year. We know that women and children leaving abusive relationships face economic hardships, poverty. This is why a higher minimum wage, school lunch programs, reduced school fees are some of the great ways that we are supporting women and children. I know St. Albert values the work . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The acting Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent to allow the Routine to continue past 3 p.m.

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

National Volunteer Week

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The third week in April is National Volunteer Week. Celebrated in all communities across Canada, it is a time for paying tribute to Canada's volunteers. It also increases awareness of the important role of volunteers and the nonprofit voluntary sector and encourages volunteerism. As the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead put it, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

Volunteers like people. They relish new experiences and challenges to make a difference in their communities. Alberta Health Services says: "Volunteers are ... our most valuable [resource]. Their time and energy provide immeasurable support to our busy staff. They add extra care to the quality health care" provided by AHS.

Recently, at the announcement of the \$61 million for renovation of the ER at the Misericordia hospital, I learned about the vital role that volunteers have played in improving patient experience there in less than satisfactory conditions caused by the infrastructure deficit at that hospital.

Another example is the Royal Alexandra hospital gift shop, which is entirely staffed by volunteers who manage and staff a complex small-business enterprise, organize enhancement of patient care in common areas, and contribute to vulnerable patient support.

My main place of work for 40 years has been the Cross Cancer Institute. The dedicated volunteers there, many of whom I call friends, are indispensable to the positive outcomes of my patients. Examples of contributions of CCI volunteers include providing patient information, running the gift shop, cafe, and tea cart [interjections] . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Dr. Turner: . . . in the OPD and on wards, and driving patients to and from clinic visits.

Simply put, the Cross couldn't function without our great volunteers and all three groups of hospital volunteers, who, like this government, work to make life better for Albertans and are shining examples of what we should celebrate in volunteer week.

3:00

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. On behalf of the Government House Leader, pursuant to Standing Order 34(3) I'm rising to advise the House that on the next available Monday written questions 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 will be accepted. Also, on the next available Monday motions for returns 13, 14, 17, 18, and 20 will be accepted, and motions for returns 15, 16, and 19 will be dealt with.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table five copies of an article from the CBC that I referenced in my member's statement; namely, Energy CEOs Praise Alberta's Carbon Tax at Calgary Chamber Event.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several tablings that I alluded to in my questions today, letters from Dale Christian from Red Deer county relating to the risks of gravel extraction in flood plains, including some aerial maps of areas that show significant risk, especially during flood periods.

I also have copies of the WPAC response to Alberta Environment and Parks' sand and gravel program review of March 2017, where they make eight recommendations, including stopping water extraction on flood plains.

In addition to those tablings, Mr. Speaker, I have a tabling from Jeanne Phéné, a registered engineer who is also concerned about the need for greater consultation on the labour changes coming up. She's a Calgary engineer with concerns about new restrictions on their practice.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of the *Metro* news article I referenced in my member's statement. It includes a lot of discussion on the 20,000 new full-time jobs and, of course, includes the quote in my statement.

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

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just standing to table a copy of the letter that was sent to myself as well as the Minister of Ag and Forestry regarding the frustration of the Boychuk family with AFSC.

The Speaker: The Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the requisite five copies of an article from the *Edmonton Journal* published on April 10, 2017, that talks about the increased number of jobs in the Edmonton area. Particularly, it affects people who live in my riding.

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings. The first one I referenced in my question today. From Energy Efficiency Alberta, it's the page that says on one side that they're selling things; on the other side it says that they're not selling things.

My second one is the terms of service for Energy Efficiency Alberta, which, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, you were too offended to let me read today.

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four letters to table today, the first one being from the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, the voice of progressive unionized employers in Canada's construction industry. They're requesting that the Labour minister consider extending and enhancing the review of the labour code. It's a letter from Mr. Paul De Jong and also was sent to the minister, I believe.

I have three other letters. This letter is from Silverado Site Services – this is in Fort Saskatchewan – from Les Brownlie, equipment manager, requesting an extension and enhancement of the labour review.

A letter from Golderado Contracting Corp., from Laura Wood, manager, is requesting an extension and enhancement of the labour review.

Also, a letter from PME Inc. This letter is signed by Dennis Johnston, general manager, requesting an extension and enhancement of the labour review.

The Speaker: Calgary-Greenway.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies to table of a constituent's letter regarding the changes to the Labour Relations Code.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter to table from Service Alberta. It's written by Tim Grant and Philip Bryden, deputy ministers, and it's regarding FOIP requests for all deputy ministers across Alberta.

The second one is a letter from Shauna McHarg regarding FOIP concerns that she's brought up several times over the last several years. It's important that we start to take FOIP more seriously.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I choose this opportunity to encourage you to have safe travels, those who might be travelling today.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 8

An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government

[Adjourned debate April 20: Mr. Hanson]

The Speaker: The opposition leader.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I had an opportunity to go through my speech and prepare it and think about how I was going to deliver it. When I finally finished, I couldn't come up with, actually, a proper title for it, so I thought what would be best is to reflect generally about what's happened to my community, Fort McMurray in particular, Bill 8, and what it's planning on imposing on my citizens.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I thought about a good title for the speech. Originally, I started off with How to Boil a Frog: They Don't Notice until It's Too Late, which is sort of like our community, Madam Speaker. As you may know, we've had a few things hit us lately. A frog doesn't really know when it's in the pot and there's boiling water. I've never tried this personally, but somebody can turn up the flame a bit, and actually the frog doesn't even notice. He thinks the water just gets warm gradually. All of a sudden, something happens, and the frog is not there any longer. I thought that was sort of appropriate because of what's happening in Fort McMurray and, of course, you know, the different things: the cap on the oil sands emissions, the fire, generally our economy, the carbon tax, and all of those other things. It's sort of like a frog in that situation. But then I thought: that's not really that appropriate.

I kept thinking about, you know, what else I could call it. I thought maybe How to Close Down a Resource Town in 10 Easy Steps. But I know that that song is already taken by the accelerated shutdown of coal that this government has brought in on five or six other communities across Alberta. I thought that song was already taken, and it wouldn't be appropriate to use it on a community like Fort McMurray when so many others already have that.

I looked at some music melodies that I thought would be appropriate, the Talking Heads' *Burning down the House*. I like the band; I don't like the song anymore. *Paper Towns* had *Runaway*, *Burning*, and *Look Outside*, three good songs that I thought would be appropriate. Then, of course, there's the Pretenders' *My City Was Gone*. That was another song that would be great to talk about today because that's ultimately what's happening here with the pile on that this government is doing to my community, my hometown, Madam Speaker. Like, it's my home. It's not just where I work. It's where I live, where I was raised, where my children were born, and where I plan on dying. It's my home, and they're not treating it with respect.

I kept going through the list, and I thought that, well, John Mayer's *Please Be Patient with Me* would be a more appropriate song because, Madam Speaker, I'm not really worried about my house burning down anymore; I'm worried about this government. I'm worried about what they're doing. They are treating my community and the citizens like frogs in a boiling pot of water. That's what's happening. They don't even see it, and that's one of my major problems with this government, not only their lack of any accountability whatsoever but their lack of actually talking to people and getting out from under the dome and recognizing the pain that they're inflicting upon their citizens.

That's why I thought, you know, that the most appropriate would be something along the lines of Audio Adrenaline, who came up with a song called *Goodbye*. I went through the lyrics, and I thought that that would be an appropriate song because what I'm planning on working on full-time is to overthrow this government. I know that's what my citizens want me to do. A recent poll in my community said that 80 per cent of my community members are in favour of what Wildrose and its leader and our shadow minister of Health are doing for the people of Fort McMurray. So *Goodbye* would be the most appropriate melody.

In fact, I looked at it a little bit more, and I wanted to send this song out to the people of Fort McMurray because I believe this government owes the people of Fort McMurray answers, answers to why the fire happened in the first place, why the protection was not there for them, and then to the response to that fire. We're going to get into that, Madam Speaker, I promise you. There are going to be many opportunities in the future, and we will get to the bottom of it, and there will be blame. There will be blame. [interjections] They can say what they want, and they can laugh and snicker, but there will be blame thrown on this.

3:10

It is the government's responsibility to keep their citizens safe. You know why I get upset, Madam Speaker? Because they don't recognize the importance of the actions they do here today, that happen to the people of Alberta. They don't. It sickens me. [interjections] They're making fun over there. They should come and see my community, talk to those people, but they're too afraid. They should come and talk to them. As it says in the song *Goodbye* by Audio Adrenaline, "You'll be fine tomorrow, the sun will [shine]." And it will, because the sun will shine again on Fort McMurray when the NDP government is gone. It will shine again on Alberta. The light will be back on Alberta, the light of prosperity. We will be a beacon on the hill again, the example to the rest of the world of what good governments can do.

Now, Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to talk about Bill 8, An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government, and I'm hoping that's their long-term plan. Unfortunately, the melody that they keep singing is: boil the frog, and let's see if they notice. Well, I notice, and the people in Fort McMurray are awake, and they notice too, as do the people of Alberta. That's why the polls are so bad for this government, why the people of Alberta have rejected them, rejected them everywhere, just about. It's soon going to be very much close to this place that they will reject them, because I know Albertans are smart, and they see that this government is not serving them well at all.

Now, I have the privilege of being from Fort McMurray. I love the place. I do believe it's the greatest place in the world to live, to raise a family, to work, to have dreams, to fulfill those dreams. It does that for many, many people, thousands of people. People right across this province and people right across this country recognize how important Fort McMurray, the oil sands, and, generally, the quality of life there are.

When I moved there, there were 1,700 people. Most people don't recognize that Fort McMurray is, by itself, quite a ways away from any major population. In fact, it's quite a ways away from any other population except for the citizens of the regional municipality or Fort MacKay or Anzac, Conklin, Fort Chipewyan, many of the small communities that surround Fort McMurray. For the most part, we do our shopping in Fort McMurray because you have to make a five-hour car ride to be able to shop in Edmonton, the only other large shopping centre outside of Fort McMurray.

You know, the people of Fort McMurray are resourceful. They're entrepreneurial. They're hard working. They're creative people.

There are a lot of patents that come out of that area. There's a lot of work that comes out of that area. There are a lot of taxes that come out of that area, a lot of premiums for unemployment insurance, lots of premiums for the Canada pension plan that come out of the workers in that area, that they don't see. It's not really an insurance plan. It's just taking money to give to Ottawa so they can decide who gets it. That's what unemployment insurance is in this country. You know and I know, Madam Speaker, that only 38 per cent of Albertans actually get coverage for unemployment insurance while other parts of the country, including Quebec and others, get 58 per cent or 100 per cent in some cases.

Now, that's because, Madam Speaker, we've been treated less than well in northern Alberta for some period of time by not just this government but by previous governments. That's why I came back to government just a few years ago and wanted to have the opportunity to run again for the people of Fort McMurray, so I could see if we could make a difference: a difference in health care, a difference in education, a difference in a long-term facility for our seniors.

In fact, I made a list. I was trying to think of all the things that the province and the federal government have ignored for the people of Fort McMurray for some time. You're not going to believe this, Madam Speaker. I know there was a recent investment in a long-term care facility in Leduc, for instance. I don't begrudge that at all. I think it's good to invest in long-term care because our governments in the last 15, 20 years have really ignored our seniors, have done a terrible job, a horrendous job of managing our seniors' care. I went through a list, and the first one where we've been ignored and, frankly, not treated right was in long-term care.

The second one was highway 63, Madam Speaker. For many years it was called the highway of death. In fact, in 2005, when I was a federal MP, I asked my citizens to come forward and sign a petition. About 6,000, 7,000 people signed a petition in less than two months. I took that petition, and I gave it to the Premier at the time here in Alberta, and I also gave it to the Prime Minister. I tabled it in both Houses, got it to both levels of government. You know what? Within five months of that being tabled, we had a \$150 million commitment from the federal government to twin highway 63. That was supposed to be done in four years. I was the parliamentary secretary of Transport at the time. I was very proud to make that announcement. The provincial government at the time was putting in about 55 per cent of the total funds. It was supposed to take four years to be done. It took 10 years. The PC government was not the greatest at efficiency. This government is no better. In fact, I would say it's worse. But we finally got most of it twinned, and it's a good highway.

I believe that as a result of that twinning and as a result of governments in February 2006 coming forward with the funds to twin that highway, lives were saved. Lives were saved. We drove against the traffic leaving the fire, my friend the shadow minister of Health and I. He was actually driving. I was in my seat belt, and I was pretty nervous. Five lanes of traffic coming toward us. There's no way we would have had no loss of life, in my opinion, without that twinned highway. That's because policies matter and politics matter, and if that fire would have happened three years earlier, I believe there would have been deaths, a serious number, and I believe most experts that have analyzed the fire would believe that as well. So that's number two.

Land prices. Let me tell you about land prices. In 1997 we had a PC minister come to Fort McMurray, and she asked a group of people whether they wanted more land released. The group of people, Madam Speaker? Landowners. Good one. Let's ask all the landowners if they want more Alberta government land to be released to the public. That should be a really clear answer: no. No?

Why? Because they have a monopoly on the land, just like this government and the previous government had a monopoly on the land around Fort McMurray. They managed it so badly that for a lot in Fort McMurray, a small zero lot line, you pay \$450,000. Now, this isn't downtown city centre. This is out in the boonies. You know, in 1993 I paid \$81,000 for a house in Fort McMurray. That house sold for \$570,000 about 10 years later. I bought one for \$185,000 in 2003 and it sold for \$750,000 just about 15 years later. Those houses are not affordable for normal people. And they're not big houses. They're normal, little houses. The one that I bought for \$81,000 was about 800 square feet on the main level, a very humble home.

Albertans are put in this situation, Fort McMurray residents are put in this situation by this government and the previous government. Bad management of our resources and bad management of tax dollars: that's what it is. As a result of that, our land prices are too much, and they don't want to release land because then – guess what? – land prices go down, and everybody gets mad because they paid \$750,000, a million dollars for a home that in Calgary would be worth \$500,000 and in rural Alberta maybe \$150,000. Like, these houses that we buy in Fort McMurray: the high average price of houses and land is a result of the negligence of this government and the previous one. And I'm only on number three, Madam Speaker.

Congestion. When you have 20,000 or 30,000 people that go down the same highway every day, back and forth 35 kilometres for work, maybe – just maybe – a government could plan better so that people, my citizens, my family don't have to wait two hours in line to go 35 kilometres after a 12-hour workday. Maybe before a 12-hour workday they wouldn't have to wait two hours in line. Maybe a government that has the ability to understand how many workers are going to be coming to Alberta and to Fort McMurray specifically for the oil sands, which is every single government because they lease the land and they approve the plant, so they must know what's going to happen. Why wouldn't they build enough infrastructure so that those people that have to travel that 30 or 35 kilometres don't have to wait two hours in traffic morning and night? That's four hours of their work life after a 12-hour shift. Now, that's happened for years, Madam Speaker.

I didn't put this on my list, but I just thought of how many times I've had an opportunity to get a Tim Hortons coffee in Fort McMurray. Well, Madam Speaker, I can do it now, but two years ago: 20 people in line ahead of me. In fact, it was so bad that they had to stop allowing people to line up on the major artery because it was causing traffic problems with a major piece of road.

Infrastructure. Congestion is not just when going to work and back. It's everywhere. There is a lineup to get through town to get to the highway to get to the plant sites. It's crazy. I invite you to come and see crazy. It's lack of infrastructure, lack of planning, lack of good management.

3:20

Health care. Now, the plant sites are required to have their own health facility, and they do, but if you go to the emergency room in Fort McMurray – wow – bring your sleeping bag because it's going to be a while. That's what we've had to deal with not just in the last week or the last month or the last year. We've dealt with that for 15 years. Not enough government management. Well, maybe I should rephrase that: not enough good government management. Our health care is important, and when your child is sick and you've only got one regional hospital – one hospital – you would like some timeliness for the fact that your child is ill. You would like the opportunity to know that you can get into the emergency room in Fort McMurray faster than you can in Edmonton after a five-hour

drive, but that's not the case, and it hasn't been the case. That's what people do; they go to Edmonton instead of waiting in our emergency area. That's crazy. That's crazy, especially when we're supposed to have universal health care. Now, a lineup for a waiting list is not universal health care. That's universal waiting list. That's not real.

That's why the job these folks do – maybe snickering and giggling is good for them, but it's not good for the people that listen and watch this. They want this government to take it seriously because it is their life, and their life is hurting. They are in pain. Right now a record for Alberta: a hundred thousand people collecting unemployment insurance. Wow. What a record to brag about after only two years in government. Twenty thousand jobs last month? Seriously? Madam Speaker, there's at least that number of people, a hundred thousand people, that are unemployed in Alberta that are not collecting unemployment insurance, and they don't even have it in the records that they're unemployed. There are way more than a hundred thousand Albertans unemployed. Go to the real world. You can see them there.

Now, number five is about a tax increase, and that is hurting people, too, because the tax increase, of course, is going to be on the municipal taxes that we're talking about here. At one time this government said that it would be an indefinite grandfathering of the people of the municipalities that are currently under their ratio. Then it went: well, maybe not indefinitely. Now it's to the point where we're changing the legislation so we can sneak in late at night and do it when you're not watching. That's what they're doing. That's what regulations mean. They don't have to bring it back here. They just do a regulation to say: when nobody is watching, we're going to change the law, and we're going to make sure, for the people of the Wood Buffalo municipality, that their taxes go up. They won't even know it. That's not transparency. That's not good governance. That's not accountability. That's hiding what you're doing to the people. It's disgusting, Madam Speaker, especially after the fire, especially after what they've done with income taxes, the cap on oil sands emissions.

Cancelling the Northern Gateway. That was number 7. People say: well, we got two pipelines. Well, I haven't seen any pipelines in the ground. I haven't seen any shovels anywhere. I've been looking for that social licence; can't find that either. But I do know one thing for sure. The NDP in B.C., if they get elected, are not going to allow that pipeline. Madam Speaker, we all know and you know, of course, that the NDP are one big, happy party right across the country, and they plan these little fun sessions about strategy together. We know that. The Northern Gateway pipeline would have brought a lot of investment, a lot of investment into Alberta and a lot of investment into Canada. It would have been very good for the people of northwestern B.C., very good for the aboriginal communities there. I've seen the success in northern Alberta, working side by side with the aboriginal communities. It's incredible to see. The benefits are amazing, long term, and great. I'd like to see those benefits in northwestern British Columbia. I think both the Prime Minister and this Premier missed a tremendous opportunity. A tremendous opportunity.

Now, Madam Speaker, number eight was getting both B.C. parties mad at them. These are our neighbours. These are the people that we need to talk to in relation to laws, in relation to pipelines going through their province, in relation to having their energy come to us if necessary, good relationships. But it's not just the Liberal Party of B.C., that's currently in power, that is mad and doesn't like this government, based upon their comments. They more or less said just a few weeks ago, when kicking off the campaign, that the Alberta NDP is just spending money like crazy

and is going to put our province into the drink, and that's what's happening.

It's not just the Liberal government in B.C. that can't get along with these folks. It's the NDP government in B.C. as well, so with both governments, no matter which one gets elected in B.C., we're not going to have good relationships. That's not what we need to do in politics. Although my job is to be Mr. Negative here in this place – that's what I was elected to do, to oppose and to be Mr. Negative – I'm a very positive person, so it's difficult for me. Madam Speaker, how do you make both left-leaning governments in B.C. mad at you at the same time? Like, it's bizarre.

Now we've got number nine, not talking to the Saskatchewan government. Now, that's the people on the other side of our province. On the west side both parties are mad at us, and the only party that really has a realistic chance of winning in Saskatchewan is the Saskatchewan Party, and they don't even talk to them. They don't get along. Now, if you don't get along with your neighbours, maybe it's time to pack up and move, and I could think of nothing that would please Albertans more than these folks packing up and leaving government.

Now, Madam Speaker, I did have number 11 as the cap on oil sands emissions. You know, it's already oversubscribed. They've already sold more leases and approved more projects than can be done under this cap, so there's going to be some more legal battles. The NDP government, this government, is famous for it. They even have Alberta companies suing Albertans. That's amazing. I can't believe that, but that's what they do.

Number 13 was business taxes. They do hurt, Madam Speaker, businesses taxes. It's very expensive to employ people in Fort McMurray, and when you pay more for people's wages and when you pay more for taxes, it makes you less competitive. It often means that because of some of the other challenges that face them in Fort McMurray – and there are some tough challenges to being in business – they're not going to be in business there. They're going to pack up because they can sell from Edmonton all their products in Fort McMurray. That's what we've been fighting for a long time in local businesses. I heard some talk today about a priority on local hiring. I think that's a good practice. I can't imagine anything more important than the people of Fort McMurray getting the first shot at all the jobs in Fort McMurray, just like I hope the people of Edmonton get the first shot at all the jobs in Edmonton and Albertans get all the jobs in Alberta. Definitely they should get the first shot and then, I would suggest, Canadians and others if the need is there. Hopefully, the need is not there if the government is managing things properly.

Now, Madam Speaker, they've also brought in increased regulation on the oil and gas sector and, of course, increased taxes. Those all hurt.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. leader, I'm having some difficulty tying all of your comments to Bill 8, so I would encourage if you could just kind of, you know, be a little more direct to the bill. Thank you. Please continue.

Mr. Jean: Sure, Madam Speaker. You see, this bill is actually bringing in place a tax system that is not fair for the people of Fort McMurray, just like all these other things are not fair for the people of Fort McMurray.

I was on number 13, but I'm going to go to number 15 because that's the carbon tax. It's very similar to this situation, where they come in and they say: yes, we're going to do something. Or they don't mention it. Like, in this case, the carbon tax is very similar because they said that we were going to be grandfathered because they recognize the extraordinary circumstances of communities like

Fort McMurray and Cold Lake and others, but they snuck it in. They didn't campaign on it, like the carbon tax that's going to cost Albertans \$3 billion, \$5 billion in just a couple of years. That's \$2,500 out of each family's pockets in Alberta. That's how it's similar; of course, they said one thing and did the exact opposite. They're trying to sneak it in through regulations so nobody notices and they can do whatever they want.

That's why it's so similar, Madam Speaker, just like number 15, the GST on the carbon tax. They never even checked it out. They didn't know there was going to be GST on the carbon tax. Did they know that the MGA was going to bring in regulations that actually change it in the dark of night, when nobody's watching? Just like the carbon tax, just like the GST on the carbon tax: they didn't even know it was going to be applied, yet we now find that it could be over a hundred million dollars that the people of Alberta are stuck paying because this government didn't do their homework, because they didn't understand what the ramifications are, even the Minister of Finance suggesting that. Shocking.

Now, number 17, Madam Speaker, was the fire burning down our houses. That is another one very similar to the MGA, where we have a government that's responsible to bring in an act, responsible to bring in regulations and be transparent with the people of Alberta and protect the people of Alberta, protect their economy. Now, the Municipal Government Act specifically says, if you want to know the relevance, "to provide good government." It does. It says that in section 3. It outlines the purposes of a municipality, and I can't imagine a more important purpose for this government than to prevent fires from burning down houses and to take all steps possible. That's a pretty tough blow to take, and the people of Fort McMurray really have a lot of questions on that.

3:30

I did a town hall the other day, and it was so oversubscribed that the phones shut down. They shut down, Madam Speaker, because there were too many people on the line and too many people wanted to talk. I can tell you that I heard it very clearly from people that they could not believe that this government was not held to account for what happened in Fort McMurray. They just don't understand it, and they want answers. They're not getting them, and I think that they've been more than patient.

Now, the Municipal Government Act also talks about what the relationship between the provincial government and municipal government should be. The provincial government is in charge. That's why it's called the Municipal Government Act, because the Premier, the province are in charge of the municipality and in charge of delegating authority to them. Madam Speaker, it's ultimately the province's responsibility to keep the people of Fort McMurray safe and to keep the economy of Alberta in good shape. It's important that they do that. They're not doing that, and they haven't done that.

Madam Speaker, the biggest shock in all of this and the most obvious negligence that I've seen in this place since I've been here and in governments before is the amount of time it took for them to approve the rebuild. They seem to forget that there are 2,500 families that don't have homes. Not only that, but probably a thousand of those people didn't know when they could rebuild their houses.

How would you like it if today your house was burned down and you didn't know for five and a half months that you could even rebuild it? What do you think you would do? You're the frog in the pot of boiling water. You know what you're going to do? You're going to leave town, and that's why right now 10,000 to 15,000 of my family, friends, and residents and the people that count on me to fight their fight here are not going back to Fort McMurray. I

believe most of it is a result of this government not allowing us to know when to rebuild our homes, when we could rebuild them, and when we were allowed to get back in. I believe it was their responsibility, Madam Speaker, and I blame them, and I'm going to make sure that the people of Fort McMurray know that, because it is.

Certainty in your government is just like stability in your government. Those are signals you can send to the people, and this government has screwed that up. They should have got on the ground, let people know when it was safe to come back, and allowed them certainty in the regulations and the understanding: "My house was burned down by a fire. I'm not allowed to rebuild it because of a flood. Now I can rebuild it because of a flood after five and a half months under certain conditions. I never started the fire. I never let it burn. Why should I not be allowed to rebuild my house the same way it was for 30 years before that?" Because of governance. Because of this government. Madam Speaker, I don't think that's fair.

Now, I'm on 11, but I want to talk about business taxes. That's number 12. Business taxes, Madam Speaker, are the highest – highest – of all the prairie provinces in western Canada. Those business taxes, we heard today, are about \$830 a year. Because it's a 20 per cent increase in corporate taxes, it's going to come out of people's pockets. It does affect the people in Fort McMurray a lot because when corporations don't have enough money to pay their staff, they find solutions to it. Right now their solution is: let's fly them in and out of camps to work in the oil sands. That's not a solution. That's a Band-Aid, and it's a Band-Aid that is hurting the people of Fort McMurray and, I think, in my mind, creating a lot of instability. I understand why the oil sands companies do that, because they have to answer to their shareholder, but I think there needs to be an incentive for people to stay in Fort McMurray and to live there and build families and to create a beautiful environment. It is the greatest place in the world to live, but people need to give it a chance, and when their government is not on their side, they won't give it a chance. That's why people have left. That's why people are not happy there.

I know some people there that have been there 50 years, Madam Speaker. She told me a few months ago: I can't live here any longer; I don't feel safe. Their house was not burned down, but they don't feel safe. Fifty years. Her husband is a bush pilot and had a bush pilot plane company that flew in some of the most dangerous places and weathers that is imaginable for a small plane, and his wife doesn't feel safe in her home after living there for 50 years. The stories go on. The increased regulations from this government are slowing down the oil sands and are causing a tremendous amount of problems on the ground.

Now, Madam Speaker, I know I only have an hour and a half, but I do want to talk a little bit about what we have seen in Fort McMurray because I know everybody wants to hear from me for the next 90 minutes. From 2000 until 2015 the population of Fort McMurray grew by 143 per cent – 143 per cent. Wow. That's like taking the population of Alberta today, 4.3 million people, and in 15 years it would be 10.5 million. Can you imagine a population growth in Alberta by that much? It's staggering. The entire province of Alberta in the same time period only grew by 38 per cent, just by way of comparison. Those changes, that boom-bust cycle in Fort McMurray, causes other problems. That's why we need to be treated differently, just like other resource communities. We do because what we have is, all of a sudden, a tremendous amount of pressure on our infrastructure, and nobody comes to our aid, including the provincial government and especially the federal

government. That's why we feel like a frog boiling in a pot of water. We're just not sure how close we are to seeing that water boil.

I've seen both booms and busts in our town, and I've seen the impact of bad government policy. I remember one policy that I never thought would be outdone, the policy of the national energy program by Pierre Trudeau. I didn't think we would see anything worse. As you know, Madam Speaker, I sold office supplies and printing and office furniture door to door during that period of time in Fort McMurray, and almost no businesses survived that. In fact, many people moved out of town, and many people lost their homes and their houses. They lost all hope, and that's what bad government policies do. As I mentioned, I never thought I'd see a worse one until this carbon tax came in with no plan. It was not campaigned on, and now the federal government has almost doubled it. I think it's a bad tax because it's going to cost everybody so much money.

I've seen the local stresses that are caused by lack of involvement by both the provincial and the federal government levels. It's easy to look down on the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo and say: "Oh, those folks have lots of money. They have lots of infrastructure. They have everything they could possibly need." Let me tell you a little bit about my house, my house that was built in Uranium City. It was built in Uranium City, Madam Speaker, out of cedar. It was an older house. It was built in the '50s, I think in '54. The back alley: not paved. It was a dirt road. Front street: the strip was paved but right in front of my house was not paved. Dirt. Now, it's a small lot: 44 feet wide, 130 feet long. I promise you that it was nothing special, but it was my home, and my infrastructure doesn't compare to any infrastructure I've seen around this province, not the municipal infrastructure.

We've now seen some changes, some good changes. We've seen the MacDonald Island complex. That is an incredible beacon of success, I believe. It was a very expensive bit of success, but it's an indoor facility for the people of Fort McMurray to enjoy some of the hockey activities they like and swimming and a water park and a whole bunch of other things, and it was partially paid for – you've got it, Madam Speaker – by oil companies because their employees used it, and I thought that was good partnership between the private sector and the public sector on that.

But, Madam Speaker, we didn't get the support we needed, and as a result of that, when our population went up to 125,000 from just 51,000, we all suffered. We suffered, notwithstanding that the government knew that it was coming. I saw all the reports. I saw people come to the chamber of commerce, who said: "It's coming. It's coming. It's coming. It's going to happen." I saw it in the '90s. Everybody knew what was coming on. I saw reports from all the plant sites. The federal government, when I got there in 2004, knew it was coming. The provincial government knew it was coming, yet nobody planned for it. They just thought we would just take it and be done with it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. leader, again, your speech sounds like it's more of a response to the throne speech or the Budget Address, or I could even see it in the context of maybe Bill 10, but with Bill 8, An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government, I'm just really struggling to find a connection, so if you could please keep your comments more on point, I'd appreciate it.

3:40

Mr. Jean: I will, Madam Speaker, and thanks for pointing that out. In fact, in section 3 of the Municipal Government Act it specifically says "to provide services, facilities or other things." This is a facility, so talking about MacDonald Island in Fort McMurray is exactly what the Municipal Government Act is supposed to do, and

that's why it's relevant to today. MacDonald Island: a great facility, but it's one shining light out of the entire community that doesn't feel like they're treated properly.

You know, the infrastructure is, of course, under the Municipal Government Act because it is governed by the province of Alberta, and the Alberta government is in charge of the Municipal Government Act and puts that authority down to the local municipality to administer, but it doesn't mean that just because the Alberta government gives up the authority, they don't have the responsibility, Madam Speaker. That's what I'm talking about today, under the Municipal Government Act the responsibility of this government. When they do a bait and switch, when they say one thing and do another, that doesn't show good governance. It doesn't at all.

I would say that it does also say, "to develop and maintain safe and viable communities." Now, speaking of safe, we have one of the largest RCMP detachments in western Canada, I think number two largest, about 170 officers or so. We have one of the largest, during the boom times, crime rates of any city our size. Yet the average experience for an officer in Fort McMurray, when I was there practising law, was three years out of depot – three years – because, Madam Speaker, of the tax situation in Fort McMurray and the other investments, the services, and facilities that we have there that aren't adequate, that aren't anything like the ones here in Edmonton, nothing like the ones in Calgary.

That's why I'm saying to you, Madam Speaker, right now – right now here – and I'm saying to the government: please, hold back the legislation that enables you to bring in regulations in the middle of the night to impose a dramatic tax increase to my citizens. Give them certainty. Give them stability. Let them know that this government is going to stand behind them after the great fire. Let them know that they're not going to see a tax increase that's double or triple for their house that they can't afford at a time when they're picking on the people in the oil and gas industry. Yes, I say "picking on" because that's exactly what this NDP government is doing. They are trying to boil the frog and shut down the oil sector. Now, they think the frog doesn't notice, but I'm noticing. I'm going to do everything I can every single day here to stop them from turning up the heat. Madam Speaker, I can't wait to sing that song *Goodbye*, just like I think most Albertans want to sing, too.

It's no secret that our party believes firmly in getting better value for taxpayers' money. I believe that. I don't believe that we should just willy-nilly throw money around. I think that it's important to have a good system and to have good management of that money. But there are other issues here: the long-term predictability and stability that this government could give the people of Fort McMurray right now to understand that they're not going to stab them in the back, Madam Speaker. They're going to have their back. They're going to protect them. They're going to make sure that they can continue to work and live in Fort McMurray and in northern Alberta.

Cold Lake has the same issues. Madam Speaker, we can't all move to Edmonton and Calgary because a lot of jobs are outside of there. There are jobs like the resource sector that create a lot of wealth. There are jobs like our coal sector that did create a lot of wealth until this government shut it down. Our farm sector: that was doing extremely well, but, of course, Bill 6. It's the lack of consultation and trying to sneak something through in the middle of the night. It doesn't help. Trying to create regulations so they can do whatever they want doesn't help. It doesn't send the stability to our community.

But it is the government, this government, the Alberta government, that's ultimately responsible for what happens in Fort McMurray and for all of Alberta, what happens to our municipal government

rate of taxation, what happens ultimately for people moving out of Alberta or staying in Alberta. They talk about 20,000 jobs. Well, you have to look at the 100,000 they lost and look at it in its totality. They lost 80,000 jobs since they got elected, Madam Speaker, and it does change month to month, but overall we've seen one of the highest unemployment rates we've ever seen in Calgary, 10 per cent. It's the highest rate of any city in Canada: 10 per cent in Calgary.

That's primarily as a result of this government's policies on the oil and gas sector. We know Saskatchewan is still the fourth-best place in the world to invest in the oil and gas industry. Alberta is not even in the top 40, and that's because of government policies. We use the same pipelines. We have almost the same laws, the same constitutional obligations. Yet Saskatchewan is doing so well, and we're doing so poorly. It is the government, Madam Speaker. It's the NDP government. It's either negligence, or they're trying to boil the frog. I don't think it's good because I don't think people like it, and I think people see clearly what's going on.

Given what we've done as far as contributions to the entire country, Madam Speaker, those lineups, those 12-hour shifts, the lack of infrastructure, all of those things are reasons to look at this situation differently. One of the reasons why I got back into this was just simply to try to get a fair shake. We don't want anything special. We just want to be treated fairly, and "fairly" means that when you have a situation where a population can explode in 15 years by 150 per cent, you have to treat it differently. We had a previous government that didn't release enough land, so the land prices skyrocketed, and almost no one in the world could afford a house there. I think we should be treated differently as a result and managed into a situation over time, and giving long-term, predictable changes to that legislation and regulation would be a good start.

Now, in Bill 8 we see how the government is giving itself the power to decide a change to the 5 to 1 ratio. With all due respect to my colleagues on the other side, I don't think there's a lot of trust from the people of Alberta. I can assure them, if they haven't heard it, that the people of Fort McMurray do not have any trust for this government anymore. They don't. They don't feel like they can take this government at their word right now. That's why I'm saying to them: "Back up a little bit. We know what you're going to do, and the people of Alberta and Fort McMurray know what you're going to do. They're very upset. We know that this signal that you send will have long-term ramifications, just like the royalty review did." That's right, Madam Speaker. You know.

I went to Toronto, I went to New York, and I went to Washington. I talked to business investors there. They said: "Only one way you're going to get us to invest in Alberta again. Change the government." That's what they said, Madam Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Really?

Mr. Jean: Yes, that's what they said. They did say it.

In fact, not just one but every single one I talked to knew what was going on in Alberta, and they said: if you want us to invest there, get rid of the government. Now, the fact is that we need this government to change course. We need it to go in a different direction. We need it to, honestly, Madam Speaker, do what they say and say what they do.

Now, they say that they have the backs of the people of Fort McMurray. Show us. Show us that you have the backs of the people of Alberta. Reverse these taxes. Eliminate the carbon tax. Stand up against the Prime Minister and say: "Justin Trudeau, no. If you want to come and take away our rights, our resources, which belong to us under the Constitution, you have to go through us first." Have a

Premier that actually has our back. Have a Premier that actually stands up and fights for us.

Bill 8 is just another example, Madam Speaker, of a government that's ignoring the issues that we've had to deal with for years, the issues of not just Fort McMurray, not just Cold Lake but the issues of many communities around Alberta. The signals that are sent to the AUMA and many other organizations, municipal organizations, are the signals that are causing so much distrust, so many situations that are not very friendly to this government, and something that I personally find not the best step forward for democracy. If it's not handled properly, if this is not implemented correctly and managed appropriately, there will be more significant consequences. Those consequences will be foreclosures on houses, on businesses, just like in Grande Cache a few months ago, where a couple moved from their home into their car. I saw it in the '80s. It's happening now again.

This government needs to be there for them, to send the proper signals, to make sure they don't send the wrong ones, and to understand that we are in a unique position, like many areas around the province, and respond accordingly. Let's remember the amount of pain and the frustration that the people of Fort McMurray actually went through last year, the shock. Madam Speaker, I can assure you that it's not over. It's not. People are in pain, and how this government has responded has not been mature. It's not been a good way to respond.

3:50

But it's not too late. They can turn the corner. They can support the people of Fort McMurray, and they can support the people of Alberta through good policies on municipal governments. Madam Speaker, there is still time to correct this problem. I know the Minister of Finance was listening to me with passion earlier. I'm hoping maybe he'll reverse his decision on this. There is still time to do it, to amend the legislation, and to ensure that the residents of Wood Buffalo are not punished for what I consider to be terrible management of our economy. It's not too late. We all learn from mistakes.

I would really hope that they reach out to the opposition, which has two members here in the House from Fort McMurray, and that they have an opportunity to listen to us. Five hours' drive away is a long way away. I know the Premier is busy, I know the ministers are busy, but these are real people, with real lives and real families. They just want something positive to happen instead of something negative. This government is just bringing a whole bunch of negative, and I wish they would just stop.

Now, Madam Speaker, I am done with my speech, but I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 10 Appropriation Act, 2017

[Debate adjourned April 20: Mr. Hunter speaking]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner. You still have 11 minutes.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was in the middle of talking about Bill 10 and talking about the municipal transit and transportation grant programs, that they've jumped almost five times in value this year over last year, from \$125 million to over \$619 million this year. The largest piece of this is the GreenTRIP, coming in at over \$484 million. This is because the province needs to partner with federal public transit infrastructure funds worth

almost \$285 million in Alberta. We can expect lots of light rail transit expansion in Edmonton and Calgary as well as new buses in other centres like Cold Lake and Lethbridge.

With GreenTRIP sunset, a new replacement program for transit has come along. The Alberta community transit fund has \$40 million in it. I look forward to hearing the details of what this all entails. The minister denied that this is his rural Greyhound replacement. He also indicated that more details are to be worked out on existing rural handibuses like the Rocky View handibus service and medical transportation.

A favourite program of municipalities, the strategic transportation infrastructure program, is back, with \$35 million for community airports, local road bridges, resource roads, and local municipal initiatives. The minister indicates he has 170 requests, totalling \$140 million, vying for the only \$35 million that they've allotted.

Another municipal favourite is the municipal waste-water program, coming in at \$50 million. Water for life, at \$55 million, along with partnering money from the federal clean water/waste-water fund worth \$165 million, and another \$25 million for First Nations water: record amounts of money are being spent on water infrastructure in Alberta, \$295 million in total. Even at these levels of funding, places like Okotoks can't get confirmation of provincial funding for a waterline from Calgary. Rural water co-ops are still ineligible for water grants or getting funding for hooking up to existing municipal systems. Add on over \$94 million in debt-servicing charges, and there you have it, Madam Speaker, over \$1.77 billion in operating expenses for Alberta Transportation.

But that's not the whole picture. There's still over \$1.2 billion in capital investments to be made. We have some office hardware like computers and stuff in strategic services getting over \$4 million in funding. Then we have the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads getting over \$273 million in funding this year. Most of that is for the southwest Calgary ring road, a project that has been on the drawing board for decades. There is \$30 million for highway 63 twinning work that needs to wrap up, stuff like the second-stage paving.

But the big money this year goes to highway twinning, widening, and expansion projects. I asked the minister about two important projects: the Ray Gibbon Drive and highway 2 realignment around St. Albert, and the highway 3 twinning, like, the Fort Macleod bypass or through the Crowsnest Pass. While some of highway 3 is on the radar, much remains to be done.

We in southern Alberta have been asking for highway 3 to be twinned for over a decade. Here we are the least impacted by the energy sector downturn, with a strong, sustainable, and growing agricultural base, and we're being left in the field, as it were. I just wanted to be on the record as reminding the minister that we pay our taxes, too, down in southern Alberta, and we need to be able to have this road twinned. Funding the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads is important, but so, too, is funding the twinning of highway 3.

We watched with envy as highway 63, albeit only 200 kilometres of it, got twinned. Though the traffic counts weren't there, the accident count was. The lack of action on highway 3 is causing resentment against this government throughout southern Alberta. With the minister making waves in the Castle area touting tourism and new metallurgical coal developments proposed in the Crowsnest Pass, push is going to come to shove. There will be people killed on the highway, and eventually this road will get the scream that it needs to be twinned. I implore the minister and his department to do the right thing and get on with this project from the west end and work their way east.

What Transportation also did this year was that they cut the budget for interchanges, intersections, and safety upgrades by over

\$32 million over two years, to only a little over \$61 million. This will barely buy one and a half diamond interchanges. Meanwhile Chestermere needs three, and the Balzac one on highway 2 needs to be fixed, the one that the minister made CrossIron Mills pay for in order to install a partial interchange to relieve congestion. The CrossIron Mills fix wasn't enough.

Bridge construction projects has \$68 million in it this year. The minister and I in estimates discussed at length the new twinned bridge for Fort Saskatchewan, teasing out details, and the minister admitted in so many words that Alberta Transportation messed up by not twinning this bridge sooner.

Remember when I was talking about crack filling? If the crack filling does not get done in a timely fashion, it results in a higher rehabilitation cost. Here it is up almost \$111 million over two years. Provincial rehabilitation will run \$388 million this year. There is a lot of paving that needs to be done.

My colleague the MLA for Battle River-Wainwright managed to tease an answer out of the minister about the building Canada fund national and regional projects component. Of the \$476 million remaining, there is \$18.7 million for bridge renewal, \$25.8 million for intersection reconstruction projects, and \$21 million for highway rehabilitation. The minister is waiting for federal approval to spend this money for projects that include the Springbank off-stream reservoir to protect Calgary from flooding; the bridge in Peace River; Sandy Lake water treatment; projects on highways 2, 19, 43, and 63; and major pavement rehabilitation projects in central and southern Alberta.

This leads me to water management infrastructure, the dams. There is over \$39 million on this, and it is not for Springbank or McLean Creek to protect Calgary. The minister says that it's in the Environment department's budget, but we know that the Infrastructure department is waiting for approval from Ottawa to spend building Canada fund money to pay for this project. The minister might want to clarify on the funding for Springbank his department's role in delivering on various parts of the budget. The minister will also want to clarify around the murky nature about this building Canada fund money and the lack of transparency until my colleague for Battle River-Wainwright asked the questions in estimates.

4:00

Finally, there is an \$18 million line item to help with flood mitigation and recovery from the 2013 flood in southern Alberta, for a grand total of just over \$1.2 billion in capital. But there is more. You see, there are financial transactions that are recorded and that occur. Salt, sand, and gravel are needed for the roads for \$50 million as is the debt repayment on the ring roads for just over \$45 million, for a total financial transaction of just over \$95 million.

There is a lot of spending here, Madam Speaker. While efforts are under way to find ways to reduce costs, the industry is going to have to find ways to deliver infrastructure at better prices.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) any questions or comments for the hon. member?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to Bill 10? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to enter some questions into the record on this particular portfolio. This is under line item 2.3, ticket processing, and this is in respect to photoradar. This line item was stated in the business plan. Under line item 2.3, for processing photoradar tickets issued by municipalities, my questions are as follows in that respect: what provincial oversight is there to ensure that sites for these locations are following the automated enforcement guidelines; has the minister been approving the locations listed in appendix A; has the minister ever rejected a location; and finally, when was the last time appendix A was updated, and why isn't it listed in open data?

My next questions, Madam Speaker, are to the Minister of Service Alberta. This is under outcome 2, that government is transparent and information is secure, and this is with key strategy 2.4, to enhance the availability and usability of information on Alberta's open data portal. My question for that is: why are the photoradar locations not listed in open data?

There were some corrections systems that had come under fire for certain cultures which discourage females from entering the workforce. This is under line item 8.2, with the adult remand and correctional centres, and I have a couple of questions with that. What is the female-to-male ratio of management and supervisory level FTEs? My second question is: has your ministry asked the Minister of Status of Women to conduct any GBA plus analysis to ensure that procedures and cultures are creating respectful workplaces for all employees? My third question with that is: has your ministry established an anticorruption task force to address serious drug smuggling allegations, amongst others, within corrections? Then I have two more questions. Are Narcan kits available to our corrections staff in the prison system? The next question is: how many Narcan kits have been administered in the Edmonton Remand Centre and the Calgary Remand Centre?

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, I believe you had moved second reading of the bill on behalf of the Minister of Finance. Did you wish to close debate?

Mr. S. Anderson: We don't want to close debate on it, no.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Then I will call the vote.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a second time]

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Seeing the progress we have made today and the fact that it is Thursday afternoon, I move that we call it 4:30 and adjourn.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:05 p.m. to Monday, May 1, at 1:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to Thursday, April 20, 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 Sitings.

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.*), 556-58 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 674-78 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

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*)

Third Reading — 678-79 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

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*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 cV-5]

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*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c2]

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*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c1]

Bill 6 — Northland School Division Act (Eggen)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 558-61 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 671-74 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 7 — An Act to Enhance Post-secondary Academic Bargaining (Schmidt)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 679-81 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft.*)

Bill 8 — An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government (S. Anderson)

First Reading — 577 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 691-700 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 716-22 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 9 — Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2017 (Carlier)

First Reading — 606 (*Apr. 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 683-87 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 687-90 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 10 — Appropriation Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 670-71 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 690-91 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., adjourned*), 700-02 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 722-23 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 578-86 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Bill 203 — Alberta Standard Time Act (Dang)

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

Second Reading — 496-503 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft., referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future*)

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

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

Second Reading — 503-07 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 205 — Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Act (Jansen)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017 (Kazim)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr2 — Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act (MacIntyre)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

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