



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, October 31, 2017

Day 46

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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

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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP),
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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)

Party standings:

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 27 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2

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Kleinstauber	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 31, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

First of all, we will be taking a photo in the gallery of this Legislature. We attempted to arrange a picture. I'm seeing a message that we're not taking a photo? [interjections] Now please be seated.

Hon. members, first of all, I'll explain. We're taking a risk on the picture outside. We wanted to aim for the "150" banners that were out there, but because of the weather and circumstances we have decided to attempt to do that at a later date. That may not be successful, but we will do our best.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you very much. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature His Excellency Mr. John Lanyasunya, high commissioner for the Republic of Kenya, and his staff, who are sitting in the Speaker's gallery. Mr. Lanyasunya will be meeting with the Lieutenant Governor; yourself, Mr. Speaker; as well as a number of cabinet ministers, including myself; and with senior government officials. The high commissioner's visit will focus on fostering economic co-operation between Alberta and Kenya. I would like to ask everyone in the Assembly to provide a warm reception to our guests.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly some wonderful students from my constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods. The students of Millwoods Christian school are here accompanied by their teachers Ashley Merta, Thomas Hughes, and Sarah Inman. We have three classes of grade 9 students. I would like to ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups for introduction today?

Seeing and hearing none, the Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the Assembly Tara Martin. Tara and I had the honour of working together in Calgary back in the days before I got into politics. She still thinks it's probably a good idea that I got involved in politics. We're not sure. I really enjoyed working with her and welcome her to the Legislature. I would ask that she rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you one of Alberta's occupational

therapists. I'd ask that Abid Valji please rise as I do this introduction. October is dedicated to occupational therapists as they dedicate their careers to the well-being of others. Occupational therapists work to help Albertans in need of care to care for themselves and to live inclusive, fulfilling lives. Please join me in extending the traditional warm welcome to our guest.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House some additional members of the Alberta College of Occupational Therapists. Occupational therapists empower and enable patients to reach their goals and are valued members of patient-centred, team-based care. I'd ask that Gayla Grinde, clinical lead at CASA, Elizabeth Taylor, associate professor in occupational therapy at the U of A, Shaniff Esmail, associate chair and professor of the department of OT at the U of A, Sharon Brintnell, a global leader in occupational therapy and service development, and Maggie Fulford, registrar for the Alberta College of Occupational Therapists, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on your behalf to introduce to all members of the Assembly some familiar faces: Amanda Porter, Kylie Kwok, and Andriy Krugliak. These three incredibly hard-working and dedicated young Albertans are not strangers here because they are former or current members of the Legislature page program. Former head page Kylie recently started her second year at the University of Alberta studying biological sciences, current head page Amanda is in her final year at Paul Kane high school in St. Albert, and former Speaker's page Andriy is enjoying his second year of honours in economics at the University of Alberta. Andriy, however, wasn't quite ready to leave legislative life after his term as a page, so he's now balancing a full course load while working as a dynamic member of the Speaker's office team.

Kylie, Amanda, and Andriy are here today to sit back and relax for a change while observing this afternoon's proceedings. They are standing in the Speaker's gallery, and I would ask all of the House to please give them the warm traditional welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House two of the forces behind the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta, Louise Daviduck, provincial director of development, and Rubyann Rice, provincial executive director. The Schizophrenia Society works to improve the quality of life for those affected by schizophrenia and psychosis through education, support programs, public policy, and research. With their efforts to support those affected by schizophrenia, Louise and Rubyann embody the motto of the Schizophrenia Society: caring, empowering, educating. I'd invite Louise and Rubyann to now rise so that we may welcome them with the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you a group from the MS Society:

Nicole Gasior, Garry Wheeler, Julie Kelndorfer, Michael MacFynn, and Bonnie MacFynn. I will speak more about the MS Society later today, but I want to now thank the MS Society for the great work they do to provide invaluable supports to those living with MS. I'd ask my guests to now rise, which they already have, and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so pleased to rise and introduce to you and through you Telus employees Matt Mosby and Rob Wright and their supervisor, Theresa Stevens. You may have heard about Matt and Rob in the news a few months ago when they rescued a family of four from a terrible apartment fire in a neighbourhood in my constituency of Lethbridge-East. They truly embody what it is to be Albertan, Lethbridgian, and make us all proud. I'd invite Matt, Rob, and Theresa to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

1:40

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly representatives of over 120,000 Lutherans in Alberta and over 80 million world-wide who are today marking the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation. I might add that to the best of our knowledge this is the largest gathering of Lutherans that didn't first involve a potluck supper. I would ask my guests to rise and remain standing as I introduce them.

Reverend Dr. Edwin Lehman is past president emeritus of Lutheran Church – Canada. Reverend Dr. Larry Kochendorfer is bishop of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories of the Evangelical Lutheran church of Canada. Reverend Dr. Glenn Schaeffer is district president of the Alberta-British Columbia District of Lutheran Church – Canada. Reverend Dr. Harold Ruf is the past president of the ABC District of Lutheran Church – Canada, and Mrs. Ruth Ruf. Reverend Dr. Stephen Chambers is academic dean and professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Lutheran Seminary.

Pastor Keith Hoveland is pastor at Zion Lutheran church in Golden Spike, Alberta, and his wife Carole. Pastor Curtis Boehm is pastor at Grace Lutheran church in Edmonton. Reverend Jason Anderson and Reverend Ingrid Doerschel are pastors at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran church in Edmonton. Reverend Heidi Wachowiak is pastor at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran church in Ellerslie along with Jacob Rempel and Tammy Kirkwood who are staff members.

Reverend Clifford Haberstock is retired but was previously president of the Concordia Lutheran Mission Society. Dr. Harold Witte is also a retired pastor. We have Reverend Walter Hambrook. Michael Harmon is a pastoral intern at the Armena Lutheran parish in Armena, Alberta. Reverend John Haycock has a specific interest in my soul because he's my pastor from First Lutheran church in Lloydminster and Zion Lutheran in McLaughlin. We also have some members of First Lutheran, Ron and Ann Faulkner, long-time friends, as well as my son Roland.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have these guests with me today, and I'd ask that they receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. member, the Lutherans got suppers, but we Catholics got bingo.

Members' Statements

Martin Luther

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, 500 years ago today an unknown German priest in a backwater town wanted to start a discussion. You see, the Catholic church was needing to raise money to build St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and for a few coins faithful members could buy an indulgence, a little piece of paper that absolved them of all sin and even sprung a dead relative from purgatory. Now, this priest had some problems with that. He compiled a list of 95 objections and nailed them to the church door at Wittenberg. That priest was Martin Luther. Today I join with my fellow Lutherans world-wide to mark the anniversary of Luther's courageous act of defiance, an act that triggered the Reformation and changed the course of world history.

Now, what Luther did was not without risk. Others had challenged the overwhelming power of the church and were rewarded for their efforts with execution as heretics. But Luther was a man of principle, courage, and unwavering faith. Forced to appear before the Catholic authorities, he was threatened with death if he refused to recant. His defence was simple. "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen."

Luther was excommunicated and declared an outlaw. To avoid execution, he disguised himself as a knight and went into hiding at Wartburg Castle. While there he began the work of translating the Bible into German so that the Holy Scripture could be read by the common people. He returned to Wittenberg, married a nun, fathered six children, and spent the rest of his life preaching and teaching that justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, for the sake of Christ alone.

Lutherans do not worship Martin Luther. He would be the first to acknowledge his many human flaws and his need for God's grace. But people of all faiths can learn from what Luther embodied, his steadfast adherence to his principles despite tremendous personal risk and his unwavering devotion to his followers, lessons, Mr. Speaker, for us all.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Government Policies

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With apologies to Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*.

Once upon an election morning people woke with dire warning.
What had happened while we slept was NDP with 54.
As we stood there unbelieving, wondering, pondering world was reeling –
Came a shiver. It was quite a feeling,
thinking of what would happen more.

"Who are they," we asked ourselves, "who will run this province to its core?"
There were anti-oil activists there
who had picketed and protested everywhere.
They'd coauthored books with radical people and had signs they proudly wore.
They wouldn't try those radical taxes like their brothers did next door.
Surely not raising fees here nor carbon tax would be in store.
Quoth the Premier: all and more.

Suddenly we could see it clearly that their views were oh so nearly
to their comrades to the east. That did worry us ever more.
Bills they were so proudly passing
that were so far encompassing.
I felt for sure they would be pausing from their agenda oh so poor.
“Do you understand this?” we would ask, but their answers
were to come no more.
Quoth the Premier: there’s the door.

One look at Bill 6 consulting made the NDP look quite
insulting.
Battered, beaten, and downtrodden, farmers never felt so
poor.
Now those coal-fired generators
Were feeling like they’d met a gator.
Furthermore, communities that relied on coal were feeling
sore.
Carbon tax caused coal contracts turned back to pool by the
score.
Quoth the Premier: we’ll sue some more.

They tackled those that fish, and foresters and trappers did
wish
the Dippers had never looked their way and what they had in
store.
Caribou plans were quite extreme,
and they blamed the feds supreme,
causing counties, foresters, and towns to start to lean to war.
“Give it up,” they pleaded as they started to feel the poor.
Quoth the Premier: let them roar.

On and on they did continue, straining Albertans in their
quarters,
round and round and back and forth, damaging Alberta to the
core.
“Hey,” we asked them, “aren’t you done yet?”
Surely Alberta has too much debt.
Ninety billion dollars and \$3 billion interest is the score.
Isn’t that enough?” we yelled as we stood there keeping
score.
Quoth the Premier: billions more.

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

Schizophrenia Support in Indigenous Communities

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m honoured today to talk about schizophrenia and its impact on indigenous communities. The Schizophrenia Society of Alberta works tirelessly to support people suffering from schizophrenia to lead independent lives and gain employment. The Schizophrenia Society is aware of the need for support and awareness programs in indigenous communities. They’ve developed an indigenous outreach project to provide support and programs to indigenous communities in Alberta affected by schizophrenia, with a mandate to develop strong, viable, and trusting relationships within indigenous communities.

Employed indigenous helpers and elders will engage community leaders in conversations about schizophrenia and share how services will be made available through indigenous helper support services. They’ll co-ordinate community education presentations for these communities that provide information about the illness, symptoms, support options, and recovery; share real stories and personal experiences of schizophrenia; and challenge common misconceptions. Presenters will be on call to answer questions and provide direct phone support to communities. The presentations

will be ongoing to ensure that the message continues to be spread and to provide helpers an opportunity to develop relationships with those in need of support. The Schizophrenia Society will also collaborate with other aboriginal mental health organizations.

This project will provide valuable support for many people in indigenous communities who are suffering without the information and supports they need. Early intervention and awareness helps people who are experiencing symptoms to reach out, receive help, and have a greater chance of recovery. This is a program offering help and hope to people in need of it.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Pipeline Approval

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I proposed a straightforward motion demanding that the federal government amend the National Energy Board Act to remove upstream and downstream emissions from its pipeline assessments. I did this because the NEB changes that they have done, at the instruction of the Trudeau Liberals, are directly responsible for the death of the Energy East pipeline, a pipeline that this Premier and this caucus claimed to have supported. I can think of no better message from this House than a unified message from all of us to Ottawa that we stand up for this pipeline. Will the government reconsider and support my motion? Will this Premier and will this NDP government do something to stand up . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I would ask all of the members – I mentioned it yesterday – that as we move forward, please contain your volume. There have been several members, at least one that I mentioned yesterday, so I urge you to keep your volume down and, as always, your comments respectful.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned and said yesterday several times, our government fought for Energy East every step of the way. We told the federal government that the downstream emissions should not be a factor in the considerations and the deliberations. Notwithstanding that, our government has done more to promote pipelines in the last two years than the members opposite did in the previous 44. That is why we have two pipelines approved and they got zero pipelines approved, indeed while their current leader was in Ottawa making those decisions. We’re proud of our record, and we’re going to keep going.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: This Premier and this government have been missing in action all summer on this file. The NDP has claimed that they oppose the federal changes, but their actions don’t back up the words, Mr. Speaker. It’s clear that the NDP just want this issue to go away so they can continue their love affair with the Trudeau Liberals despite Ottawa’s persistent attacks on our great province. This is not just about Energy East. This is about the viability of every future pipeline project that is proposed. I will ask again. Will this government send a clear message to Ottawa by supporting my motion? Will this Premier and will this government stand up for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Premier and this government have been standing up for Albertans, and in fact we will continue to stand up for Albertans. We will continue to do the work that they have been unsuccessful at doing. We got approval for a pipeline to tidewater. I am very proud of that. We will continue to fight for that pipeline because we know that that's what's best for Alberta's energy industry and what's best for the Canadian economy overall. That's why we won't stop until the job is done.

Mr. Nixon: All this Premier has is two cancelled pipelines. The federal government does not take into account downstream emissions when they cut cheques to Bombardier, whose planes burn oil. They don't take into account downstream emissions when cutting cheques to Ontario auto plants, whose cars burn oil. But Alberta pipelines, which don't burn oil but just move it, are being singled out for special treatment. Will this government finally send a clear message to Ottawa and finally stand up for what they say they believe in, stand up for our pipelines, our largest industry, and the people of Alberta?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, in fact, the analogies, or one or two of the analogies, that the member opposite made are exactly the analogies that both our minister and myself used in speaking with the federal government about the issue of downstream emissions. You know, I said this last session about the previous Leader of the Opposition, and now I think it applies to the current leader of the UCP: nothing more than a sheep in sheep's clothing; 20 years in Ottawa and never stood up for Energy East. What we are doing is standing up for a pipeline to tidewater, and we will be successful.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
Second main question.

Pipeline Approval and Federal-Provincial Relations

Mr. Nixon: We know how insincere the government's objections are to the federal government, including downstream emissions in its pipeline assessments. They won't support a simple motion that all members of this House should be able to get behind. But just as troubling is this government's inability to defend Alberta's constitutional rights, rights fought for and won by Premier Lougheed. The government has not objected to the NEB meddling in upstream emissions, setting an extremely dangerous precedent. Will the government send a clear message to Ottawa and launch a constitutional, legal challenge to the NEB's invasion of our provincial jurisdiction?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, that's certainly a reasonable question to ask, and in fact we have considered that matter as we have also been working in consultation with Kinder Morgan as it relates to the pipeline to the Pacific. As things stand now, we don't have the legal position from which to engage in what the member opposite suggests, but we will take every legal opportunity that is available to argue that downstream emissions should not be considered, and I suspect that members opposite will be pleased to see that outcome as we go forward.

Mr. Nixon: Well, it might have been a reasonable question. That certainly was not a reasonable answer.

This issue should be bigger than partisan politics. Alberta has constitutional, enshrined rights, and we shouldn't sell those just to make friends with the Trudeau Liberals. Upstream emissions are clearly within Alberta's exclusive provincial purview. Can the government tell us what other constitutional rights they are currently willing to dispose of to maintain their alliance with Justin Trudeau? Is education next? Is health care next? What line is the Premier not willing to cross to maintain a relationship with Justin Trudeau?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's interesting. The members opposite often talk about issues of being careful with our money. In that spirit, I'm not going to spend legal money grandstanding for the sake of political gain, which is what the members opposite are suggesting. What we will do is that we will stand up for Alberta in the responsible ways that are at our disposal, in a way that ensures that we respect the law and that we move forward in a way that gets us what we need to have at the end of the day, which is a pipeline to tidewater, something that we got approved and they did not.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: The hundred thousand jobs that have been lost are not political gain.

Again, this NDP government siding with the Trudeau Liberals over our province is disgusting. They're doing it on pipelines, they caved and agreed to Trudeau's 67 per cent carbon tax, and they refuse to speak out against Ottawa's attack on small businesses. Can the Premier tell us one significant issue, just one, where her government has spoken out against Ottawa? And I don't mean a toothless press release. When is she going to speak out against Ottawa, stand up for the people of Alberta, stand up for the province, and do the job that she was elected to do?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I was not actually elected to refight the lost election of these guys' new leader. Okay? I'm really sorry that they're having trouble getting over the fact that their new boss lost an election to the current Prime Minister, but you know what? Live with it. The fact of the matter is that our job is to do the best thing we can for Albertans, which is what we're doing. You know what? It's working. Things are looking up. Jobs are up. Manufacturing is up. Investment is up. We are leading the country because we're focused on the people of Alberta, not past political losses. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please. Volume.
Chestermere-Rocky View.

Catholic School Sex Education Curriculum

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A member opposite has proposed a motion on interfaith harmony week, and what irony coming from a party whose leader just defamed Alberta's largest faith community. Last week the Premier attacked the proposed Catholic curriculum by saying, quote: consent is the law in Alberta, and under no circumstances will any child in Alberta be taught that they have to somehow accept illegal behaviour in a sexual relationship. The end. By this she alleged that Catholics support marital rape when the curriculum she attacked says, "Consent is always necessary." Why did the Premier smear Catholic educators?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Actually, there is smearing going on, but it's being done by the member opposite, quite clearly, and I'm surprised to see that kind of thing from that particular member.

But let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker. What happened last week was that a document was FOIPed, and it was in the public realm. It included some very concerning statements, some of which were concerning, some of which were confusing. It was therefore the job of the Premier to clarify the position of the government in response to that document, and that is what I did. Under no circumstances will I apologize for it because it was the right thing to do.

The Speaker: Thank you.
First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think confusion should obviously lead to an apology right away. In her drive-by smear of the Catholic educators the Premier went on to say, quote: under no circumstances will we enforce or condone a sexual health curriculum that normalizes the absence of consent. In what world – I don't understand what she was talking about. The proposed curriculum states the opposite, that consent must always be present. Was the Premier misinformed or confused, or was she malicious? In any event, why won't she simply just accept the responsibility by apologizing to the Catholic community for these really outrageous remarks?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, the comments that I made were with respect to a particular document. Within that document there were statements that promoted discrimination against sexual minorities and also discouraged safe health practices and also raised questions about the matter of consent. As a result, it was important for me to clarify how our government would respond to the document on the issue about which there was confusion, about the fact that we will not ever tolerate any form of discrimination against sexual minorities, nor will we promote . . .

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is specifically around the idea of consent. It's not just the Premier who claims that Catholics are supporting nonconsensual sexual relationships, but her Education minister also engaged in the same smearing, objecting to the Catholic curriculum, saying that teaching consent is a basic health and safety issue for students in regard to sexuality, obviously. Given that the curriculum clearly states that consent is always necessary, in what world was – we don't understand what the Education minister was talking about. If the Premier won't retract and apologize for this offensive remark . . .

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

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, there was a document. The document was the subject of my comments. The document contained statements that discouraged safe, healthy practices, that promoted discrimination against sexual minorities and gender minorities, and that raised questions about how one should examine the issue of consent. As a result, we made it very clear that the way in which that document was constructed would

not find its way into a publicly funded curriculum, and I retain that position.

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

Political Action Committees

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, this Halloween something very, very scary lurks in the shadows of these halls. Political action committees are subverting Alberta's election finance rules by bleeding dark money into leadership and election campaigns. Alberta Liberals are going to stop this along with the government. Alberta Liberals want to stop this; it's not clear the New Democrats want to stop this. What magic will the Premier work to ensure that Albertans decide elections, not spooky interest groups?

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much to the member for that very, very scary question. In fact, I have to say that I agree completely with the sentiments that are expressed within that question. Our very first bill, once we got elected, Mr. Speaker, was to take big money out of politics and to enhance disclosure of the money that does go in. The member opposite raises an interesting question about the matter of PACs. Many governments across the country have tried in a number of different ways to limit the impact of PACs, and sometimes the courts have pushed back against that. We introduced legislation that we thought would get us there, but we . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Dr. Swann: Groups like Unite Alberta, United Liberty, and Alberta Together are channelling shadowy funds to the parties of my hon. colleagues to the right and to the far right, but it's the NDP's zombielike pace on regulating PACs that is very unsettling. Is the government dragging its feet because dark money flows in your veins?

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm inclined to say boo, but I won't.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, you know, as I've said, our government is committed to taking not only big money out of politics but also dark money out of politics, and we are concerned at the rate at which we are able to see enforcement of the legislation that we've got in place right now. We are also looking at whether there are ways to strengthen that legislation within the confines of what the courts have said up to now, and we hope there is. I think you'll hear more from us on that very soon. There is no question that people need to disclose, and I would suggest that the new Leader of the Official Opposition might want to . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Dr. Swann: You heard it, Mr. Speaker: "very soon."
The NDP really wants to bury this issue in the political catacombs, but the Alberta Liberals want to drive a stake into the heart so it cannot suck the lifeblood of our democracy. We'd do that by making PACs follow the same rules as everyone else, which is what my Bill 214 proposes. Will the Premier be Wonder Woman and pledge her government's support? Yes or no?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I will commit to the member opposite that you will see from this government the most aggressive legislation against PACs that we can possibly bring in and ensure that it stands

up to the courts between now and the next election because that's what Albertans need. They need dark money out of their politics, they need big money out of their politics, and they need a light shone on where the money is coming from, which is why I again suggest that Jason Kenney should disclose his leadership donors.

Indigenous Educational Curriculum Content

Mr. Rosendahl: Mr. Speaker, over 22,000 Albertans speak an indigenous language. In my constituency several schools offer Cree language programming, which is key to creating bridges between communities. To the Minister of Education: given your commitment to combat bullying, address issues of racial discrimination, and take concrete steps towards reconciliation, how will your ministry ensure that all students learn to respect and understand indigenous peoples?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and for the question as well. I'm very pleased to point out that we have put out lesson plans in regard to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture and teaching, and we will continue to do so. We saw a very big uptake with these lesson plans, and we're very excited about the appetite that Albertans and teachers and students and parents have to learn more about indigenous culture. All Alberta students will learn about the history and legacy of residential schools and the history of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada as part of the government's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The lesson plans that we have . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Rosendahl: Mr. Speaker, given that programs that provide a greater understanding of indigenous culture are often limited to small groups of students or do not continue beyond the elementary level, to the same minister: how will you ensure that indigenous programming is available to all students throughout their schooling?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of June of 2016, of course, we are building new curriculum together with thousands of Albertans, and included as an integral part of that building curriculum is to ensure that we have First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture teachings throughout all grade levels in all subject areas. This is mandatory for all schools, this new curriculum, and I expect that it will help to drive a deeper understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture throughout our province.

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

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that people who are exposed to different cultures and languages lead more tolerant and prosperous lives and despite Mr. Kenney's belief that this is social engineering, to the same minister: what further steps will you take to ensure students benefit from greater awareness of indigenous history and culture?

2:10

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. At all points we know that education is the best way to fight against ignorance, against intolerance and to help to edify all of us and bring us closer together as a people. We know that together with the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Alberta Teachers' Association,

First Nations, and postsecondary institutions we're building authentic culture and language, to teach these things along the way. We're teaching indigenous language as well. I'm looking forward to expand Cree and Blackfoot language and other languages, Dene, to ensure that culture is not just preserved in a museum but it is lived, and it is lived together with . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Opposition

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, Karen Mahon was appointed by this government to the Alberta oil sands advisory group. As a member of Stand.earth, an ill-informed oil sands organization, it is hard to think of a more inappropriate appointment for Alberta. Recently we learned that Ms Mahon was arrested in B.C., protesting against the Trans Mountain pipeline. Ms Mahon now says that this is only the beginning. What gave this government the incredibly foolish idea to appoint her?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, in all our groups when we consult, we consult with a variety of people. We consult with industry, and we consult with environment groups to get the best legislation possible. The person described is no different. She's been involved in different things. We've worked very hard to get our pipelines, and to be clear, our pipelines were approved because of our climate leadership plan. They have federal approval, and they will be built.

Mr. Barnes: Given, Mr. Speaker, that Ms Mahon is a radical who will continue to undermine the confidence in Alberta's oil and gas industry and thousands of jobs for all Canadians and given that Ms Mahon will be starting direct-action training to oppose pipelines, what will this government do to ensure that this pipeline will be built and doesn't just die on the vine like they killed Energy East?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? Our plan, including the climate leadership plan, is working. Jobs are up. Wages are up. Drilling is up. Production is up. That's because there's confidence in Alberta's energy industry. We've secured two pipelines. We're working to diversify our economy, something that this opposition has fought us on the whole way. At some point I need the opposition to work with us to support Alberta's energy industry, support Alberta jobs.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that despite the exposure of the oil sands industry through the panel Ms Mahon declared that this Kinder Morgan pipeline "will never be built," can the government comment on how much of our hard-earned taxpayer money went to work against Alberta's job prosperity and wealth creation, supporting radicals such as Ms Mahon and Ms Berman on this panel? How many of our tax dollars?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we worked very hard on our climate leadership plan and on the OSAG as part of that. We engaged industry and environment groups to manage the 100-megatonne cap. You know what? In Alberta we just recently celebrated 50 years of the industry learning to take oil out of the sand. And you know? It's going to be innovation that's going to take carbon out of the barrel. We have the best innovators,

we have best technicians in Alberta, and we're going to have the best industry going into the 21st century.

Seniors' Housing

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, in my meetings with public, private, and nonprofit seniors' housing providers across the province, all have expressed concern over the ever-increasing financial burden being wrought upon them by this government. Minimum wage increased yet again with little consideration for the impact on the care and services for seniors. And now the already devastating impact of the carbon tax will escalate by 50 per cent in just two months. To the minister of seniors: why has your government disregarded the impact of these irresponsible policies on the health, well-being, nutrition, and compassionate care we owe to our seniors?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we work very closely with our housing management bodies. In fact, we've invested \$88 million for them to do retrofits – improve furnaces, change windows – creating energy efficiency, so we're working very closely with them.

We know that we're caring for seniors and the opposition would be cutting millions of dollars. We know Kenney's plan would be hurting seniors. We're helping seniors.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're hurting them. We're not.

Given that the double whammy of the carbon tax and minimum wage increase will further threaten the financial viability of many seniors' housing providers and, indeed, many other Alberta businesses and given that many have told me that their last option is to reduce costs by cutting expenses related to food, care, and recreation given no credible financial relief offered by the NDP government, again to the minister: why do you continue to put your ineffectual ideologies, damaging wage polices, and burdensome carbon tax . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gotfried: . . . ahead of the quality of life of the seniors who built this province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we're very committed to supporting seniors. Besides the \$88 million that we've invested in housing management bodies for retrofitting and supporting them to do energy efficiency plans, we've also given them a grant of \$500,000 to look at energy audits. This helps them, again, reduce the costs of carbon. We're caring for seniors and protecting their benefits. Jason Kenney's reckless plan to cut 20 per cent from the province's budget would cut 30,000 seniors off the Alberta seniors' benefit. We're supporting. They're hurting seniors.

The Speaker: Second supplemental. Watch the preambles, hon. member.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe if your Premier lets Jason Kenney in the House, he can answer some of your questions.

Given that many seniors' organizations operate both privately funded . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please.

Mr. Gotfried: . . . and publicly funded facilities and given that many of these facilities are unable to afford much-needed capital maintenance due to escalating costs forced upon them by this government and given that in some instances the government has offered to pay for upgrades in exchange for allowing the government to own and operate the facilities, again to the minister: are you using rapid increases in minimum wage, carbon tax to force providers to transfer ownership of their facilities to the government to remake them under the NDP's . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms Sigurdson: Once again, Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet.

Ms Sigurdson: . . . we're investing and supporting housing management bodies across this province. Over 110,000 Albertans are supported in provincial affordable housing programs. We're investing significantly in supporting them to be energy efficient. We're investing. They want to cut and hurt seniors and people in the affordable housing public service delivery. We're certainly proud of all the investment we've put in.

Thank you.

Rural Crime Prevention

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, crime in rural Alberta is skyrocketing. At a town hall meeting I hosted in Mannville last week, the RCMP reported that property crimes in one detachment had increased by 68 per cent over the same period last year but the staffing levels were the same or even lower than in previous years. It is not uncommon for the RCMP to take over an hour to respond to a reported crime in progress. To the Solicitor General: what specific actions have you taken to ensure that rural RCMP detachments are assigned more members to address this increase in crime?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Of course, no one likes to see increasing crime rates throughout the province. The RCMP is responsible for specific deployment of officers, but we continue to support them with the highest funding level per capita in any western province. We invest over half a billion dollars in the RCMP.* We also have programs available to municipalities so that they can add additional officers, and I'd be happy if that municipality were to reach out.

Thank you.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly take the minister up on that because criminals don't work 9 to 5, and they don't take holidays.

Given that some rural detachments are so understaffed that they don't even have enough officers on duty to be around-the-clock and given that this situation would never be tolerated in our larger urban centres, to the minister: what measures have you taken to ensure that rural Albertans have the same 24/7 police protection that is standard for those who live in Alberta's cities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

*See page 1647, left column, paragraph 7

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I think the most important measure that the government can take at a time like this is to ensure that we're continuing to invest in front-line services. This government is taking those steps to make sure that that money is there, that we're not cutting 20 per cent out of the budget. That would reduce staff even further. In addition, we've been working with the RCMP. They have started a new integrated crime reduction unit, and they are already seeing results.

2:20

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that many perpetrators are repeat offenders who have underlying mental illness and addiction issues and given that the availability of counsellors in our remand centres is limited but that access to drugs is widespread and given that addressing the root causes of criminal activity through counselling and rehabilitation is essential to breaking the cycle of crime, to the minister: why are illegal drugs readily available in remand centres but counselling services are not?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member and I definitely agree that addressing these underlying root causes is absolutely the right way to go about solving this problem. That's why our government is ensuring that we continue to invest in health care, that we invest in mental health supports, that we continue to invest in education so that we can assist people to make better decisions as they go forward.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of drugs in correctional centres, we have a number of different things that we do. We've announced just recently a new pilot project with respect to body scanners. Those have been very successful in other jurisdictions, and we hope to see that success here.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Airdrie.

Mouseland Read in Schools

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has told Alberta's parents that there's nothing to worry about when it comes to curriculum reform. Earlier this month the Member for Edmonton-Decore proudly tweeted several disturbing pictures. What was so disturbing? He was reading a book called Mouseland to children in our classrooms. What exactly is Mouseland? Well, it's NDP hero Tommy Douglas's famous socialist story. Can the minister tell us if he thinks Mouseland is an appropriate book for our young children?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I'm delighted to answer another question about curriculum here today. You know, it's important to have Canadian content in our curriculum, and Tommy Douglas is a perfect example of that. Certainly, we are working hard. More than 35,000 Albertans have contributed to the curriculum program so far. If the UCP and Jason Kenney are interested in constructive criticism of the curriculum, then they can join up and actually make submissions about what should be in our curriculum here in the future. I haven't seen them thus far, but the door is always ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, given the minister's unwillingness ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Advanced Education, keep your voice down.

Mrs. Pitt: ... to give a straight answer about storytime with the Member for Edmonton-Decore and given that the Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert also has been reading Mouseland to our school kids and given that it's really not just a fairy tale, that it's the story the NDP founder Tommy Douglas used to push his socialist world view and given that the minister's colleagues are pushing this world view in Alberta's classrooms ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet.

Mrs. Pitt: ... can the minister tell us if he thinks reading socialist ...

The Speaker: Hon. members, where are we? Answer to first supplemental?

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I always get confused about these holidays sometimes. I can't see if it's April Fool's Day or if it's Halloween today. I'm choosing to take the question seriously. You know that Tommy Douglas was voted the greatest Canadian by CBC for a long time. I think that reading and learning about the past and the present and the future is a good thing as well. It's important to build curriculum and to develop curriculum over time. If you take \$1.6 billion out of the education system, certainly you can find a very interesting metaphor about big fat cats.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjections]

Hon. members, please, not so loud with the pounding of the desks.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, this is not a laughing matter. Albertans are sick of having their classrooms politicized.

Mr. Speaker, given the actions of two of his fellow MLAs – it appears that the minister is supportive of reading highly politicized books to young children – and given that Albertans are supposed to believe that the common curriculum reforms don't have an ulterior motive, will the minister denounce the reading of propaganda and demand that his colleagues cease their behaviour immediately?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, as it happens, I was a teacher for 20 years, and one of the important lessons that I knew is that you do not ban books, you do not burn books, you do not put books on lists because that's a slippery slope to a place where you just don't go. What we are doing, though, is building a transparent curriculum. We're building a curriculum together with Albertans. We have literally engaged tens of thousands of people. I'm very proud of that process. What I'm proud of is Jason Kenney and the UCP turning that into a political propaganda machine and a circus. That I do not stand for. [interjections]

The Speaker: Well, you must be excited to get out and do some tricks and treats.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Carbon Levy Increase

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Christmas is on the way, and once again the NDP have a special present coming for Albertans. What's that? Well, it's a 50 per cent hike to its job-killing carbon tax. The NDP's tax on everything raises the price of everything

from fuelling your vehicle to heating your home and even buying groceries. Of course, the NDP never campaigned on this present, and they never even mentioned it during the campaign. Will the government give Albertans a break and put a hold on their massive tax hike?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're making life better for Albertans by reducing greenhouse gases, getting emissions down, and investing in green infrastructure and green energy projects. As I mentioned in a previous question, we have a lot of innovation in Alberta, and we expect that innovation and technology to take the place of carbon emissions. We have a made-in-Alberta plan, and we're making sure that this plan works for Albertans and works for our industry. Our plan is working. As I mentioned previously, we have two pipeline approvals because of this plan.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the minister's refusal I'll change tack just a little bit. Given that the NDP started with a \$20-per-tonne carbon tax and given that they're raising it to \$30 per tonne in just two months and given that, to make matters worse, the NDP agreed to a \$50-per-tonne carbon tax when Justin Trudeau demanded it – true dat – can the minister tell us if there is any limit to how high the price of their carbon tax could eventually go?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're taking leadership on this matter of climate change, something that the new Leader of the Opposition did not do when he was in Ottawa. We're making investments in energy efficiency and green technology, something that \$9 billion in cuts for infrastructure would kill, something like the Calgary green line. We're focused on creating jobs and making life more affordable for Albertan families. The Kenney government would prefer big tax giveaways to their wealthy friends. We're taking care of Albertans on this side of the benches.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the government's complete unwillingness to stand up to the Trudeau Liberals, how can we believe that they won't simply agree to another massive carbon tax increase should Justin Trudeau demand one? I ask the minister again: how high would the number have to go before the NDP finally says no to Ottawa?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

2:30

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What this side of the House is unwilling to do is listen to an opposition that wants us to not create a made-in-Alberta solution for climate change and wants more Ottawa. They want more NEB, more imposition from Ottawa. On this side of the House we're taking care of Albertans by creating a made-in-Alberta plan for Albertan workers and Alberta families.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Indigenous Economic and Climate Initiatives

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose is the home of the largest indigenous

communities in the province, including a significant urban indigenous population as well. This morning we proudly debated Bill 20, about water for First Nations communities. In 2016 our government made a commitment to the principles of the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: what is being done to support good-paying jobs and economic development for indigenous peoples living in communities like Maskwacis?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The Indigenous Relations ministry is currently working with all four bands at Maskwacis on economic development projects, and with each project we provide a variety of sources for the community to be able to better themselves and to create new jobs and revenue for their own community. An example for today is the Samson Cree Nation, who used our fund to provide a feasibility study and a business plan for a community-owned truck stop and gas station located near the city of Canmore. I've also been working with Montana First Nation for several years on their solar energy program.

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

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that indigenous communities often struggle with access to energy, to the same minister: what is being done to ensure that indigenous communities can participate in Alberta's growing market for sustainable, renewable energy and support both their traditional commitment to the land and the goals of our climate leadership plan?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. We're very happy to have announced earlier this year seven different programs in the indigenous climate leadership initiative that will allow First Nations to participate fully in the program to restore our land, our air, and our water to its pure form. That includes programs such as the indigenous solar program, that funds rooftop solar, and the Alberta indigenous green energy development program, which supports funding for jobs in the communities.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm quite proud of the leadership our indigenous nations have been making, but given that the 2016 federal census shows that the indigenous population in Alberta is growing rapidly, to the same minister: what steps are you taking to ensure that indigenous voices are included and heard in the discussions on all matters that concern them?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'd like to take just a moment to thank the member, who is working very hard with the indigenous communities in his riding as I know that he cares deeply about them.

In answer to his question, we have been inviting indigenous people to the table in a way that they have never experienced before. In fact, some of them tell me that we're almost exhausting them with the amount of opportunity we're giving them to speak to government policy and practice. Right now, for example, we're renewing the First Nations consultation policy, the Métis settlement

consultation policy, and the Métis consultation policy for the broader province.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Surgery Wait Times

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, this government continues to fail Albertans. Under this Health minister the first quarter of 2017-2018 shows that Alberta Health Services is failing our constituents. Cataract surgery wait times are at their longest in three years, at over nine months. Open-heart surgery people now have to wait five weeks longer than last year. Does this Minister of Health, who's been at the job for 30 months, realize that her job is to reduce these wait times?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My job is to ensure that all Albertans get access to quality public health care, and I will not apologize for doing that. Obviously, we have work to do, and we are absolutely committed to doing that for all Albertans. We don't want to move forward with Jason Kenney style health care, where only the wealthy, probably the people who donated to his campaign – but we don't even know who those are because he won't tell us – get to access quality health care and the rest of us wait on our own because we have no options. That's the wrong path. I'm glad to stand with a government that's investing in public health care.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, according to AHS in Calgary you have to wait 35 weeks for a hip surgery. In the north it is a whopping 48 weeks, and in the south zone it is 55 weeks to wait for a hip surgery. To the minister: why is there such a large discrepancy within these regions? What are you doing to identify this and resolve these issues?

Ms Hoffman: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of the fact that we are investing in long overdue infrastructure throughout our province. Let's talk about the southwest Edmonton hospital. Edmonton hasn't had a new hospital since the 1980s. That's shameful. Under the Official Opposition, were they to have the opportunity, they would cut \$9 billion from our infrastructure alone and 20 per cent from the Health operating budget. You know what that would do? That would mean seniors would wait in pain while they're requiring hip surgeries, and only the wealthy would get access. That's not what we're doing. We're moving forward to protect all.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, they're just practising for the opposition here.

Mr. Speaker, given that in the central region a report from the 2015 needs assessment shows a shortfall, when you're talking about infrastructure, of 96 beds, 18 ER beds, and three OR rooms, there's an infrastructure deficit in central Alberta. Have you identified that, have you looked at those reports, and what are you doing about it?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud to be part of a government that's investing in public health care. Just in the first three months of this year we opened 388 new continuing care beds. What would happen under Jason Kenney? Cuts, cuts, and more cuts. On this side of the House we're standing up for Albertans and we're investing in things that matter to them, like health care. The member opposite is delusional if he thinks that they can move \$20 billion in cuts, \$9 billion in capital, without having an even deeper impact. I am proud

of what we're doing on this side of the House, and you won't convince me otherwise. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. minister. [interjection] Hon. minister, please. The Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Openness and Transparency in Government

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, under NDP rule the government of Alberta has become the most secretive and least transparent government in our country. Canadian privacy experts have denounced entire departments as rogue agencies, and Alberta's own Information Commissioner has repeatedly called for the NDP to clean up what she has described as "fast approaching a crisis situation." Is the NDP incapable of cleaning up the cesspool of government policies, or is it simply too convenient to operate in the shadows?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. We believe the government should be open and transparent. Our government is more open and transparent than the government in the history of Alberta has ever been. We are hiring more FOIP processors to clear the backlog, we're streamlining the FOIP process, and we're proactively disclosing more information than the Alberta government ever has before. We're taking real action on this. It's clear to us that we inherited a mess, and it's taking a long time to clean it up.

Mr. Cooper: Given that the UCP has discovered through access to information what appears to be the deletion of over 800,000 e-mails from government servers and since these e-mails are public record and belong to the people of Alberta, is there anyone on that side of the House that can explain how record retention policies were so deliberately ignored and almost a million e-mails permanently deleted from the public record?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to add some clarity to my friends in the opposition. We certainly welcome the investigation by the Privacy Commissioner, and we are certainly of the view that this is a good opportunity to make clear to our public officials and, clearly, to the opposition that there is a requirement in the act that requires us to keep official records, but we are also required to delete transitory documents because nobody wants my Gap coupons.

2:40

Mr. Cooper: I can assure you that there are not 800,000 transitory records.

Mr. Speaker, given that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has informed us that she is in fact investigating four departments due to this apparent breach and since government officials were offering iTunes gift cards as prizes to see who could delete the most e-mails, Minister, when is your government going to face the music and tackle your terrible, terrible record on transparency?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to answer this question. As I have said, our government is the most transparent that the Alberta government has ever been in the history of freedom of information and access. There is certainly more work to do, and we are constantly ensuring that our

senior officials have appropriate training. We encourage them to do so. While that kind of contest is not within our guidelines and we would not encourage that, we do encourage appropriate training so that our officials know which documents need to be saved and which ones need to be deleted.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Minister of Justice has requested that she make a correction to an earlier answer.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Rural Crime Prevention

(continued)

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to correct a response I gave to the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster. I had said that we provide half a billion dollars in RCMP funding, which is, of course, incorrect. It's half a billion dollars in police funding, because many of our municipalities have police services that are not the RCMP.*

Thank you.

Dr. Starke: Well, that's fine. It's clarification. It's a good job. Thank you.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Government Policies

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I want to take you on a short trip down memory lane. You might remember the flamboyant vampire character Count Floyd, played by Joe Flaherty. You'll remember him in the Canadian TV show *SCTV*. Count Floyd became famous for the phrase "scary stuff." Seeing as this is Halloween, I want to honour the iconic *SCTV* Count Floyd by naming the top five scary stuff that this NDP government is engaged in.

In the number 1 spot we have this NDP government jumping at shadows any time they hear the name of our new leader, Jason Kenney. It's kind of like the hyenas in *The Lion King* movie that kept jumping at the name Mufasa. No wonder the Premier won't call a by-election. She's afraid of facing our leader in this Chamber.

In the number 2 spot: this government's deficit is \$10 billion, and its projected debt is going to be over \$90 billion by 2020. I can tell you that this is going to be a nightmare for children in Alberta. That is pretty scary stuff indeed.

In the number 3 spot is implying that Catholics condone spousal rape. Now, that's some sick, scary stuff.

In the number 4 spot: the carbon tax, capping oil sands productions, and Bill 6. Yes, there is more than one thing mentioned here, but all these things drive away investment and cost Albertans thousands of jobs. If that isn't scary stuff, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is.

To cap off the top five scary stuff this NDP government is doing is the F, Mr. Speaker. What I'm talking about is the grade F that they continue to receive from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business on red tape reduction. Did you know that Alberta is the only government in Canada that doesn't have a red tape reduction strategy? Did you know that this government doesn't even know how many regulations they have? Now, that is some very scary stuff.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Johnson MS Bike Tour

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My wife, Linda, and I recently had the pleasure of attending the 2017 Johnson MS mountain bike tour. This unique event brings riding enthusiasts to the backcountry trails around Hinton, Brûle, and William A. Switzer park every year. This year over 260 cyclists and 43 teams joined us on our spectacular Rocky Mountain trails. Participants rode 90 kilometres over challenging mountain terrain to raise money and awareness for MS. This event was a huge success. Just over \$300,000 was raised to support the work of the MS Society. They provide support to approximately 14,000 Albertans living with MS. While there are other rides for MS around the province, the Johnson MS tour is the only mountain bike event. Linda and I enjoyed meeting participants as we helped to serve a lunch at the Black Cat ranch in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains near Brûle. We were also there at the finish line and celebrated with everyone at the awards dinner in Hinton.

Now we are looking forward to the 2018 Johnson MS Bike Tour. The MS Society is especially excited since this will mark the 20th anniversary of this unique event. I hope that everyone will join me in supporting and congratulating the MS Society for their ongoing success in fundraising to support research and awareness of MS in Alberta.

Thank you very much.

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

Catholic School Sex Education Curriculum

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few days the Premier has essentially accused every Catholic in Alberta of being in favour of marital rape and of wanting to pass this belief on to their children. The Premier, having heard the over-the-top intolerant rhetoric of her Education minister, decided that she would be the head Catholic school punisher in Alberta and took her language and tone to a place all of us in this Legislature should be ashamed of.

Catholic school boards have been working in good faith – pun intended – with the Education ministry in trying to meet the requirements of the minister's ordered curriculum changes. The Education minister chose to take to the media channels to demean, threaten, and intimidate duly elected separate school boards from across this province from his ministerial bully pulpit. Remember, it is Catholic parents from all across Alberta who elected these people. In fact, the Catholic schools made it very clear in writing, in black and white, that consent before sexual activity is an important aspect of Catholic sexual education teachings.

Somehow the Premier chose to overlook this or did not check this key fact and went on a tirade against all Albertans of the Catholic faith. The Premier's words amount to saying that Catholics are teaching their children that consent within marriage is not required. Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree in this House that sexual activity without consent is illegal, criminal, and wrong.

The Premier has attacked Catholic schools and by extension every Catholic teacher, parent, school board member, and even child in Alberta. These good people are now tainted by the irresponsible, reckless, and hurtful words of their own Premier. The United Nations declaration of human rights under article 26(3) states: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day in Alberta when a Premier of a province needs to be asked to apologize for such an abhorrent quote, but that's where we are today. It gives me no joy to say what I'm

*See page 1643, right column, paragraph 12

saying, but in the absence of an apology from this Premier it is my duty. Premier, do the right thing and apologize.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 21

Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review Statutes Amendment Act, 2017

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

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review Statutes Amendment Act, 2017. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce first reading of Bill 21.

Mr. Speaker, provincial government agencies, boards, and commissions play a pivotal role in delivering important programs and services to Albertans. This is why we are committed to continuing the review of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions. This review was first announced in November 2015 and looked at the 301 public agencies that existed at the time. Since then our government has reduced the number of ABCs, cut executive salaries and perks, and opened the recruiting process for those ABCs to all Albertans. The ongoing review of agencies, boards, and commissions ensures ABCs are transparent, accountable, and using public dollars effectively and efficiently. There are a number of agencies that are no longer relevant, and it is not prudent to keep them in place. We are combining with others to achieve additional efficiencies.

Bill 21, which we are introducing today, is the second omnibus bill that will implement the dissolution of public agencies that require legislative amendments as well as consequential amendments. Bill 21 proposes to repeal or amend nine pieces of legislation to dissolve 14 public agencies. These changes are intended to address inactive and defunct agencies as well as create administrative efficiencies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

2:50

Bill 22

Resident and Family Councils Act

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Resident and Family Councils Act.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce this bill. I believe this act will support the establishment of resident and family councils in all long-term care and licensed supportive living facilities that have four or more residents. These councils are an important mechanism for establishing resident and family councils to present requests, concerns, and proposed solutions to facility operators.

I personally attended a couple when my mom was away when my grandmother lived at the Edmonton General and found that it was a very important opportunity for me to learn from facility operators as well as to express my grandmother's hopes, mostly as they related to doing laundry or the food that she was consuming as those were two things that she took great pride in before she lived in a facility, and she wanted them to be held to the same standard. It was certainly beneficial to be able to participate in those formal structures.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes that residents of Alberta's long-term and licensed supportive living facilities should have a say

in how care and supports are being delivered and how they can be improved. With this legislation these residents can be assured that regardless of whether their facility is privately or publicly funded, they will have a forum to voice concerns and share feedback to their facility operators.

I look forward to discussions and deliberations with my colleagues on this important initiative. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans deserve thoughtful discussion on a wide range of issues. Given the day and in deference to the efforts of Martin Luther 500 years ago I'd like to table five copies of not 95 theses but 95 questions for debate that should be of concern to Albertans, and I invite the start of debate on these issues.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 19

An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to begin debate on second reading of Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers.

Standing behind a till or pumping gas should be safe work, Madam Speaker. Our kids do it. Our neighbours do it. Our friends do it. That's how they earn their living, pay for school, or feed their families. When one of these workers is hurt or injured through a gas and dash or a robbery, we are all shocked. We are saddened. We feel that to our core. No one should suffer injury and pain. No family should suffer the loss of a loved one just because someone else was selfish enough to try to drive away with a tankful of stolen gas. Over the last three years violence at fuel stations and convenience stores has killed five workers and seriously injured three others. As Albertans our hearts break when that happens, and our pain is nothing compared to that of the individuals and families involved.

It must stop, so it is with hope that I introduced Bill 19. I believe that these proposed changes before us here today, with the support of all members of this House, can prevent these incidents from happening again. I know we all recognize the pain on the families who were here at introduction yesterday.

Earlier last year I promised that I would address fuel and convenience store worker safety. Over the last 18 months my department has held engagement sessions with industry, labour groups, advocates for convenience store workers. Occupational health and safety officers have proactively conducted store inspections to better understand risks in retail fuel stations and convenience stores. The result is Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. Bill 19 does this in two ways; first, by making customers prepay for their fuel either at the pump or by prepaying the attendant before fuelling up and, second, by making violence prevention plans mandatory.

I will now take a bit of time to walk us all through both of these areas in Bill 19, starting with prepaying for fuel. Bill 19 amends the occupational health and safety code to make prepayment for fuel

mandatory. Right now it is voluntary. Already many retailers across Alberta have voluntarily equipped their stations with pay at the pump technology, and many have implemented prepay policies either at all times or in effect overnight. That will now be in effect for all fuel stations 24 hours a day.

Prepayment doesn't always mean pay at the pump. Prepayment options don't always need expensive pump upgrades. Our goal is to protect workers, not to create hardships for owners. Prepay options can include paying the service attendant ahead of time or going into the store and paying the cashier. Those options will make it easier for small operators to implement prepay quickly.

We know that there is a very small number of pumps in the province that can't be controlled by workers from inside the store. We are going to be working directly with retailers on other solutions to improve safety and potentially reduce fuel theft as well as make sure that worker safety is the priority. Bill 19 has that flexibility built in.

Data from the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police shows that in 2015 there was an average of 12 fuel thefts per day, 4,000 that year. Every one of those was a potential risk to the attendants, and yesterday Edmonton Police Chief Rod Knecht shared that each incident can take an average of four hours to investigate. We are talking about a huge amount of time from our police services across the province.

When British Columbia implemented similar legislation in 2008 fuel thefts and related violence virtually disappeared. In British Columbia drivers got used to prepay relatively quickly. We expect Alberta drivers will also adjust.

Bill 19 also complements other workplace legislation in Alberta. Alberta's Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act clarified that it is illegal for employers to deduct thefts from their employees' wages. Workers should not be held personally responsible for fuel thefts, and this change will reduce confrontations between workers and thieves, seriously reducing the potential for violence. Mandatory prepay provides Alberta workers with even greater protection, and it's a benefit to owners by reducing losses from stolen fuel.

The second way that Bill 19 protects fuel station and convenience store workers is by amending the occupational health and safety code to make violence prevention plans mandatory. We did the research and found that these kinds of programs, along with strong training opportunities, are the most effective way to reduce crime and worker injuries. Again, up till now violence prevention plans have been voluntary, and many fuel stations and convenience stores in Alberta already have some of these methods in place. They have time-lock safes that have no overnight access. They have minimal amounts of cash on hand. They maybe have video monitoring. Bill 19 will make these mandatory and require signs to be posted so that customers know these measures are in place.

We also know that tobacco and lottery tickets are common targets for theft. Bill 19 will require retailers to keep limited amounts of these available overnight.

Good visibility is the enemy of crime. Stores will be required to have good visibility both within and outside the premises. People working alone will need to have personal emergency transmitters, and all workers must have violence prevention training that includes how to deal with difficult or abusive customers.

3:00

I know that some people have called for rules preventing people from working alone at night. We looked at the research and found that using multiple workers showed mixed results. Violence prevention plans and training are the most effective ways to reduce

crime and violence at fuel and convenience stores and are appropriate for all stores across Alberta.

That being said, every store must complete a hazard assessment and address any identified challenges. That may mean for some locations that additional safety measures are warranted, and I encourage all owners and operators to work with OH and S, who can advise on safety measures to protect workers.

Again, I know that cost is a concern, and I can say with confidence that the cost of a violence prevention plan is expected to be minimal. Many businesses already have purchased time-locked safes and video monitoring technology, and those are the highest cost components. Personal emergency transmitters can start as low as \$3.50 per month per user.

So what happens if Bill 19 passes this fall? Fuel and convenience stores will have six months to adjust. The legislation will come into effect June 1 of next year, and we will be working very closely with store owners across Alberta to communicate changes to them every step of the way. As well, I will work with my ministry to prepare materials to assist owners, operators, and workers. For fuel stations and convenience stores these changes are not onerous. Many already have prepay in place, at least under certain circumstances, and a lot of them already have violence prevention systems and procedures.

Friends, Bill 19 is a response to the tragedies we've seen as Albertans, but it is also thoughtful legislation built on consultation with those who represent the businesses, workers, law enforcement, and the families of victims. It's driven by the conviction that every worker in Alberta should return home safely at the end of the workday. No worker should be injured and no family should lose a loved one because of a stolen tank of gas or other theft. Our government promised to take action and protect those precious lives, and that action starts with Bill 19. I welcome the debate on this bill.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today with a heavy heart, a heart that is truly in mourning, to address Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. Ki Yun Jo, the gas station owner killed in Thorsby, Alberta, as a result of a gas and dash, was one of my constituents. I gassed up at this station many times over the past two years, and he was always polite, and he was always willing to be of service. You could tell that this was a family-run gas station and that he was a hard-working immigrant making a life for himself and his family in this adopted country called Canada.

There are times in life when you wish you could just change things, when you ask yourself: why? Too often there is no real answer, no real answer that helps us to understand the tragedies of life. It's at those times that you reach out to your family and to your community and to your God. You surround yourself with love, and eventually, after the grieving process has begun to turn to healing, you begin to ask and you begin to answer the question: how do we make sure that this never happens again?

The day before Jo was killed, I was in a meeting with several people, one of whom was the staff sergeant of the Drayton Valley RCMP detachment. At the end of the meeting he took me aside, and he said, "Mark, I want to talk to you about a problem that I want you to address in the Legislature." To paraphrase him, he said: "Mark, we have a serious problem in this constituency with people stealing vehicles, then gassing up the stolen vehicles, and taking off without paying. If we don't address this soon, someone is going to

die.” His recommendation was the introduction of a prepay system for purchasing gas.

So it was with great sadness and with great shock that the very next day I heard about the death of Ki Yun Jo. This death, like all of the other senseless deaths accredited to gas and dash, can be mitigated through a prepay provincial piece of legislation. It has worked in other jurisdictions around North America and in Canada, and it can work here.

Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers, will have my support. Bill 19 can be broken into two parts: part one, the mandatory prepay, and the second part, about a violence protection plan. While we have at times, I’m sure, all grumbled about the inconvenience of prepay when travelling in another province or in places like California, the reality is that prepay has saved lives by effectively addressing the issue of gas and dash.

In the days after Jo’s death, I made a point of stopping at several of the gas stations in my constituency to have a conversation about prepay legislation. Without exception they told me stories about their experiences with gas and dashes. Incredibly, in the small town of Calmar at one gas station there were two gas and dashes in the two days following the death of Jo. There was not only concern about the lost income and worker safety but, just as importantly, the safety of the citizens as the vehicles raced out of the gas station. One of the employees was very concerned that people on the sidewalks and cars on the road were going to get hit as these gas-and-dash vehicles went flying out of the gas station.

Bill 19 has a flexible approach to prepay in that it can allow citizens to prepay at the pump. You can prepay using cash or debit card at the till, and you can leave ID at the till and pay cash in the store. If stores do not have in-store pump control, the gas station can work with occupational health and safety to put together alternative measures that will ensure worker safety.

The second part of Bill 19 is a violence prevention plan. This will implement a series of measures designed to enhance worker safety. It will include employee training on safe cash handling and violence prevention, special safes with time locks or drop safes to take away the incentive for violence, a limited quantity of goods on hand of high-quality items like tobacco or lottery tickets. The flexibility on this issue has been built into the bill with a common-sense approach, whereby specific amounts will be determined by individual employers based on sales, past sales and projected sales. It includes increased high visibility regarding windows and lines of sight that will increase worker safety. It controls access into and out of the workplace, video surveillance, posters that will outline the safety measures that have been taken so that customers will be educated, and it will act as a deterrent to those that have other ideas. Personal safety transmitters will be employed to monitor employees that are working alone.

Madam Speaker, while there will be some cost to this, Bill 19 does provide enough flexibility that the cost does not need to be prohibitive. There are no fines or penalties built into Bill 19, but the plans and the training must be evident to OH and S inspectors on-site if requested.

3:10

Overall, Bill 19 addresses the issue of gas and dash with flexibility and effectiveness, and it will have my support. I realize that there may be some that will decry the inconvenience of prepay or believe that the cost to the gas and convenience store owners is too high, but I believe that the benefits to the community, to the promotion of law and order, to community safety far outweigh any perceived or real negative outcomes.

The week after Jo’s tragic death the community of Thorsby came together to mourn with the family. I watched as people cried and

prayed and as they attempted to love the family. I saw a long line of people give their condolences, and those same people would have, if they could have, done anything to reverse the events that took Jo’s life. While we cannot turn back time, in this Legislature we can ensure that we have taken measures to ensure worker safety and to address the tragedy that can happen when there is a gas and dash. It is my fond hope that should we pass this piece of legislation, this will be the last time that we have to mourn because of a death created by a gas and dash.

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

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am proud to speak to you and through you to all of my fellow members in the House as cosponsor on the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods’ Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. Friends, family is the cornerstone of our great province. Family is there to get you through the tough times and is present to share the triumphs. We are compassionate to their safety and well-being because as Albertans we revere family as the fabric of our great province. We all work hard for our families and cannot negate that it is the fundamental cornerstone that drives us on a daily basis.

Madam Speaker, I wish to offer a moment of silence in the House as a respectful tribute to the families whose loved ones did not make it home because of the reckless actions of fuel thieves. Over the last three years five Albertans’ lives have been taken, and three have sustained serious injury as a result of their occupational vulnerability. This, fellow members, must stop. I rise today in support of Bill 19, an Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers, which serves to strengthen and protect those at risk of the needless consequences of their jobs. Pumping gas and standing behind a till is an essential service in our economy. As Albertans we have built a national, international, and global legacy from our rich resource. As many Albertans have built a life, we must do our best as a government to protect them in all facets.

I am saddened to have read that five lives have been taken as a result of violence arising at gas and convenience store locations, and I encourage Bill 19 as a further prevention to this minimization of our citizens’ lives. These crimes take a toll on Albertan society and threaten the sanctity of our workplaces. Through consultation and proactive store inspections we have learned that we can mitigate risk through legislation and thoughtful preventative measures.

Madam Speaker, it is a great opportunity for this member today and for all members in the House today. Legislation aimed at protecting our workforce is most definitely multifaceted. Reducing negative impact through prepay methods focuses on a strong deterrence to the risk for our gas and convenience workforce. At this point this voluntary mechanism has been adopted by many within the industry, with strong support from advocates and labour groups.

Prepayment need not be viewed as an expense if it enables our gas and convenience workers the liberty they deserve: going home at night. Options are available to support this legislation with minimal overhead costs. Our goal is to protect workers, not create hardship for owners. It is integral to recognize that there is no justice for a life lost, and over the last three years there have been five lost.

Current data supports that there were an average of 12 fuel thefts per day in 2015. Effecting prepayment mechanisms can significantly reduce this number, and this, Madam Speaker, resonates sound governance. The burden of these thefts exasperates our police force, and implementing prepayment further exemplifies mitigating impact.

When we look to our neighbours to the west, in B.C., we can identify the opportunities of effecting Bill 19. Prepayment resulted in the virtual disappearance of fuel thefts and crime-related violence.

Madam Speaker, I firmly believe that the lives of our gas and convenience store workers are well worth the few extra moments it takes to prepay for fuel. As Albertans our ability to be adaptable and resilient can assist in assimilating this legislation with seamless and flawless execution. When we partner Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers, with amendments to our occupational healthy and safety code, we are maintaining our mandate to make life better and safer for all Albertans.

Research supports that coupling prepayment legislation in conjunction with mandatory violence protection plans is an effective way to reduce crime and worker injury. Up until now both have been voluntary, and the aforementioned statistics correlate with a resounding need for change.

Time-lock safes with no overnight access, minimal amounts of on-hand cash, and video monitoring are strong deterrents to criminal activity. Good visibility on targeted premises further enhances the safety of our gas and convenience store workers. Reducing accessibility of commonly targeted commodities such as lottery tickets and tobacco products and personal emergency transmitters also serve to mitigate risk and vulnerability. Madam Speaker, these are viable remedial solutions that serve to protect our Albertans who are just trying to make a living.

Empowerment is attained through training investments that focus on how to deal with difficult and abusive individuals. This further stands to mitigate risk, which, in turn, recognizes profit potential, and this, fellow members, is a win-win.

3:20

Legislating Bill 19 is a call to action that serves to preserve the interests of our industry and its workers. It serves as a message that we as a government can and will respond to the predicating values of our great province. This is our commitment to reducing crime, preserving the safety and sanctity of our Albertans, and redefining the values of the lives and livelihoods of our proud Albertan men and women.

Madam Speaker and fellow members, if Bill 19 is passed, we are resolute in working alongside store owners across Alberta and maintaining the communications that enable these changes with thoughtful regard. But what we cannot misunderstand is the importance of this legislation and the safety mechanisms it serves to effect.

I wish to thank all those organizations who have effected these precautionary measures to preserve the safety of their staff and business. We wholeheartedly open the doors of communication to those who require assistance in implementing the mandate. We stand unified in our efforts to ensure the safe return home of all employees, who are, like everyone, working to make life better for all Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, I will recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. An honour and a pleasure to stand and speak to this very important bill that, yeah, has needed leadership for some time, and it's getting leadership, from my point of view.

Instituting mandatory prepayment for fuel purchases in Alberta will reduce gas-and-dash incidents. It will save lives. It just stands

to reason that if a person has to provide payment before filling up with fuel, theft becomes much more difficult. Requiring prepayment for fuel purchases is the next logical step after the government recently amended the Employment Standards Code to prohibit employers from holding staff financially responsible for stolen gas. Since the proposed prepay approach is somewhat flexible and won't actually require gas station operators to install prepay pumps, at a price tag of around \$30,000 each, the cost of compliance is also not overly burdensome. Many gas station operators already use prepay systems, so in some respects this is a case of the legislation catching up with the industry trends.

Evidence from other jurisdictions shows that mandatory workplace violence prevention plans can be highly effective in reducing crime at fuel and convenience stores and protect the health and safety of workers. While there are some naysayers, to me the concerns about freedom and choice pale in comparison to the importance of the safety and health of our workers.

I have no amendments to suggest and only full support for this as quickly as possible. Let's facilitate this and, obviously, wait the six months to allow for operators to bring into place these important changes. I applaud the government for its initiative on this.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, I will recognize the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think it's very admirable to see that we're trying to keep Albertans safe, especially those that are working late at night and during the day. I think that any time we can move a law forward, that shows that we have the best interests of Albertans at heart, especially for those that have an entire vested interest in ensuring that these gas stations work.

Now, as I'm sure many of you in this House are already aware of, my constituency right now is going through some hard times: high vacancy, a lot of businesses struggling. I can tell you that every dollar that goes into a business right now makes a difference. I know that the gentleman that was killed in Thorsby probably was run over for \$50. I don't know the total, but it probably wasn't a lot of money. But when you put in perspective – and this is from the cosponsor. She said that 12 of these fuel thefts were happening per day in 2015. That amounts to a lot, and that's only what's been reported. I can only assume that a lot of what is happening right now goes unreported. When we've got a business that's already struggling to make the rent payments or pay their staff or bring merchandise in, it is incredibly bad for business to have your merchandise walk away.

Now, I can tell you that one of those things from the facts that we've done for research is that there are 1,500 gas stations, and about 12 to 15 of those 1,500 gas stations do not have pay at the pump. That seems like we've got a very small percentage of the whole right now that can already do this, so the impact should be low if we bring this legislation in. It should be very low impact, but there is going to be some impact. I do understand that when we're dealing with the fact that we need to make sure the employees aren't put in unsafe conditions, we need to also address other things.

Now, cash handling is definitely something that I think every business should be looking out for and putting a plan forward for. I know that as a past business owner myself we made sure there was never any cash on premises when we closed the business, but a lot of these businesses are 24 hours, and they don't have that ability, so it's important that the staff have training and are able to know that cash is just not on the premises. I think it's great that we're

starting to say that there shouldn't be sizable amounts of cash on hand. I also think that we do need to be cautious, though.

Now, I will say that possibly 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. may be a little bit onerous for some businesses. The reason is that some businesses are – in my constituency we've got guys that drive two hours away, so they need to gas up in the morning. That means they're getting to these gas stations at about 4, 4:30 in the morning. We do need to make sure that we have the ability for these gas stations to be able to deal with the high volumes in case there are peak periods, especially when they're close to oil sands projects and other large businesses.

Also, another one of the concerns that I've got here is if you go to the bill and look at 392.2(c), "maintaining good visibility into and out of the work site." It could be that they're going to be needing some significant structure upgrades, which could be very onerous. Again, safety needs to be definitely considered first, because you always want to make sure that safety is put forward first for every one of the employees that are within Alberta. I guess the question here is that if OH and S is going to be willing to work with these struggling gas stations and convenience stations across Alberta to ensure visibility, maybe they could do it with mirrors or something like that, but to actually have to go in there and change foundation – suddenly we're adding several hundred thousand dollars to something that may be something we can explore a little easier.

3:30

Or even making sure that there is video surveillance. I will say – this is another thing – that we have had remarkable gains when it comes to video surveillance, and I think that it's not very cost prohibitive right now. It's something that's accessible. I think that this is great, that we are able to say: this is important, that these groups are starting to look at identifying these people that are running away from a gas station without paying.

Now, I will say that I have a constituent who wrote me. This is a constituent. His name is Gerald Lafond, and I'd like to read the e-mail that he put forward.

[Dear MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake,] I am outraged Oil companies are surviving the economic downturn unscathed by maintaining high pump prices and not passing the only advantage of low oil prices down to the consumer. There seems to be an acceptable scam going on and people don't appear to be reacting to this shenanigan.

Please explain why Oil companies are not offering a direct proportional rate at the pumps vs. crude oil prices. I understand a lot has to do with inventories and a wheel barrow full of other excuses but [there's] no justification for inflated prices of \$40/[barrel of] oil.

Now, he goes on, but this is relevant because what's happening here is that we're seeing a rapid increase in gasoline prices within our province. Now, in this case I would argue that we have created a high value for this gasoline, and we've done that through taxes. By putting so much tax on this, it is becoming a real strain not only for those without work but for those that have jobs right now.

Now, for those that can't afford it, what we're seeing here is that a carbon tax is directly affecting their lives and the fact that you've got a GST on a carbon tax, a tax on a tax, if you will. Now, that means that what we're looking at here is a commodity that is becoming very valuable because it's very expensive.

Now, there's an article that was put forward by Global News. The article's title is Shot Fired during Attempted Fuel Theft near Red Deer: RCMP. Now, what happens here is that we're not only seeing this fuel theft at gas stations; we're also seeing this fuel theft out in rural Alberta. This is a real problem for rural Alberta because what we're seeing now is that there is an incredible spike in rural crime.

It's not just something we're seeing in the fuel stations; we're also seeing it across Alberta. This is what happens indirectly when you start overtaxing people. We start to see that there's an increase, or a spike, in theft, and what happens is that it puts people's lives at risk.

Now, when we hear that over the last three years five deaths have happened because of this fuel and dash – I'm not attributing these five people to a carbon tax because that's ridiculous, but what I am doing is saying that we're creating a real energy poverty within this province. When we create that, what we're doing is we are putting people in positions that are more or less saying: in order to heat my house, in order to fuel my car, in order to do basic things in life – and I can't afford them – what do I do? I would hope that we back off on some of these other things because in the end we're going to see larger spikes in crime and we're going to see more things like this as we continue to levy more and more taxes on Albertans.

I think this is a great bill. I think that the fact that we put this forward is a protection. I do think we need to be very cautious to ensure that there's not red tape that prevents business from operating, but we also need to make sure that the consumer is protected. I can tell you right now that as I see this carbon tax being implemented, we're going to see more and more energy poverty within our province.

I'd like to say that the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster was very clear when he was talking about a large spike in crime. What we need to start doing is actually going after these criminals that are doing these things because if there is an end result, we start holding people accountable for their crimes, you're going to start seeing a decrease. We won't see shots fired on Red Deer residences. We won't see as many of these gas thefts.

I will tell you that people become more and more creative when it comes to theft. We'll find a way to reduce the amount of risk that comes with paying at the pump, but what's the next step here? Does that mean that these thefts – these thefts are going to happen anyway. Are we shifting these thefts from a gas station to farmers and ranchers inside of Alberta? Are we shifting these thefts? We know that they need gasoline. Are we moving that into a person's personal property? It's important that we bring this forward.

But it also is important that we address the fact that rural crime is out of control in rural Alberta. We need to make sure that our constituents and my constituency are protected. Now, that means that we need to put resources towards our prosecutors to ensure that they start prosecuting these crimes and getting these petty crime convictions ahead of time, before they create something like a death. What we're looking at now is that if we start to shift this out to rural Alberta – we do not want vigilantism to be part of protecting your property. We do not want people to be put in the position where the only thing they can do about ensuring that they have safety on their property is a gun by the door because that is tragic.

I heard from the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster that it takes an hour for people in rural Alberta to hear from the RCMP. Now, I have sat with my local RCMP. They're incredible. Both the detachments are incredible. They work hard. These men and women are incredible. They do an incredible job. I can tell you that I have heard that the frustration is that we have the same group of people committing the same crimes over and over again because we're not getting these people off the streets. Now, it could be, as we heard, again, from the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster, that there's a systemic problem. I can tell you that the detachment in Cold Lake specifically identifies drugs as that problem, and they've started to focus on that.

I think that as a province we need to start addressing that we have a real problem when it comes to this, so we need to start dealing with these kinds of problems, like how do we protect the workers,

but how do we ensure that that theft doesn't move out and start affecting more and more people?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, another speaker. I will recognize Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. I am very pleased that this government is introducing Bill 19. It's bills like this that I think all legislators in this Assembly should be proud to pass because it's a bill that will save lives. I'm actually inspired by the tone in here today.

3:40

Madam Speaker, the deaths of gas station and convenience store workers really are the catalyst to this legislation. For me, these deaths are the most heartbreaking and egregious of them all. That's because these deaths occurred while on the job, while people were merely trying to earn a living for themselves and their families. Every Albertan should return home from work. While accidents happen, if we can help reduce deaths at work through legislation, then we should, and we are doing that with Bill 19.

You know, there have been some tragic incidents of gas station employees, including June 2015 in Calgary, October 2015 in Edmonton, and, of course, most recently on October 6, 2017, in Thorsby, in which Mr. Jo, a gas station owner, was struck and killed. It was very emotional to have his family here in the Assembly yesterday, Madam Speaker, as I'm sure you're aware.

As I've stated in this Assembly before, the gas-and-dash death in Calgary in 2015 of Maryam Rashidi occurred in my constituency of Calgary-Klein. In fact, I was taking my daughter to the local hardware store that morning, the morning of Ms Rashidi's death, which is located right beside the gas station where she worked. My daughter and I were minutes away from seeing the incident. I can't imagine if we had. You know, I often used to purchase gas at this gas station, too, and unknowingly had met Ms Rashidi. I just didn't know that it was her. I also spoke at Ms Rashidi's funeral. It was heartbreaking – absolutely heartbreaking – and I never want to have to do it again. When I spoke at her funeral, I committed right then and there to ensuring that it never happened again.

Madam Speaker, after that incident this government committed to making work safer for Alberta's convenience store and gas station employees. That started last session with Bill 17, in which it was legislated that convenience store and gas station employees cannot be held liable for missing money due to theft. This protection will be enhanced with the passing of Bill 19. As the minister said, it will do this in two primary ways. It amends the OH and S act to mandate prepaying for fuel, and it mandates that a violence protection plan be in place.

In regard to prepay options the safest way, of course, is to pay at the pump as there is no interaction between the customer and the

employee. But for those operators who don't have pay at the pump technology, they can use the pay before you pump option. We've made this an option, being cognizant of the \$30,000 to \$35,000 required to upgrade a pump.

Research shows that violence protection plans with strong training components are the most effective way to reduce crime and injury at fuel and convenience stores. This includes security cameras, emergency transmitters when working alone, time-lock safes, and, of course, training to ensure that they are familiar with what safe workspaces are. Now, as we know, B.C. has had these measures in place since 2008 and has virtually eliminated fuel thefts and related violence.

Madam Speaker, this government committed to protecting Alberta's convenience store workers, and we are doing it, but we did want to get it right. That's why we did conduct extensive consultations over 18 months. This included discussions with industry leaders like Husky as well as health and safety associations, academics, labour organizations, families of workers impacted by violence. Also, our OH and S officers conducted focused inspections of over 250 gas stations and convenience stores across the province to get a real understanding of what the risk and safety measures are out there. According to data from the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police there was an average of 12 fuel thefts per day in 2015. This must stop as every theft has the potential for a violent confrontation.

Through consultation it was also determined that the majority of gas and convenience stores have many of the measures in place, and we will work with those that don't to ensure that they are safe and compliant. This is also why we're providing the six months to allow operators the time needed for compliance. It will also give consumers the time required to adjust as well. It would also be mandatory for these fuel stations to hang signs to say that prepaying or paying at the pump will be mandatory.

I'd just like to close by thanking the minister for bringing this forward. Thank you to everyone that's spoken on this, and thank you for the tone on the other side right now. I'm feeling that this is going to have no problem passing. I think we need this, and I think we all understand that we need this. I am very pleased to be a part of this government and this bill, and I do look forward to further debate and encourage all members on the other side and all members of this Assembly to help us pass this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a second time]

Cortes-Vargas: I would move that we call it 6 o'clock.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:48 p.m.]

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