



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, December 6, 2017

Day 62

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP),
Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition
Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (NDP)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (NDP)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),
Government Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (NDP)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (Ind)
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (Ind)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (NDP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (UCP),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (NDP)
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (UCP)
Jansen, Hon. Sandra, Calgary-North West (NDP)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (UCP)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)
Kleinstauber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (NDP)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (NDP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (NDP)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)

Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP)
Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
Government House Leader
McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret,
Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (NDP)
McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
Official Opposition Whip
McKitrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (NDP)
McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (NDP)
McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (AP)
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (NDP)
Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (NDP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (UCP),
Leader of the Official Opposition,
Official Opposition House Leader
Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Premier
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (NDP)
Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (NDP)
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (UCP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (NDP)
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schneider, David A., Little Bow (UCP)
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (NDP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (UCP)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (UCP)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (NDP),
Deputy Government Whip
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Vacant, Calgary-Lougheed

Party standings:

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Vacant: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk
Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and Director of
House Services
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel
Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel

Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and
Committee Services
Nancy Robert, Research Officer
Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of
Alberta Hansard

Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
Chris Caughell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Gareth Scott, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
Shaye Anderson	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Deron Bilous	Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Joe Ceci	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
David Eggen	Minister of Education
Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Sandra Jansen	Minister of Infrastructure
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Children's Services
Brian Mason	Minister of Transportation
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Stephanie V. McLean	Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women
Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Community and Social Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

Parliamentary Secretaries

Jessica Littlewood	Economic Development and Trade for Small Business
Annie McKittrick	Education

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Coolahan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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

Carson	McPherson
Connolly	Panda
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schneider
Fitzpatrick	Schreiner
Gill	Taylor
Gotfried	

Select Special Auditor General Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Cyr	Littlewood
Gill	van Dijken
Horne	Woollard
Kleinstauber	

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goehring
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Aheer	Miller
Drever	Orr
Hinkley	Shepherd
Horne	Swann
Jansen	Vacant
Luff	Yao
McKitrick	

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Drever	Nixon
Gill	Pitt
Horne	van Dijken
Kleinstauber	Woollard
Littlewood	

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Wanner
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	Nixon
Dang	Orr
Jabbour	Piquette
Luff	Schreiner
McIver	

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Ms McPherson
Deputy Chair: Connolly

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

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

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

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Cyr
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

Barnes	Malkinson
Fildebrandt	Miller
Fraser	Panda
Goehring	Renaud
Gotfried	Turner
Littlewood	Westhead
Luff	

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Loyola
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hunter

Babcock	Loewen
Clark	MacIntyre
Dang	Malkinson
Drysdale	Nielsen
Hanson	Rosendahl
Kazim	Woollard
Kleinstauber	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Statement by the Speaker

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

The Speaker: On this day 28 years ago 14 Montreal students were killed for being women. I'm the proud father of four daughters, who I encouraged to grow up and to ignore artificial boundaries which others may place on them because of their gender. I now share the same message with my granddaughters. This event, more than a quarter century ago, was a hate-filled attempt to prove to myself and other proud fathers and mothers that we were wrong to encourage our daughters to be whatever they wanted to be, whomever they wanted to be, and to love whoever they wanted to love.

That man failed in his objective, and that is proven to me on a daily basis when I come into this Chamber of the Legislature each and every day. This man's failure is not only proven to me by the number of women in the Assembly but by the millions of Albertans who voted in 28 female MLAs and by those who voted for hundreds of other candidates who were not as successful. Our citizens do not look at gender but ability in casting their ballot.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the ambassador for the State of Kuwait to Canada, His Excellency Abdulhamid Alfailakawi. Kuwait and Alberta have much in common, especially the strength of our energy sectors and the common goal of increasing renewable energy production by 2030. We were happy to lead a delegation of Alberta companies to Kuwait last month, in November 2017, to explore opportunities in the region. In fact, there are many opportunities to collaborate and innovate in the energy sector, but there are also many opportunities in agriculture, agrifood, advanced manufacturing, education, and health services, to name a few. We look forward to continuing to explore these avenues with His Excellency, to expand relations between our province and Kuwait. I'd now invite all members of the Assembly to join me in giving the ambassador a warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

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

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure to be able to introduce some friends and students from l'école Greenview school in the wonderful constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Cheri Krywko and Ms Amanda Kates. They also are

joined by chaperones Mrs. Miranda Macauley, Mrs. Renae Dyck, Jill Cahoon, and Leonard De Guzman. I hope that they've enjoyed their time here at the Legislature. It is such a pleasure to be able to see them here. I will be by to read stories soon. Please rise to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health and Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the minister of seniors it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a school group from the riding she represents, Edmonton-Riverview. There are 30 grade 6 students who are here from Crestwood junior high. We're confident that they'll enjoy their time here at the Legislature and have many good, probing questions to follow up with their teacher and others. They are here with their teacher, Trina Ludwig, and the adult chaperones Mr. Lane Monteith and Dianne Kirwin. We thank them very much for being here. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions this afternoon. First, I would like to introduce 11 members of the home-school field trip group who reside in Edmonton-Rutherford along with their chaperones, Mrs. Joanne MacDonald, Mrs. Karen Roth, and Mrs. Heather Reich. I would ask them all to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Now my second introduction. We have some friends in the gallery from the South West Edmonton Collaborative. It's a group of service providers who get together in my riding of Edmonton-Rutherford every month to discuss how they can provide services for our neighbours and families who call Edmonton-Rutherford, Edmonton-Whitemud, and Edmonton-South West home. My staff have the pleasure of attending these meetings as I am often unable to do so. I will read through their names and ask them to stand as I do so. We have Ev Simpson, Karen Lee, Wendy Melnyk, Rhea Bowman, Connie Marciniuk, Jennie McLester, Andrea Seeger, and Thomas Bonifacio. Would they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you a group of grade 6 students from the beautiful city of St. Albert, from the Wild Rose elementary school. I believe they are behind me. I'll get them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today in the House to introduce to you and through you my constituency assistants Sabeen Vasti and Mohammad Alam. They are very dedicated and very devoted CAs, such as I could possibly imagine having, so I would like to thank them for their efforts and for being with us today. Thank you so much. Please give them a round of applause.

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you a constituent, dear friend, community

volunteer, and mentor, Mr. Jack Redekop. I met Jack when he was volunteer president of a community-managed family leisure centre, and through a long process of trust and collaboration we were able to establish the Trico Centre for Family Wellness as a corporate, public, and community partnership with Trico Homes, who I was employed with at the time. Jack is a graduate of the U of A, a chartered accountant, a successful business owner, employer, entrepreneur through his company Computer Upgrading Specialists. As an aside, another pinnacle of Jack's life is having summited Mount Kilimanjaro with his two sons.

Mr. Cooper: Twice?

Mr. Gottfried: No. Just once.

Jack is an inspirational community volunteer, having coached hockey for many years, served as president of the Trico Centre, and has served in senior leadership roles on various provincial and federal constituency associations, including his current role on my newly formed Calgary-Fish Creek UCP association. Jack is also a giving and passionate member of his church and brings his commitment and spirituality to all he does for Alberta and in the community. Mr. Speaker, I would ask Jack to rise and remain standing to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to this Assembly seven people who contribute greatly to agriculture and forestry research in the communities I'm proud to represent in Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley. As I introduce their names, I'd ask them to rise. Audrey Gall and Vance Yaremko are from the Smoky Applied Research and Demonstration Association, better known up our way as SARDA, which is based in Falher. It was established in 1986 to bring research institutions, industry, and ag producers together to share information, and their vision is to one day own an advanced ag resource centre of excellence.

We also have Liisa Vihvelin from the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association, which is a hub of innovation and research that benefits beef, forage, and crop producers in the Peace region. Also, I would like to welcome Tom McMillan from the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta, Melissa Freeman from the West-Central Forage Association, Roger Harbord from the Lakeland Agricultural Research Association, and Sean LaBrie from the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that these groups receive and work together under a fund from the Alberta opportunities fund. I wanted to recognize each of them for their contribution to both ag and forestry. My personal thanks to them. Please join me to welcome them here in the Assembly today.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce and congratulate a long-time Edmontonian who was recently inducted into the Hershey Bears' hall of fame. Roger DeJordy was a prolific goal scorer for the Calder Cup winning AHL Bears, including 52 goals scored in the 1966-67 season, and Roger also played many years for the Edmonton Flyers and the Edmonton Monarchs seniors. He's accompanied today in the gallery by his wife, Mary Paraszczak, and I would ask my guests to now rise and all my

friends in the Legislature to extend the customary welcome to this hall of fame.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a long-time friend of mine, Mr. Al Browne. Al has been a businessman in Alberta and British Columbia for over 45 years. He's past president of the Alberta hotel association, past board member of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and of the SAIT Board of Governors, and a proud UCP volunteer. I would ask Al to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce to you today a pair of people, starting with Zoe Szeremet. Zoe is with us all the way from Australia to witness a legendary Alberta Legislature question period. Zoe is accompanied today by Tyler van Vliet, a long-time friend. Tyler has been door-knocking with me since he was 15 years old. He currently works in my office in Calgary. I would ask both of them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 19 students from Londonderry junior high school in my constituency of Edmonton-Manning. They are accompanied by Annette Zielinski, assistant principal at Londonderry junior high, and Peggy Wright, a teacher at John Barnett school. Last year I held a consultation with all the grade 6 classes across the constituency on how an idea can become a bill, and I'm honoured to have some of those students here today for the introduction of my private member's bill. I would like them to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly some amazing individuals from the Paralympic Sports Association. Joining us today are Amy MacKinnon and Gary Marcellus. The PSA offers supports and recreation programs for children, youth, adults, and seniors with physical and/or developmental disabilities and has been the launch pad for many national and Paralympic-level athletes. Also, I will add that they have offered to organize sledge hockey tryouts for the members if they so choose. I will ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

You have another introduction.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three distinct guests who have returned from volunteering at the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh. As you are aware, there is extreme persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and while the

conflict and crisis seem to be a world away, let's be clear that racism, discrimination, and prosecution, regardless of where in the world they're occurring, are unacceptable. Our guests are family physicians who travelled to help by volunteering at a medical camp and continue to do important work here in Canada to assist those who are so desperately in need.

Joining us today are Dr. Fozia Alvi, Dr. Sameena Bajwa, and Dr. Fizza Rafiq, with husbands Dr. Zahid Rafiq and Dr. Abdul Kamran. They are showing us the importance of standing together to put an end to persecution and racial violence, both here at home and abroad. In light of the heartbreaking racial vandalism in Calgary yesterday, their visit to our House seems even more timely. I'd ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a day when we remember 14 women whose lives were taken from them because they dared to enrol in an engineering program at l'école Polytechnique, it is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two amazing women from the Women Building Futures organization, which calls Edmonton-Centre home. Women Building Futures prepares women for careers in skilled trade industries, where women have historically been underrepresented. These career paths are transformational for women, their families, their communities, and Alberta's workplaces. WBF has graduated over 2,000 women and has an employment rate of over 90 per cent.

Here today are Kathy Kimpton, CEO and president, and Jacqueline Andersen, director of stakeholder relations. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health and Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and through you Jana Tondou, who is a constituent of Edmonton-Glenora. She's seated in the members' gallery today, and I ask her to rise. Jana is an energetic, passionate, and community-minded volunteer. She is a hard-working limnologist, our water quality expert, with Alberta Environment and Parks and ensures that Albertans have safe drinking water. Jana was born in Wainwright and now resides in the community of Woodcroft. I'm very fortunate to know her, proud to work with her and for her, and proud of the work that she does to support our government. Please join me in extending the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my fabulous and hard-working constituency office staff, Kathryn Casement and Michael Mooney, who do everything they can every day to make sure the constituents of Calgary-East are connected to the government and also make sure that I look good, whether I'm in need of coffee or speaking notes or, you know, sometimes lipstick. If they could rise and please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature two guests who are founding members of the building safer communities block watch program in the northern hills of Calgary. Tavis Settles lives with his family in Covewood Green in Country Hills. He's a lifelong resident of Alberta and works with Secure Energy Services in their IT department. Shane McEwen lives in Coville Circle with his family. He grew up in Quill Lake, Saskatchewan, and is a project marketing manager for the life safety division of Honeywell. I'd like to thank them both for joining us here today. If they'd please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I have a second introduction here. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members Dylan Liley, who is originally from Davidson, Saskatchewan, and now lives in the Mill Creek Ravine area of Edmonton with his family. He proudly raises his children Marigold and Fredrik, who are in grade 1 and preschool and attend the Escuela Mill Creek immersion program. Dylan has had numerous businesses on Whyte Ave., including Vespa Edmonton, and now works in business development in oil and gas and in industrial capital and maintenance projects internationally. I'd ask Dylan and his daughter Marigold to rise, please, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Legislature.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

Greenhouse Gas Large Emitter Regulations

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, today the minister of environment announced the replacement of the specified gas emitters regulation with something called the carbon competitiveness incentives regulation. Alberta has had a price on emissions for a decade now, and since the NDP imposed the 100-megatonne cap on those emissions, now the NDP are tightening the belt, squeezing this same industry for more money.

A confidential leaked government analysis of the NDP's own plans reveals the devastating cost of the NDP policy. The Alberta climate change office estimates the total cost to the energy industry at around \$1.3 billion per year, starting in 2018. The Alberta climate change office estimates that six oil sands projects may be at risk under the proposed output-based allocation structure. An Alberta Energy analysis, on the other hand, identified up to 15 oil sands projects that may be at risk, which could result in reduction in production and investments in Alberta.

Alberta Energy anticipates that the potential impact from output-based allocation combined with the pending methane regulations could have a greater employment loss than the estimated impacts associated with the coal phase-out. Yesterday's announcement of \$1.4 billion over seven years for innovation projects, of which only \$440 million is innovation to increase production while lowering emissions, is nothing but trying to close the barn door after the horse has left.

The facts remain. The NDP is siphoning billions of dollars from our productive oil and gas sector and handing the money to their special-interest friends for risky schemes. NDP policies, Mr. Speaker, are killing the economy and jobs, and they'd better stop it.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.**Greenhouse Gas Large Emitter Regulations**

Mr. Nixon: A confidential government analysis of the NDP's own plans reveal the devastating costs of the latest NDP policy. The government's own analysis says that the output-based allocation requirements will have material impacts on the competitiveness of the oil and gas facilities in Alberta. It goes on to say that the total costs of the OBA requirements to the energy industry in Alberta will cost approximately \$1.3 billion a year. The question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Why are the NDP once again knowingly attacking the oil and gas industry and the Albertans that they employ?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, the opposition is living in the past and wants to beat Alberta right into the ground. The material in this particular case that they are referring to over there is months old, and they know it. It's based on decisions that were never taken. Here in the present, however, we are investing \$1.4 billion in innovation, and people like CAPP are saying: it is good to see innovation being recognized as part of the carbon plan; it's something that our industry is obviously very committed to. We are proud to work with Albertans. That other side just wants to keep yelling at them.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the internal analysis makes reference to the sale of oil sands assets by international companies, events that occurred just this last spring, but if the government wants to insist that this analysis is outdated, all they need to do is release their latest updated impact analysis. To the Premier: will you release your government's latest analysis of how many Albertans will lose their jobs over your heavy-handed, ideological decisions? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the minister of environment was in Calgary today releasing the actual decisions that this government has made. But, you know, when it comes to the members opposite, keep in mind that these are the same folks who have denied climate change again and again. In contrast to that, what our government is going to do is responsibly reduce emissions, and we are going to work with and support industry as we do it. For instance, the president and CEO of the Cement Association of Canada said that our work on carbon competitiveness included – and I quote – the most collaborative stakeholder consultation exercise I have ever seen.

Mr. Panda: Point of order.**The Speaker:** Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, the Premier is calling people names when we're talking about something as serious as thousands of people losing their jobs.

This internal memo says that \$1.5 billion will be lost. That's a significant amount. It says that thousands of jobs will be lost, another significant amount at a time when we've already seen 12,000 jobs lost last month alone, 1,000 jobs alone just as a result of the methane decisions that this government is making, more jobs lost than we've seen because of the coal phase-out that this government brought in. That is serious. The Premier wants to say

that this is outdated. Will she at least stand up, then, and guarantee that nobody will lose a job as a result of her latest ideological decision?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to do that, you know, because, as I've said, the memo that the member refers to is completely out of date and is based on decisions that we never took. In fact, what we did instead was that we spent months meeting with and consulting with industry to find a way to work with them collaboratively. That's exactly what we did, and that is why yesterday we announced a \$1.4 billion innovation fund to work with industry to help them reduce their emissions while repositioning ourselves as the progressive energy producer in the world. That's what we are building in this province, and I'm very proud of that.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are concerned about the sustained attack by the NDP government on their jobs, on their energy industry, and on things like that because of ideological agendas that are being put forward by this government. The Premier wants to say that the analysis has changed since the analysis that I am referring to, so I will ask her: what has changed that will now result in us not losing thousands of jobs?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, for instance, the document that the member referred to refers to a methane plan which we haven't actually introduced or acted on yet. In fact, that work is going on with industry right now. It refers to an OBA plan, which we also didn't introduce. Instead what we introduced is the one that we introduced today, which is significantly different. So there are a number of ways in which that document is completely false, completely inaccurate. I would suggest that the member opposite do a little bit more research before he comes into the House and asks these questions over and over and over again. We're working with the industry. We're proud . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the document that I referred to also says that six oil sands projects will be cancelled as a result of these decisions. Many, many more will see reduced investments as a result of the NDP's decision. The Premier wants to stand up and question the analysis that is from her own government and say that it's outdated. But the question I have asked already and will ask again, despite the Deputy Premier heckling while I speak, is: will you stand up and will you make sure to release the new analysis? Yes or no? If not, there probably, really, is not one.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the new analysis and the work that we have done was actually released today by our minister of environment in Calgary. I urge the member opposite to read the newspaper tomorrow, and hopefully he'll find the answers to the questions that he's asking. Of course, that announcement is part of our larger plan of working with industry to reduce our emissions and reposition our energy industry, again, as I said, as the most sustainable and responsible energy industry in the world, something that will actually grow jobs and ensure the sustainability of the industry for years and years.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is dodging this issue again. Yes, the minister announced something this morning. That is what

I am referring to. Because she says that the analysis that we have from her government is now out of date, what I asked the Premier was: is there a new economic analysis associated with the minister's announcement this morning? Yes or no? If there is, will the Premier release it?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is referring to a memo that is not an economic analysis. The member opposite is referring to a memo that talks about a couple of policies that may or may not have been introduced, which weren't, and that includes a bunch of general statements that are not an economic analysis. What is true is what we announced today as a result of working with industry. Part of what we've done is that we've announced a \$1.4 billion innovation fund, which we know will create jobs, will create diversification, will reduce emissions, and will help Alberta's economy.

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

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we lost 12,000 jobs last month alone under this Premier's watch. We have an economic analysis, a document from her own government that says that we'll lose thousands more as a result of her decisions. I asked a simple question to the Premier. She says that this analysis is now out of date. Fair enough. If it is, have they done a new one? If they have, will they release it? If they haven't, that's even more alarming, that they would move forward with these policies without doing a true economic analysis of the impacts of their ideological decisions.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, one person's ideology is another person's acceptance of science. Now, I understand that for the members opposite, their ideology struggles with the notion of climate change. Their ideology struggles with the notion of dealing with the environment, respecting the environment, supporting people who are concerned about the environment. Their ideology struggles, frankly, with planning for the future at all. Thankfully, they are not in charge; we are. We've been working with industry. We are so proud of the relationship and the partnership that we've been able to establish, and we know that together we are going to move Alberta forward.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are getting really tired of the Premier doing this. When she can't answer a question, she stands up and calls this side of the House names. She calls me names. That's what she does. She yells; she screams; she fearmongers. I asked a simple question: do you have another economic analysis of the decisions that you have made and announced today? Yes or no? If you do, will you release it, and if you don't, can you explain why you have not done one? [interjection]

The Speaker: Caution.
The hon. Premier.

2:00

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, the minister released the OBA decisions today. Those are the product of significant conversations with significant players in industry, conversations about where we would be able to move forward in terms of investing in emissions reduction, in diversification, and in jobs, ultimately. We are going to go forward with that. We know that in the long haul the climate leadership plan was critical to getting the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline, and of course we know that that is a critical element in . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP have lost all credibility on this file. They have two cancelled pipelines, another pipeline that is being blocked and is looking more and more unlikely to be built, unfortunately, because the NDP won't take clear action. The question is so simple that we have repeatedly asked this Premier. She will not answer. She is obviously dodging it because she clearly does not have an economic analysis. The most recent one that we have in our possession clearly shows that thousands of jobs will be lost. Billions of dollars of investment will be gone. Albertans will be punished as a result of this Premier and this NDP's ideological decision. Do you have an economic impact analysis? Do you have any analysis that you could provide, or if not, why not?

Ms Notley: Well you know, Mr. Speaker, again I would suggest that if the member opposite is looking for the updated version of the document that they refer to, I suggest that they go to the front page of the *Edmonton Journal*. It's there for them. I know it's a bit of a challenge in terms of their research budget. Nonetheless, by all means, go ahead. Read the paper. I'm hopeful that that will answer their many questions. We're very proud to work with industry, and we are proud to continue to move Alberta forward.

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

PDD Service Delivery

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supports for persons with disabilities are needed now more than ever. Recently I learned that the turnover rate of PDD staff is 40 per cent every six months, meaning many families have a new caseworker at least twice a year, and caseworkers are already stretched with 200-plus cases. This is not sustainable. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: after two and a half years of your mandate why is the caseload still so high for PDD caseworkers?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Our government is protecting and improving the supports Albertans with disabilities depend on. That is why despite the tough economic time we have added funds so that people can get the support they need in a timely fashion.

Ms McPherson: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Party has learned that new intakes into PDD are funded at 2013 rates, and people who rely on PDD services are in dire need of predictable service. Further, advocates report that when asked, the government has been unclear regarding how many dollars are allocated for certain services and how much can be spent to provide them. To the Premier: when can the government guarantee that PDD funding will directly reach people who need it most?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The PDD program has two different streams: the family-managed stream and through agencies. Eighty five per cent of the funding reaches Albertans directly through service providers, and 15 per cent is family managed, where the family gets the funding, and they get to hire the staff and services. That's how this funding gets to Albertans.

Ms McPherson: Recently I learned that PDD staff are required to submit personal outcome index reports on a quarterly basis but do not receive feedback in return. I also learned that there is not a clear

line of communication between Alberta Health Services and PDD despite the fact that a liaison between the two was announced. To the Premier. These are only two examples of communication breakdowns that negatively impact PDD clients. How will you fix this?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud of our record when it comes to working with PDD. We have worked with the community on all issues that matter to them, and we are taking a crossministry approach. We are working with our partners within government and within the community to make sure that the community gets what they need, and we are involving them in all decision-making.

With respect to communication the Premier's council on persons with disabilities is one example, that it got 15 members for the first time in a long time under our watch. We are also moving forward with hiring a new disability advocate, which will make sure that their voices are reflected . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Education Concerns

Loyola: Mr. Speaker, parents in the constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie have contacted me directly to specifically request why the government has struck the word "specialized" from the School Act in section 16.2. To the Minister of Education: can you please explain the rationale for this change and what the end objective of this change means for parents in the province of Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The term "specialized" was only appearing in one section in the School Act, 16.2, and this change will make the legislation clearer. Removing the term does not in any way reduce or alter the supports that students receive. Of course, all students in our fine schools have a welcoming, caring, and safe place to learn, and our investment in education and our progressive policies aim to keep it that way.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Loyola: Thank you. Again to the minister: to ensure that parents in school communities have clarity on this important issue, what is the expectation of parents regarding their role in their children's education as defined in the School Act?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the critical role that parents play in our children's education has been reinforced throughout the School Act and in all of our policies that we move forward on. Our government understands that helping through homework and parent-teacher interviews and any other countless ways that parents help to have their children have a fine education – we reinforce that both in policy and in investment and in action.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that parents play a critical role in the education of their children and that it's important that their role be understood, respected, and valued, again to the minister: how are school staff expected to involve parents in

decisions about the kinds of supports and services provided to help their children succeed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, that's a very good question. The school boards are obligated, in fact, to respect the rights of parents when it comes to decisions around education and for programming and so forth. That includes the ability for parents to choose school programming that they think best ensures their child's success and to advocate for that programming or special means that their child might need in order to get the best education possible in our schools.

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

Veterinary Education

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In October it was announced that the University of Calgary's school of veterinary medicine would increase enrolment from 130 to 200 students. Now, that move is widely supported, but what's not so popular was the very quiet announcement that Alberta was pulling out of a 54-year-old agreement with the other western provinces to fund the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, a move that has disappointed both that college and our provincial partners in the agreement. To the minister: at a time when our province is trying to work with our western neighbours, why are you deliberately snubbing them by tearing up a deal that has served Albertans so well for over a half century?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, it's important for us to invest in postsecondary education, which our government has done. The focus of the veterinarian money for the University of Calgary, I think, is a good one because we're of course investing in the University of Calgary, so students are being able to go from the province of Alberta and focus on a school. We're supporting that postsecondary institution and thus helping to grow this form of postsecondary education here in the province of Alberta.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the Saskatoon and Calgary veterinary colleges use very different approaches for teaching clinical skills to their students and given that some students thrive in a more closely supervised teaching hospital environment while others thrive in an externship in a practice in the field and given that having a choice in learning style has been a huge advantage for Alberta students training for their veterinary careers, to the minister: why are you eliminating choice in veterinary education for Alberta's veterinary students?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I think that investing in an Alberta school and investing in the capacity of an Alberta school to actually perform and to deliver veterinary services is not such a bad idea. As they grow along the way, they can certainly continue those long-standing partnerships that we've had with the University of Saskatchewan, thus building a relationship that will strengthen veterinary services right across this province.

2:10

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, that's weak.

Each year over 400 Alberta students apply for the 50 available spaces at the Saskatoon and Calgary veterinary schools, and given

that the shift to the University of Calgary adds exactly zero new spaces for Alberta students wishing to pursue veterinary education and since the forecasted need for additional veterinarians in Alberta in the next 10 years exceeds that number by nearly 500, to the minister: given the high demand for veterinary education from Alberta students and the need for hundreds more veterinarians, why not keep the 20 spaces at Saskatoon and add 20 to the University of Calgary?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hardly think that investing in an Alberta university to build support and build veterinary services – it's not weak. It's quite the opposite. It's foresight. It's a strong decision. It's looking ahead to build that capacity right here in the province of Alberta. We can work with the University of Saskatchewan as well, but what better place to invest Alberta money than in an Alberta university?

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

Carbon Policy Economic Impact Analysis

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are used to seeing the NDP rob Peter to pay Paul, but yesterday they put a new spin on it: Peter goes bankrupt. Out marched three smiley ministers to tell the energy industry not to fret because the NDP is going to return, well, a sliver toward innovation from the billions they're taking. This Minister of Environment claims that output-based allocations are to lower emissions by forcing innovation, but how on earth does giving back a fraction of what you're costing the industry keep our job creators thriving, and what are you doing with the rest of that money?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll thank the member for the question. I mean, I'm going to try to introduce the members opposite to the fact that the world is changing. The world is moving toward more ethical, sustainable ways of extracting and producing our resources. That is something that our government is supporting through innovation. I think it's a little offensive that the member opposite refers to \$1.4 billion being invested in innovation across our energy sector but also food processing and agricultural space – I can tell the members opposite that industry is very, very pleased with this announcement.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. MacIntyre: I think it's shameful that this minister would call our industry historically unethical, Mr. Speaker.

It is clear that this government's own bureaucrats know that the NDP's denial of facts is sending our province into an irreconcilable tailspin. Given that the minister of environment said that she had not seen the leaked report yet still somehow knew the data was, quote, quite outdated and contains inaccurate information, how can Albertans trust this government's quick dismissal of this report when the minister decided to cast it as inaccurate before she even saw it?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, once again the members are citing a document that is old and outdated and that put forward a number of different options that our government did not choose to pursue. What we did pursue: the environment minister announced today in Calgary that we are not only going to reduce our emissions, but we

also have a best-in-class approach. What we are doing is incenting a race to the top to ensure that we can get our high-quality products to the international markets.

Mr. MacIntyre: The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier sincere questions about Albertans' futures that are on the line. These are not just numbers. These OBAs are more than just numbers. They are jobs. They are livelihoods. They are the well-being of Alberta's families. Given the Premier's comment moments ago to watch for the front page of a newspaper, are we to understand that this Premier refuses to answer direct questions in this Chamber and instead communicates to this Legislature via news releases?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are investing in a low-carbon economy of tomorrow while Jason Kenney and the UCP are picking fights and putting up walls. Our industry gets it. In fact, this week Suncor took its first step to set up two cogen units at its oil sands base plant. Steve Williams, the Suncor president and CEO, said, "We believe that bold, ambitious action is required by all of us to effectively tackle the climate change challenge," something where we're still trying to convince the members of the opposition that it exists.

Greenhouse Gas Large Emitter Regulations

(continued)

Mr. Panda: So much for news releases, Mr. Speaker. Today's announcement of the carbon competitiveness incentives sees another blow to Alberta industry. A hundred and ten companies across 13 industrial sectors will pay for their output-based allocations based on industry-specific benchmarks, costing \$1.3 billion per year and every year. To the Minister of Energy: whose benchmark are you using for the oil sands industry? It better not be the Carnegie oil-climate index. Is it?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new carbon competitiveness incentives will support large industrial emitters to be more competitive while reducing emissions and encouraging investment in renewables. Rather than paying lip service to reducing emissions, something members over there, former members, when they were in government did, our approach rewards a best in class for large emitters. This is going to encourage a race to the top. The members opposite have no clue what that is. They would rather see a race to the bottom, stick their heads in the ground, pretend that climate change isn't real, and beat our Alberta oil and gas . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that the leaked memo says that the Alberta climate change office puts six oil sands projects at risk and given that Alberta Energy believes that 15 oil sands projects are at risk of negative gross profit margins from these output-based allocations and since the Energy and Environment departments are at odds and cannot agree, to the Premier: how many oil sands projects are at risk, six or 15? Who is telling the truth?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the member and the House and Albertans that, once again, the information the opposition is using is completely dated and does not reflect the

substantial work that our government has done with industry. Now, I appreciate that the opposition loves to jump up and down and scream and run down Alberta businesses, run down Alberta industry. What I can tell you is that our government for over two years has been working collaboratively with industry to come up with a plan that ensures that they are not only going to remain viable but that we are going to increase their competitiveness to be able to compete on the global scale. We have the support of industry. I wish the opposition . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Panda: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP plan to spend \$1.4 billion on innovation over seven years to cut emissions and given the analysis on the output-based allocation shows that royalty revenue is projected to drop by at least \$140 million by 2021, to the Premier: how do you expect to balance the budget when the NDP succeeds to shut down the oil sands, lay off workers, and lose royalties?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, the premise of that message or question couldn't be further from the truth. I'll remind the members of all of the investments that have been occurring within our oil and gas sector, including JACOS, the Japan oil and gas company, that invested \$2 billion to expand their facilities. We see Suncor is investing. We see other companies expanding their assets and looking at making investments. Thank goodness the opposition isn't government because they truly would kill our oil and gas sector.

Mrs. Pitt: Point of order.

Mr. Bilous: We are working collaboratively with them. We are coming up with programs that are going to incent innovation.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

The Speaker: I'll just make this observation to both sides of the House. You've heard me speak to this before. Nonetheless, I just want to remind you that words that are of violence are not well received by me. However, please note that I drew that to your attention on a couple of occasions but have chosen to pass thus far.

2:20 Trans Mountain Pipeline Construction Carbon Policy Economic Impact Analysis

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, on November 30 last year in this House I asked the Minister of Energy about the Trans Mountain pipeline, and she stated, "I understood that shovels will be in the ground within the year." Well, a year later and only 66 of 1,200 permits have been issued, never mind any shovels in the ground. So let's try this again. To the Minister of Energy: today, so Albertans will know, within which year do you understand that real shovels will be in the ground for Trans Mountain?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, our government is not backing down on our fight for Alberta jobs and the Alberta energy sector. We're closer than ever to breaking landlock, and we're working with the energy companies, in particular Kinder Morgan, on the permitting issues. We're working hand in hand, and that pipeline will be built.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, I might have to go to my Chinese zodiac to figure out which year.

Given that Trans Mountain shovels will create good, mortgage-paying jobs in Alberta and B.C. and given that a leaked internal memo indicates that a combination of output-based allocations and methane requirements will lead to significant job losses – we will need those Trans Mountain shovel jobs just to combat NDP driven job loss – to the Minister of Energy. The minister of the environment called this information inaccurate and outdated. Surely, you have completed a thorough economic analysis. When can Albertans see this economic analysis, or are you flying blind with no regard for the impact your policies are having on Alberta job retention and creation?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, again, that today in Calgary the Minister of Environment and Parks announced our new output-based allocations. The documents the opposition continues to refer to are outdated. It's information that our government did not act on. What they can see if they want to go online is what our government is doing when it comes to output-based allocations. I can tell you that yesterday we made an announcement about investing \$1.4 billion in innovation that is going to enhance and improve the processes and practices. We are collaboratively working with . . .

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One job. Outdated and inaccurate.

Given that the NDP has never released an economic impact assessment of the carbon tax despite holding that information internally and given that the NDP will not release an economic impact assessment for the upcoming changes to the output-based allocations and methane requirements, which the leaked internal memo indicates will cost more jobs than the coal phase-out, again to the minister: why does your open and transparent government continue to wilfully withhold important economic impact information from Albertans?

Ms Hoffman: Jason Kenney and the members opposite are more interested in putting their own political interests before the economic interests of our companies and the employment of Albertans, Mr. Speaker, and that is shameful. On this side of the House we take thoughtful information received by the public service and use it to inform good public policy. We're working with employers, and we're investing in an industry and in jobs to support all Albertans. It's about time you guys stopped playing politics and started standing up for Alberta jobs.

Caribou Range Plans

Mr. Loewen: The government's response to the caribou situation in Alberta has been fraught with a lack of transparency, consultation, and, frankly, a lack of common-sense solutions. Many citizens, industries, and local governments across Alberta are nervously waiting as protection plans are being developed. Albertans were promised that the plans would be shared by the fall, but the leaves have fallen, the snow has arrived, yet we still have not seen any caribou range plans. I'm concerned that these delays will limit the time the government has to consult with impacted communities. Time is running out. Will the minister of environment

commit to properly engage with industries and the residents around them before the plans are finalized?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I can tell the member and the House is that the Minister of Environment and Parks and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry have been working very collaboratively to ensure that we're doing two things. One, we know that we need to protect our caribou. We know that if we don't come up with a robust plan, the federal government can impose one on Alberta. But what I can tell you is that we have also been working very closely with the forestry sector and will ensure that we are protecting forestry jobs. What we are doing is finding a balance to ensure that we're protecting caribou and also protecting the jobs of hard-working men and women in the forestry sector.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the collaboration the minister talks about is nonexistent according to the people involved and given that the caribou range planning process could profoundly reshape our communities which have natural resource dependent economies, what is the NDP doing to ensure that the 13.4 million hectares of Alberta's working forest that are claimed to be caribou ranges remain available for proper development by our forest and energy sectors, which the communities and families of the region rely on to provide employment and economic development in the area? Will these opportunities be hampered in any way?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you very much, and thank you to the member for the question. I will tell him that we have been working closely with First Nations communities, with municipalities, with the forestry sector. I come from forestry, Mr. Speaker, and my family, so I understand what good forestry jobs are like. I had the opportunity to go up to High Level this summer. I know that previous to that the minister of environment was up there to explain about the plan. This is a good plan that we're trying to put forward and work collaboratively on with people in this province so that the feds don't impose their plan on us, which would harm our sectors of forestry and energy and the municipalities and the First Nations. We're sticking up for Albertans.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the people affected would like to see these plans before they're finalized with the federal government and given that this government seems to be missing deadlines with the federal government and given that there is still an enormous amount of consultation to be done and given that section 11 within the Species at Risk Act allows for a conservation agreement and discussion to continue, to the minister. At the federal level I've heard that you and this government are refusing to invoke section 11 to continue discussion on caribou range plans with the federal government to avoid a protection order and plan to go straight to final approval. Is this true, minister?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, and thank you very much to the member for the question. As I said, we've been working closely with groups that are affected and with the federal government. I'll tell you this. We're working with industry and environmental groups, and the previous government had 20 years to fix the problem and did nothing. We're taking action to develop a balanced

strategy, to balance caribou and jobs. They'd rather we sit on our hands, which would lead to more job losses.

An Hon. Member: Be honest, minister. Be honest.

Mr. S. Anderson: We're working to provide economic certainty for industry and people in these communities. They would leave industry and workers in limbo. That's not how we do work on this side of the House. We have Albertans' backs, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the use of phrases such as "be honest" do not help the tenor of this place. I want to remind you in a friendly way again to avoid those kinds of comments. They do not show the respect that is warranted.

The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

PDD Service Delivery (continued)

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans continue to face long wait-lists for PDD services, especially for FMS, or family-managed services. With a centralized and overwhelmed intake department and slow assessment process, many people end up stuck on a wait-list, which compounds health crises for people with developmental disabilities and burdens families and caregivers. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: what have you done to shrink wait-lists and red tape for people who depend on FMS?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's a spend day on that side today.

What we have done, Mr. Speaker, is that we have increased funding to PDD programs, which include programs for families with children with disabilities so that they can get the supports they need in a timely fashion. We have also appointed a new council, a parent advisory council, to advise us on issues that matter to families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the wait-list for PDD and FMS is growing and given that no system is in place to co-ordinate services between AHS and PDD, again to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Albertans are caught in a bureaucratic nightmare, and in the two and a half years you've been in power you've done nothing to fix it. When will we see a one-stop shop for PDD services, no matter which government department is responsible?

2:30

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, there is a one-stop shop, and Community and Social Services is responsible for administering this program. In two and a half years our track record is clear. We have worked with the PDD community to repeal safety standards, which were imposed by the previous government. We've worked with them to repeal the supports intensity scale. We worked with them for a new contracting template. And we are continuously in touch with all of our service providers, stakeholders, advocates to make sure that this program remains relevant to the needs of the community.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that government policies have increased costs across all sectors and given that the PDD sector is hurt most by these cost increases and given that this has led to a significant reduction in service hours, again to the Minister of Community and Social Services: will you commit here and now to restoring lost service hours, and can Albertans expect proper funding in the future to ensure that service hours aren't cut again?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. PDD is not a defined benefit. How this program works is that the department works with service providers and families and comes up with a plan, which is customized to each individual, and whatever is determined in that outcome plan: that's what the department provides funding for. So we haven't got any services; we have increased funding. On that side we hear that they will cut 20 per cent, which will eliminate services for . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Highway 3 Twinning

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, in southern Alberta the most important key transportation project that is now in the advanced planning stage is the twinning of highway 3, which stretches from Medicine Hat to the B.C. border. For several years now an association of key municipalities known as the highway 3 twinning association has been working with community stakeholders and Alberta Transportation officials, who just recently held several open houses on project refinements. However, what is not known now is the timing for the next steps to this process. To the Minister of Transportation: what is the next project phase, and how soon will it begin?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, we recognize very much the importance of highway 3 to the economy of southern Alberta. The hon. member knows that some time ago I met with almost every mayor from every rural and urban municipality, and we did provide funding for them in order to do some studies with respect to that. We are fixing crumbling and inadequate infrastructure. We're investing over \$3 billion overall, and we're going to continue to make sure that highway 3 is as safe as possible and does its job of supporting the economy.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Stier: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's all well and fine, but the highway 3 transportation corridor project is an extremely important project that must continue moving forward as soon as possible. Given that last May the report conducted by an economics professor from the University of Lethbridge and partially funded by the province showed very positive economic returns for this project and given that these recent open houses are now completed, to the minister: when will the next expected phase, known as the functional planning studies, be completed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure the hon. member that our department is working on planning forward for that particular road, and he's quite correct that that would be the next stage. I can just tell the hon. member that in due

course we will be moving ahead with those studies because we recognize the importance of highway 3 to southern Alberta.

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, the sooner the highway 3 project moves forward, the sooner Albertans will reap the economic benefits. Given that several landowners and developers have contacted my office regarding land acquisition issues and early negotiation difficulties with the department and given that no clear public information has been released regarding this aspect of the project, to the minister: has the land acquisition phase actually begun? If not, when will negotiations with affected landowners, including the Piikani Nation, begin?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure the hon. member and all members of the House that as we progress with the planning for this road, we will also be seeking to acquire land in a timely fashion in order to accomplish the construction schedule that we have set out.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week we talked about how coal used to be an effective, cost-efficient alternative to natural gas in remote areas. We talked about the fictitious coal social licence the accelerated coal phase-out is supposed to be buying. I'll tell you what isn't fictitious: the devastation that this ideological policy is doing to communities like Hanna, Forestburg, and Grande Cache. Minister, do you propose to replace these mortgage-paying jobs that the coal industry provided in all these communities with stopgap programs?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take a little trip down memory lane when Stephen Harper was the Prime Minister of Canada, back in 2012. Jason Kenney was one of his cabinet ministers when they put forward regulations that would see the end of coal-fired electricity after 50 years of a plant operation, including not allowing them to convert to natural gas. That government put a nail in the coffin of coal in Alberta. They turned their backs on the workers, they turned their backs on the communities, and they had no plan to help them transition. I look forward to telling you all about it.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government's accelerated coal phase-out far exceeded the federal mandate and given that these communities' property values are now half of what they used to be, Minister, when are you and your caucus going to face the residents of these towns, look them in the eye, and tell them that your accelerated phasing-out plan is worth them losing everything they've worked for?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, what we did do was that we immediately worked with the current federal government to change those regulations to ensure that coal-fired plants can convert to natural gas. That's something that the Minister of Environment and Parks spearheaded. What I can tell you is that over the summer I visited most of the coal-affected communities and had very productive conversations with mayors, including Chris Warwick, the mayor of

Hanna, who, when we announced our supports for workers and our supports for communities, said that this is going to go a long way to help the community and their constituents to transition. Again, I'll remind the members opposite that it was not only the Alberta government's regulations . . .

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

Mr. Strankman: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member opposite. Given that this government has no long game to help these communities and given that places like Hanna and Grande Cache are on the brink of becoming ghost towns under this government, to the minister: what industry, manufacturing, or processing business has your government approached about locating to one of these areas so that generations of Albertans do not become historical footnotes?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish the member opposite would talk to the municipal leadership in the communities that he represents. They would tell him that we introduced the coal community transition fund, which is a fund that is designated to support affected coal communities to look at opportunities to diversify their local and regional economies. We not only have the backs of workers in the coal-affected communities; we are working collaboratively with the municipalities. The members opposite would turn their backs, turn out the lights on these communities, and do nothing to support them. I can tell you this much. When is Jason Kenney going to apologize to the workers and communities?

Rural Emergency Medical Services

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, we have asked numerous questions over the years about the situation with rural ambulance service. Recently a number of my constituents have let me know that an ambulance responded to a call at a residence in Alcomdale where a woman was having what appeared to be a heart attack. Upon arriving at the scene, the EMT asked if there was an automated external defibrillator in the hamlet because the ambulance did not have one on board. CPR was performed until a second ambulance with an AED showed up. To the Minister of Health: are AEDs considered standard equipment on all ambulances, or is this the NDP's idea of kind, compassionate cuts?

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, any time an Albertan calls 911, they want to know that EMS is on their way and that they'll have the tools that they need to respond as quickly and safely as possible. I'll be happy to look into the very specific situation. I wonder if maybe it was a nonemergency transport vehicle or something. I'll be happy to look into the very specific details.

Of course, we want to make sure that we have the right tools in the communities so that Albertans get safe transport. That's one of the reasons why we moved forward with stable, predictable funding to support our front lines instead of moving for the deep cuts that the Official Opposition have been lobbying for and that their leader continues to lobby for.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

2:40

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that the residents of Alcomdale are now in discussions to purchase an automated external defibrillator for their community and given that St. John Ambulance has AEDs for sale ranging from \$143 to \$1,980, does AHS have any idea how many ambulances are serving rural Alberta without this life-saving piece of equipment, and is the minister prepared to stock all ambulances with this very low-cost kit, or do the MLAs have to take up a collection?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his offer. Certainly, any time resources are available, we put them to good use in supporting communities throughout our province. I know that when I was on the school board, we put AEDs in a number of different high schools as well because we knew that there was an important opportunity to have that immediate life-saving technique and technology available. But certainly any funds that the hon. member is willing to pass the hat for and use to support the cuts that he and his party are lobbying for – this government will actually put those funds to good use in making sure we're improving health care.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that in the town of Legal the seniors' lodge has 12 out of 42 rooms vacant, partly because seniors are nervous over inadequate rural ambulance service, and given that the town of Legal has had difficulty attracting a doctor because there is no pharmacist and given that they now have a pharmacist coming but still no doctor, can the minister help solve this situation in Legal, which lies within the Edmonton health region, and help seniors to feel confident that they will be taken care of in their community?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Our family farm is just east of Legal, and my grandmother had the honour of living there independently until she was well into her 80s. Just like her and her neighbours, we want to make sure that all parts of the province have access to good quality health care. We certainly are enabling the tools through organizations like RPAP to support the acquisition of good health professionals across our province, and we look forward to continuing to do that important work. We'll be happy to look into this specific question around this one community. Thanks again for the question and for standing up today for the investment that this government has been putting in. I look forward to seeing how you'll be voting on our budget come the new year.

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

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Grade 6 Student Engagement and Bill 212

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to making life better for all Albertans, and today I will be introducing a private member's bill that does exactly that for our children.

Mr. Speaker, here in Alberta students learn about democracy and governance in grade 6. The social studies curriculum encourages students to ask the question: what is democracy, and how does it work in Alberta? Last year I talked to students in Edmonton-Manning about these questions and found out what issues mattered most to them. I wanted to demonstrate to the youth in my constituency that regardless of their age, they too could affect change in their community. I had great conversations with students about legislative processes and how ideas become law. I also encouraged students to brainstorm with myself, their teachers, and their parents how to make this province a better place for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that the students of Edmonton-Manning demonstrated leadership and eagerness to engage in the democratic process that surpassed expectations and shattered preconceived notions. People said to me: they're grade 6s; what ideas are they going to get? But these young and brilliant minds are very aware of what is happening in their communities. In fact, the idea for my private member's bill came about as a result of these consultations, where every class talked about wanting to see tougher smoking laws. I am honoured to have many of those students here with us in the House today.

As a former social worker it is important to me to continue to work to make life better for all children in Alberta. It is my belief that the leaders of tomorrow need to be encouraged today and every day, and I am proud to show that in our province Albertans of any age can enact change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Blackfalds

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I celebrate the wonderful town of Blackfalds, originally known as Waghorn after the first postmaster. In 1904 Waghorn was incorporated as a village and renamed Blackfalds. In 1980 they became a town and a community of choice, being Canada's fastest growing municipality in the 2016 federal census.

Since 2007 its average annual growth rate of 8.6 more than doubled the population to today's 9,916. Blackfalds is young, vibrant, and active. Its growing families have an average resident age of only 29 years. People choose Blackfalds because of its safe environment, affordable living, and award-winning recreational amenities like the recently developed Abbey Centre. Other new facilities include the Optimists' all-wheels park, the bike skills park, and the bark park for those who speak woof.

On the 1st of July, 2017, in celebration of Canada 150 the Wadey Centre opened. This Eaton's package house was purchased by the Wadey family over 100 years ago and was their residence, but it remained vacant for many years. In November 2016 the town, the historical society, and others, with Canada 150 funding, moved and restored the structure to a new, prominent location. Now it is a premier visitor information centre, with offices for the chamber of commerce and the historical society. For this project of regional collaboration and historical preservation the town received the municipal sustainability and action award at the recent AUMA convention.

Regional collaboration and partnerships create successes, whether it be in the regional water and waste-water commissions, the regional alliance in protective and emergency services, or the partnership with the cities of Red Deer and Lacombe in the BOLT transit system. The successful bus service between the three communities offers expanded routes within Blackfalds.

With growth come challenges for a high school, improvements to highway 2A, and a second highway 2 access, but Blackfalds is amazing, and amazing things will continue to happen there. You just watch and see.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Neighbourhood Watch in Calgary-Northern Hills

Mr. Kleinsteuber: "Get to know the neighbours around you. This is key as the group is stronger than the individual. If neighbours are on the lookout for criminal activity and if we as a group continue to secure our valuables, thieves will move on, and we will be safer." Mr. Speaker, these words come from Tavis Settles, a leader in the Northern Hills Community Association Building Safer Communities Block Watch.

Just over two years ago crime levels were up. To raise awareness of practical action people could take to secure their property and to watch out for one another, Coventry Hills neighbours began to report property crimes on social media. As neighbours connected on various community pages, Coventry resident Brian Wells created the Facebook group called the Watchdogs. Three months later the Watchdogs group joined the NHCA building safer communities program. With help from a resource officer for advice and support they focused on a cleaner, stronger message of what is acceptable and what is not.

Interest and participation from residents only continued to grow. "In the beginning nobody knew anybody," said Settles. "Now neighbours are meeting neighbours and connecting." Mr. Speaker, sightings of kids playing ball hockey, climbing in trees, and playing in yards are up while crime in Coventry is trending down and now among the lowest in Calgary. Today over 2,000 Northern Hills residents participate in Facebook groups that are divided into 11 smaller neighbourhood-based groups, each with a moderator.

They have some noteworthy successes. In one case a car prowler was noticed. Word went out through the Facebook group with calls made to Calgary Police Service to confirm sightings. When police picked up the prowler, his comment was: "How did they find me? I only started this 15 minutes ago."

In April 2017 the Federation of Calgary Communities formally recognized Tavis Settles, Shane McEwen, and Jesse Sinclair for their leadership within the Northern Hills communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is how a community association can take a program that costs them nothing, engage their community, reduce crime, and can inspire community stewardship.

Thank you.

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

Pipeline Approvals

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP likes to brag about pipelines, but they ignore the facts completely. During the Harper government Alberta had four pipelines approved. Three of these were built, adding one and a quarter million barrels a day and many jobs with it. When the accidental NDP government arrived on the scene in 2015, the fourth pipeline, Northern Gateway, was also approved, and Energy East had a conditional approval. This would have given us access to tidewater on the east and increased access on the west coast. Under the NDP's watch Northern Gateway, cancelled; Energy East, cancelled. The Keystone XL pipeline was approved with zero help from the NDP government, and in fact when asked to champion KXL, the Premier would not agree to help

at all, so when she tries to take a victory lap on KXL, which still may or may not be constructed, it truly is laughable.

2:50

Now that Jason Kenney has entered the picture, the Premier has suddenly changed her mind and decided to aggressively sell pipelines to the rest of the country. We hope Trans Mountain gets built, and I wish the Premier nothing but success with that plan. But here's the problem, Mr. Speaker. If Trans Mountain gets built and expands the shipping of oil that's already there to the west coast, it will still not be enough to undo the damage already done to Alberta by the NDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, here's what we should conclude. When the NDP points to pipeline success, they had little to do with it. When the NDP points to pipeline cancellation, most of it happened on their watch. If they do take a small part of Trans Mountain's hopeful success, their spendthrift ways have dug such a hole that one Trans Mountain pipeline will not be enough to bail them out. They will need two or three Trans Mountains to keep up with their spending and debt. So the next time the NDP talk about social licence, someone should pull them over and take that licence away because it was never real in the first place. Alberta cannot put Jason Kenney in charge of Alberta soon enough.

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

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we recognize December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. We remember December 6 as an example of extreme, planned violence against women. It is a national tragedy, and we can join Canadians in mourning the loss of 14 women at the école Polytechnique in 1989. This horrific massacre was a crime against women and against feminism itself, against the struggle for gender equality.

Almost 30 years have gone by, and we still face a horrific reality. Women are disproportionately affected by violence in Canada, and the numbers are worse in Alberta. Ten women have died in Alberta in the last few months at the hands of current and former partners. Violence tears lives apart, yet it remains hidden, quiet in society. We must talk about violence against women, and we must take action to eliminate it.

My colleague from Lethbridge-East shared her personal story of living with violence, shaking the Legislature to silence before we stood to support her. With that act of courage and many acts of courage she's made through her life, my colleague demonstrated why the truth about violence must be heard and recognized.

Under the Premier's leadership the Ministry of Status of Women was established to improve gender equality in Alberta and to work on the elimination of violence against women. The more we support Alberta women to thrive and not just survive, the stronger our province and everyone in it will be. We all know that this will not be easy. The barriers we need to remove have been entrenched for a very long time. We must speak out. We must do better for the women murdered in the Montreal massacre, for the women alive today, for our daughters, granddaughters, and generations to come.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Bill 34

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2017

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm deeply honoured by introducing a wonderful piece of legislation to the House known as the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2017. I would request leave to introduce this wonderful bill, and I commend it to all members of the House.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a first time]

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

Bill 212

Tobacco and Smoking Reduction (Protecting Children's Health) Amendment Act, 2017

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 212, the Tobacco and Smoking Reduction (Protecting Children's Health) Amendment Act, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making life better for Albertans, and Bill 212 does exactly that for our children. The idea of this bill came about as a result of consultation I did last year with grade 6 students in Edmonton-Manning. Bill 212 will amend the Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act to prohibit smoking on all school grounds, playgrounds, sports fields, and public outdoor recreational activities, and smokers will be required to smoke 15 or more metres away from these areas.

[Motion carried; Bill 212 read a first time]

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

Bill 215

Tow Truck Safety Act

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce the Tow Truck Safety Act.

Bill 215 amends the Traffic Safety Act to allow tow trucks to use optional blue and white lights on their vehicles when they are performing their duties. This is in addition to the mandatory amber light provision. The purpose of Bill 215 is to improve road safety for all motorists, tow truck operators, other responders at a scene as well as all users of Alberta's busy and often hazardous highways. I would like to thank Jeff Kasbrick and Ryan Lemont of the Alberta Motor Association and J.F. Gagnon, Keith Stebner, and Devon Poole of the Towing and Recovery Association of Alberta, who are here today, for their assistance in developing this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 215 read a first time]

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, we may need to move past 3 o'clock.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much for that reminder, Mr. Speaker. I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to extend the Routine past 3 o'clock.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to table five copies of documents which support Bill 212, the Tobacco

and Smoking Reduction (Protecting Children's Health) Amendment Act, 2017. These documents are copies of letters and e-mails from the town of Redwater, the town of Pincher Creek, the town of Raymond, the mayor of the city of Wetaskiwin, the mayor of the city of Grande Prairie, the town of Calmar, the Oyen and District Chamber of Commerce, and the city of St. Albert. All of these municipalities in Alberta support the idea that our school grounds should be smoke free and that our schoolchildren should be able to play in smoke-free environments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of a *Financial Post* article authored by Kevin Libin, and the title of the article is Beware of Fake News Reporting that Liberals Are Better than Tories on Pipelines.

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling for you today. I'm tabling an article from the *Calgary Herald*, titled Alberta Takes Serious Steps to Battle Bots and Scammers, which outlines how the chambers of commerce, the BBB, and Ticketmaster are all cited as supporters of this bill.

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

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table four documents with the requisite number of copies. The first is from a constituent that has written here saying, "I am writing to you to ask for more assistance for rural Alberta in the form of RCMP. Crime in the rural area is at a high and it seems that there are break ins daily in our area."

3:00

The second is another one. It says, "Almost every week, we hear of another person we know being robbed."

The third is from a constituent that asks the government to please help stop rural crime.

Rural crime is going rampant! We're sure it is the same few that are causing this in part because they know that they can get away with it in the country.

Our home was broken into in June of this year.

As a government please help stop this.

The last is an e-mail received that says, "We now say 'when you get robbed' as opposed to 'if you get robbed'."

Thank you.

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have an article and a press release that I'd like to table. The first one is titled Legislation Banning Scalper Bots Will Cause More Problems than the One It's Trying to Solve. It was in one of my speeches yesterday.

The second one is a press release from the government of Alberta, Improving Consumer Protections in Auto Industry. I quoted that on several occasions yesterday in my speech.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four tablings today. I'm tabling the requisite number of copies of, first, a letter from Donna von Hauff that I referenced yesterday in debate on Bill 31, in which she as a former public member of the ABVMA council

noted that she had not been consulted, nor had any other public members.

The next three documents are all copies of news articles by members of the Legislature press gallery – Michelle Bellefontaine of the CBC, Emma Graney of the *Edmonton Journal*, and Julia Parrish of CTV – in which, when reporting on the release of Bill 31, they reported that disclosure and consent were new things in veterinary medicine. Obviously, they were given a very erroneous interpretation of current legislation by the Minister of Service Alberta in her press conference.

The Speaker: I have one tabling this afternoon. I rise to table five copies of the 2016 Legislative Assembly Office annual report.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mr. Bilous, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, pursuant to the Northern Alberta Development Council Act the Northern Alberta Development Council annual report 2016-17.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I believe that there is at least one point of order. Is that correct? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm referring to Standing Order 23(i), (j) and specifically to what the Premier said today. Right out of the gate today when I made the first member's statement, followed by the question period questions by our House leader, the Premier in her answer accused this side of the House, including me, that we're climate change deniers.

Mr. Speaker, we've had lots of discussion on this subject. I just looked at the *Hansard*, and last year on June 1 and June 2 we had discussed the same subject. That time it was the minister of environment who called me a climate change denier, and I took pains in clarifying that I was a science student and I studied science and I believe that climate change is real. In my defence at that time the hon. Government House Leader also stood up, and he said he heard me saying that in the House a few times. He was on record defending me, saying that I believe in climate change.

Mr. Mason: We're lucky to have you.

Mr. Panda: Now he says he's lucky to have me in the House. Thank you for that. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Mr. Panda: Through you, Mr. Speaker, the same Premier in her further answers insulted this House again. Unrelated to the point of order, but when members are asking questions, telling us to go and read the newspapers is very undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, you sent me to the Westminster seminar recently, and there I learned that these kinds of insult and abusive language directed at the Official Opposition are not acceptable in the Westminster system. The Premier has the authority, but she can't just misuse the floor and call Official Opposition members who are on record saying that we believe in climate change – she can't label us like that for her electoral benefit. There is a by-election going on, so she is trying to address this to gain votes there. I don't know what she's trying to do, but the intention seems to be very clear, and it's

repetitive. They keep calling us climate change deniers even after you ruled on June 1 and 2 last year. The Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster also spoke on that occasion, as I'm seeing on the Blues here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm bringing it to you to rule on this once and for all so we don't suffer this pain every time persons in authority call us climate change deniers. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this point of order because it has indeed been spoken of many times before. This situation is no different than in the past, so we anticipate the result will be the same as in the past. In this particular case the MLA from Calgary-Foothills is suggesting that the Premier made a comment about him personally, which did not in fact happen. The Premier made a comment generally about the opposite side of the House.

This same notion has been brought up previously in the House on a number of occasions, and it's simply a dispute over facts as opposed to a point of order. The facts are fairly clear that on a number of occasions members of the opposite side of the House have indeed been on the record, made statements that show their ambivalence toward the science of climate change. I can provide a series of examples when that happened. For example, when a journalist challenged the MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake by noting that the majority of scientists say that humans are the main cause, he replied: you can't say that anymore; the science isn't settled. That was on CBC, January 3, 2017, this very year.

The same member circulated a cartoon attacking scientists and suggested the science underpinning climate change is a socialist conspiracy. He responded: "Is the scientific community on the degree of man's contribution harmonious? Are they all together on that? I haven't seen it. I haven't seen that anywhere." That's *PressProgress*, January 8, 2017.

The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat actually funded a climate change denying film. The American Energy News, March 28, 2017.

The Member for Drumheller-Stettler has in this House called on the minister of environment to, quote, table the scientific research upon which these specific policies are made. End quote. *Hansard*, March 10, 2016.

As members know, the term "climate change denier" or "climate change denial" has been used several times in this House in describing the members opposite: on May 2, 2017; May 11, 2017; April 5, 2017; November 29, 2016; May 2, 2016; April 11, 2016; November 23, 2015; June 1, 2016; June 2, 2016. In fact, they repeatedly have reinforced the notion that that is exactly the issue at hand.

On a number of occasions you yourself have been asked to make a ruling on these terms, and you have chosen not to do so. You have urged members to be cautious in our turn, and we have indeed been cautious but respond to the facts of the behaviour of the members opposite.

I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is anything new in this particular situation over the previous rulings, and I can't see that there's any reason why we should be continually returning to this in spite of clear rulings on it in the past.

Thank you.

3:10

The Speaker: Are there any other members who wish to speak to this point of order?

Hon. member, I want to make sure that I've got it. You referred to a ruling that I made in June. Is that right?

Mr. Panda: Yep. I can give you copies of that, June 1 and June 2.

Mr. Nixon: Give him the page numbers.

Mr. Panda: Yeah. Page 1384 to 1385 and then 1454 on June 2. Therein, Mr. Speaker, you clearly asked them to refrain from using that language. The government members ignore your suggestion and then keep making those false accusations. It is creating disorder in this House.

The Speaker: It's okay, hon. member. I just wanted to know the date because I didn't have the benefit of the point you were making. Was it in fact at that time that I made a ruling, or was it a comment that you yourself made?

Mr. Panda: Yeah. I'm sending these pages. You clearly advised them not to use that language again and cautioned them. It's really causing disorder in the House with that approach.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I don't have the specific issue that you're speaking to. With permission, Pages, could you bring that to me, please? Is that agreeable? Thank you, hon. member.

The exact statement that was made by the Premier today was as follows. "Keep in mind that these are the same folks who have denied climate change again and again."

To the Deputy Government House Leader: your evidence that you submit was considerable; however, we need to all be reminded of 23(j). The matter that's requiring a ruling is whether or not certain words cause disruption in the House.

Hon. member, I think that at the time I did not rule it, if I have the correct one, as a point of order. In fact, I also did the same in November 2015. At this time I think the references you may have made, or at least the references you made in your verbal comments, were that it was directed to yourself. That's my recollection of what you said. Nonetheless, today I will stick by my ruling.

However, I want to remind the government that there was an earlier ruling that is causing me to go back and reread this again. I quote Speaker Zwodzesky. In 2013 he said, "It's had its mileage, and it's been used on this side to some effect . . . [it may be] time to move on."

In this particular instance I don't believe there was a point of order made. Nonetheless, I did caution on several occasions, and I would hope that the government is conscious of that and urges all the members to – the issue is not the particular word but: will it cause disruption to the House?

In that regard, hon. members, I know there is a point of privilege that arose yesterday. Since the Deputy Speaker was in the chair, I would ask that she take the chair.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Privilege

Obstructing a Member in Performance of Duty

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, yesterday we had a point of privilege raised by the hon. Government House Leader, and the Official Opposition had requested at that time that we defer hearing their commentary and a decision until today.

I would invite the Official Opposition to speak to that, please.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before the House deals with government business, I would like to rise and make this brief statement. Yesterday, during a particularly emotional moment in

this Assembly I made a gesture towards another member, a gesture that I would like to apologize for. While I certainly meant no harm or offence, it's clear that this was the interpretation regardless of intention. My actions were not befitting of this Chamber, and I humbly ask for the Assembly's forgiveness.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Pursuant to custom and the rules of the House the matter is now considered closed.

Did you wish to add anything further to that, Government House Leader?

Mr. Mason: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't agree that it is closed until I withdraw the point of privilege, which I now do, with thanks to the hon. member for his sincere apology.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

We'll now move on.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 30

An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans

[Debate adjourned December 5]

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 30 in second reading, where we get an opportunity to discuss the principle of the bill. I have spoken, of course, to Bill 30 on the referral motion previous and did support that referral motion because of the scale of the bill, as we look at the 147 pages of it, having heard from stakeholders that they felt they needed more time to digest what is a substantial bill and the substantive changes.

However, I want to talk today about the principles that are enshrined in Bill 30. I do support the vast majority of what we've seen in Bill 30. I do have a number of questions, but, you know, unlike the Official Opposition, I will not just reflexively oppose legislation because the NDP government has proposed it. What I really care about is making sure that we're in fact improving the lives of Albertans, in fact making lives of working Albertans safer, in fact making sure that the Workers' Compensation Board system is functional and actually serving Albertans. So that's what my comments will focus on here today.

It is of course challenging to evaluate a bill of such size in such a relatively short period of time, again, which is why I supported the referral motion. But I do believe that this bill has the potential to offer much-needed protection and to update occupational health and safety laws in this province, that have not been updated in many years, and to ensure that there is stronger and better support for employees and families and employers and especially for the workers themselves and for the families in the unfortunate case where a worker may be injured or, even worse, tragically, killed on the job.

Prevention and taking better care of families and workers could in fact reduce anguish. Ultimately, a safer workplace is a more cost-effective workplace. Keeping people at work and employed and not off the job injured is, in fact, the best occupational health and safety

system that there could possibly be. We would obviously strive to ensure that we make sure that workplaces are, in fact, safe.

3:20

I will hasten to add, Madam Speaker, that in my time, having worked directly, in particular, in the oil and gas industry from about the mid-2000s – well, earlier than that, I guess; I'm older than I think – the late 1990s up until about three, four years ago, the evolution of the safety culture within oil and gas in particular was remarkable. I think a lot of credit should go to companies, the vast majority of whom are tremendously responsible. They recognize that keeping their workers safe is just simply good business practice. More than that; it's the morally right thing to do, ensuring that people are safe. The safety culture has become a huge part of not just oil and gas but companies increasingly realizing the importance of a safe workplace.

Unfortunately, the reason we need to make rules and laws is that not every employer is, in fact, that responsible. Although the vast majority – vast majority – are, there will be cases where that is not, unfortunately, true.

[The Speaker in the chair]

This bill signals major changes in philosophy and perspective about worker and workplace safety, which reflect those changes that I think we've seen in our society here over the last number of years. The idea that we empower employees and employers to be more safe, if it's implemented well, is what I'm most interested in. That's why I'm hoping that the government, through the course of debate, will be able to answer some questions for me about implementation.

First is the question of capacity, the capacity of employees to learn about this legislation, to truly understand their rights and the supports that are available to them; also, the capacity of employers to develop and implement those new policies and practices to conform to this legislation. That includes the capacity, of course, of Alberta's public service to effectively identify and address safety issues both inside and outside the clauses of this legislation.

Employees, in this province in particular, come from a variety of backgrounds, a variety of different parts of the country and different parts of the world. That includes newcomers to this province who are working in Alberta, who have English as a second language or are English language learners. There are lifelong Albertans who may have had to work in multiple precarious jobs in the past or even to this day to make ends meet. The vast majority of their experiences are uneventful and are safe. But there are those employees as well who are well represented by collective bargaining agreements that keep up with modern workplace concerns. It's important, of course, that every one of those employee groups can enjoy the protections envisioned in this bill.

Given the wide variety of employees that face barriers accessing protections in the current workplace legislation, including basics such as being paid for all hours worked or even knowing that employees' rights exist, the question I have and, I think, the question all Albertans should be asking is: how will the government ensure that the increased protections will be meaningfully accessible by Alberta's most vulnerable employees? I've had many constituents interact with my office who had challenges accessing services through Alberta Labour not because those services don't exist but because the capacity doesn't exist to deal with them in a timely manner. So while they're filing complaints or they're trying to reach out and access those services or a resolution to workplace issues, they have a difficult time doing so because the system is quite backed up.

I'm curious, then, if the fair practices office on the WCB side – I'd like to know how the government will ensure that the fair practices office will be there to guide injured workers through the WCB system and make sure that that is, in fact, more accessible to all workers, not just those who understand how to work within a bureaucratic system and not just those who have English as a first language.

Like employees, employers come from many backgrounds like charitable groups, not-for-profit groups, and small businesses, who may not necessarily have the resources to implement new HR policies required under the bill. I recognize that there are some delineations – 20 and above, five to 19, and then below – but, still, that is something I think the government ought to think about in terms of providing those resources. One might suggest that a competitive market would remove the businesses, through the process of creative destruction, if you will, that can't comply with safety requirements, but at the same time, it's important that we recognize that companies who do strive responsibly to follow the rules ought to be given the resources they need to ensure that they can successfully implement and follow those new rules.

Charitable organizations providing essential services to communities already have very limited resources and very limited support. In particular, granted dollars from government very often do not cover administrative expenses. This bill may in fact increase their administrative expenses. So a question I have is: how will the government work with charitable organizations to ensure that they are not unduly impacted by this change and instead work with them to build capacity, perhaps work on some changes to granting formulas?

How will government help workplaces in general to build capacities to identify and report near misses that could have killed or seriously injured someone? What additional risks might employers be exposed to should they identify or misidentify near misses in good faith?

Like employees and employers, public servants will also need to be familiar with a variety of different backgrounds. How will this government develop capacity to understand practices at the wide variety of workplaces and locations of work? Training and work environments are fraught with scenarios with employer language and behaviour that outsiders may view as unsafe or abusive. Within rural communities throughout Alberta many industries and workplaces may be unfamiliar with safety and workplace inspectors based in large cities. Are there some challenges there? How will government officials be able to effectively learn about diverse workplaces, both their cultures and the workplace activities?

How will employment officials develop the respect and trust of workers needed so workers are able to fully disclose abuse and unsafe work conditions? How will government inspectors develop trust to work constructively with skeptical employers, and how will the government show the value that employees, employers, and Albertans are getting for that \$94 million a year the government estimates is the additional cost we'll face?

While we're on that particular point, Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear that I do absolutely support the principle of improving WCB as a whole. I think that's long overdue, and I'm certain workers in this province would agree with that. I think employers would also agree with that. We know that WCB has had challenges for far too long, and there are many injured Albertans that WCB has really not met the needs of. So Bill 30 does represent a significant update and a major, largely welcome, and overdue change. However, I do worry that the increased costs of these changes will ultimately lead to increased premiums down the road. It is clear that this government has a lot of work to do to make sure that the

substantial changes that are going to be implemented by this bill are, in fact, as effective as they hope.

So I would really encourage the government to identify metrics and measures of success to make sure we're gathering good data and to recognize that measuring that progress is going to help build faith in the system by all Albertans, both workers and employers. Again, I just want to make sure that – I emphasize yet again that every credible company that I know places a high priority on safety. That goes for oil and gas companies, it goes for construction companies, and it goes for IT companies. Any organization that I've worked with that I would consider credible is very focused on health and safety. But measures really do matter. It's also important that those measures are understood by stakeholders and that they can be used to hold employers and government to account for implementing the measures contemplated in this bill and to quantifiably – quantifiably – improve safety.

Albertans want to learn more about what government estimates to be the size of the safety, bullying, and harassment problems that it seeks to address through this legislation. We'd like to know. Let's quantify the problem that we're facing in this province. Is the goal to prevent tens or hundreds or thousands of these deaths, injuries, or bullying? How do we know we're going to be successful?

Now, I know there likely are some metrics in the Department of Labour, perhaps in the budget and their annual report and the business plan, but these are the sorts of questions, I think, that should be asked, and the data should be readily available. How much reduction in which measures of unsafe workplaces does this government expect as a result of Bill 30? What are the outcomes we anticipate from such a large piece of legislation? How can the effects and benefits of improved worker safety be used to motivate other stakeholders to do better? How can we recognize the long-standing good work of employers and employees who develop a culture of safety, whose worker protection may not be practicably further improved?

3:30

There is, of course, always an opportunity to be better, but how do we ensure that the companies that are already doing great work are recognized and, in fact, are not disadvantaged by these changes? We also have to ask how the government plans to support workers and their families outside the direct OH and S and WCB systems. For example, what is in place to strengthen professional services and support for mental health for workers who feel the long-term effects of harassment and bullying? How will we know when that system is effective? How much responsibility will employers need to take in order to strengthen mental health beyond simply disallowing bullying and harassment? How will Albertans know we have sufficiently improved benefits for surviving spouses and children when a worker is killed on the job?

Now, I want to focus on the maximum insurable earnings cap at this point. This is the piece of the legislation, frankly, that I'm most curious about. Is it sufficient simply to remove the insurable cap at \$98,700 a year? It certainly would allow injured workers to receive benefits in line with their expected annual earnings, but that may end up focusing a disproportionate amount of total benefits towards a small number of high-income workers. Certainly, I think we would agree that in a province that does employ people who have higher earnings, a higher cap is needed, although at \$98,700 I understand Alberta has the second highest cap in the country to Manitoba, which I believe is around \$125,000 or \$127,000, but it's a cap all the same.

So what I'd be curious about is – perhaps we need to simply still have a cap but raise it up to a higher number and then index it so it continues to increase in the future. Simply removing it entirely: I

wonder what the cost implications of that are. I would hope perhaps the government has some actual data that can show us how many workers are at a higher earnings level and then what the impact of that is going to be on the costs of WCB, which ultimately are borne by employers. Again, I'd like to see the numbers. I'm not questioning the need to raise the cap. I do wonder, though, why it is that we in this province would be the only province in the country that has no cap at all. I asked my staff jokingly: well, if the CEO trips down the stairs, can they claim a million dollars of WCB? I actually ask that quite sincerely and legitimately. I don't know if the companies are . . .

The Speaker: Are there any questions under 29(2)(a) to the Member for Calgary-Elbow? The Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for his comments. There certainly were a lot of questions in there, and only having five minutes, unfortunately, to answer is not quite a whole lot. I'll try to provide a couple of comments on a couple of items that he had brought up, firstly, I guess, around potential capacity for employers to adjust. I think what we're really talking about here a little bit are some of the coming into force dates. We've already heard in the House that one of the dates, of course, is January 1, 2018. That is surrounding the WCB. When it comes to the occupational health and safety, that date is June 1, 2018, and the Ministry of Labour and staff are very ready to help employers to move along that journey in terms of help for what they can do to make sure that they're going to be compliant with those rules coming in.

I guess around the WCB and some of the things that employers can do to navigate that system, that was part of the reason why we had the office coming in for this. You know, we've heard concerns that WCB can be quite complex sometimes to navigate, very difficult, and this office will be available not only for the workers to help navigate the system but for the employers as well. There's going to be help there in terms of them being able to access that when trying to navigate that system.

Of course, the one I'm always interested in is the health and safety. It's always exciting to hear about, you know, the success of an industry that has gone very, very far to really raise that bar for workers' safety. One of the things that I heard very clearly from organizations is that joint health and safety committees work. There's absolutely no doubt about that. As a matter of fact, we've had organizations such as the Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association that have said that health and safety committees work. They're there in a joint capacity between the workers and management to be able to create a work site that is absolutely safe because when your workers are safe, they're at work; they're productive. Lost-time accidents: there are always costs to that. When you don't have them, there's not the cost to that. There's not potentially the cost of having to retrain somebody who's filling in for those individuals.

We've also had the Construction Owners Association of Alberta that have also said that joint health and safety committees work, and we should be having them. We happen to be the only jurisdiction that doesn't have those things mandated. We've also seen that the Building Trades of Alberta have also said that joint health and safety committees work.

You know, it was very exciting to hear the member send out the kudos to the organizations that work very, very hard to take that bar and raise it up. If we can keep our workers at work, we're reducing those costs that are associated with an injured worker, including the WCB premiums that are taken on by employers. I know from personal experience that the company I worked for was very, very

proud of the fact of the work that they did on the joint health and safety committee, which I co-chaired, in terms of reducing those costs. They were incredibly excited about those kinds of things.

Again, I know there were a lot of questions from the member, and with the short time given here, I'm not able to completely answer them all. But I'm hoping that at least a few of those comments that I've been able to make might help address some of the questions that the member might have had.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Again, it does answer, certainly, some of the questions that I've had.

I'll just, you know, finish off here in the brief couple of moments I have left here just to say that in general I believe this bill does go a long way to genuinely resolving the concerns that I've heard from my constituents. I know that there are some questions out there from the business community about whether some of the things that are represented in the bill do in fact represent an overreach. I look forward to hearing from more of those stakeholders, but in general the principles of improving safety and improving the efficacy of the WCB are really, really important.

We will be offering at committee stage some amendments, some of which we've shared with the minister, which we hope genuinely, truly seek to improve the bill, and I can hardly wait to talk more about this later.

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

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have to say that it is yet another great honour to be able to rise in this Chamber today and speak to a bill that is moving to protect hard-working Albertans, and of course this time that bill would be Bill 30, An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans. Now, you're probably asking yourself why I'm so excited about this bill. Well, because we are going to update legislation and the Workers' Compensation Act. That has not seen a comprehensive review in over 15 years. I've been asking around, and some people don't even have vehicles that are 15 years old, so it's probably a bit of time, you know, that we now get to that.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? If that wasn't enough to excite you, we're also going to be updating the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That has not been significantly renewed since it first came into effect in 1976.

Loyola: When?

Mr. Nielsen: Nineteen seventy-six. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know I was only nine years old at the time, but one of the things I guess I should point out is that back then not only was I nine years old; I was starting to enjoy eating Timbits for the very first time. Yeah. They came back in 1976. I got to enjoy a really cool new program that was on TV at the time while I was eating those Timbits at nine years old called *Family Feud*.

I think it's high time that we tell hard-working Albertans that we have their backs and to give our full support to the proposed changes to both WCB and occupational health and safety because, frankly, Mr. Speaker, Albertans deserve to have the same rights and protections that Canadians already have.

3:40

Let's talk about some of those changes by starting with occupational health and safety. Mr. Speaker, last year we saw that more than 44,000 workers were injured while on the job, and, even worse, 144 of those workers did not return to their families. I hate

to say that that number positioned Alberta as the second largest in the country for the number of workplace fatalities per million working population. I think we need to do better. We can't continue to do that. We have to ensure that hard-working Albertans get to go home to their families every single day after work. What's even more tragic is that most of those injuries and fatalities are preventable, okay? With proper precautions, with public awareness, and with diligent ongoing training and the effective enforcement of legislation, I think we can strive to reduce those numbers to zero.

Bill 30 creates a responsive system to better prevent illness and injuries by adapting to changing hazards while also supporting an injured worker's return to work. I was mentioning that a little bit earlier. You know, when you have an injured worker, the faster you can get them back to work in a productive manner – that means we need to provide them the supports they need to get one hundred per cent back to work being fully productive for their employers because in the end that's what helps not only them but their employers to be successful.

Bill 30 will also qualify the roles and responsibilities of both employer and worker to ensure everybody's health and safety, and Bill 30 will also enshrine the worker's right to know about workplace hazards. I know I experienced some of this in my early days in my former role at my employer. You know, times were a little different, so we weren't quite necessarily as diligent at informing workers of some of the hazards that we should have been watching out for.

There's also the right to participate in health and safety throughout the workplace through the health and safety committees. I had, again, mentioned this. My experience at my former employer: I co-chaired the health and safety committee for probably at least 15 years of the almost 20 that I spent on that committee in that workplace. I can totally get into more of that story in Committee of the Whole, but I think for now maybe I'll just give a little bit of a teaser for later on. [interjection] Exactly. A teaser. You know, get you built up, waiting for the story later on. Let's remember the number: 1,650 days. Maybe just remember that. Of course, the one very crucial thing: I know there's been a lot of people over the years that have been striving to get this changed. It's the right, not the duty, to refuse unsafe work, okay?

This bill will also ensure that workers can exercise their rights and fulfill their duties under the law and do it without fear of reprisal or the threat of reprisal. I have heard multiple times where individuals were afraid to report something because they thought that they might get terminated at their place of employment. That should never happen.

We also need to ensure that workplaces are free from violence and harassment, and I think that those are going to be addressed here through Bill 30.

Finally, Bill 30 requires that occupational health and safety laws be reviewed every five years, not every 41 years. I think we need to do a little bit better than that.

Mr. Speaker, a strong system of workplace health and safety programs saves lives. It saves lives. It prevents injuries, and it helps businesses save money. Again, I can get back into my story later on about that. I know that a mandatory health and safety committee: when there is that buy-in to that from not only the worker but the employer as well, incredible things start to happen. Incredible things start to happen, and there becomes a culture – the member that was speaking before me had mentioned how, you know, the oil and gas industry had really set that bar high. At some point in time in their past, in their history they had made that decision to make that a priority.

Bill 30 will also address some of the long overdue changes to the Workers' Compensation Board. Now, Mr. Speaker, you might be

asking: why are we dealing with both occupational health and safety and WCB at the same time? I know I've certainly heard that from the other side. It's because the two are closely linked and related. You can't have one without the other. When you're talking about an injured worker, they usually end up filling out a WCB form, and if it turns out to be a lost-time accident, you now have a claim. So when you're talking about how you can deal with that, the two are interrelated, and you must do them the same. I know we saw some discussions before about splitting bills up and stuff like that, and it's just not the way that kind of thing works. The two are very, very interdependent.

An injured worker often results in the filing of a WCB claim, and in 2016 WCB had accepted more than 44,500 claims. In 2015 Alberta had the fourth-highest total number of claims for injuries that resulted in lost time. I think we need to do a little bit better, and I think that with the changes to OH and S, we are definitely expecting to see those numbers go down, which, again, is very much more healthy for the workers, and it's a lot better in terms of money for the businesses that employ those hard-working Albertans.

When we're talking about a worker when they are injured or develop a work-related illness, then WCB is supposed to provide medical and financial support so that that person can get well and can get back to work and be productive for their employer. And while they're accessing the WCB system, it should be in a compassionate and a fair and accessible and easy-to-navigate way, which doesn't really happen a lot right now with the legislation. Again, it's more than 15 years old. We need to get to modernizing that. We need to make it better for people to be able to access in a very compassionate – you know, treating people like people. As I mentioned, again, I don't think most of us have vehicles that are 15 years old.

Changes to the WCB act. Bill 30 will now bring workers' compensation firmly into the 21st century and, of course, join the rest of Canada. There are also changes that will improve existing benefits for surviving spouses and children, changes for injured workers' retirement, and changes that will provide injured workers more choice in selecting health professionals.

Employers will continue providing existing health benefit programs for injured workers for one year after the date of injury. Employers and workers can also apply for interim relief while compensation decisions are under review and appeal.

There are also some new provisions that Bill 30 proposes to introduce. Presumptive coverage for first responders will not be changing, but the coverage for psychological injuries, including PTSD, are now extended to all occupations. Employers will have an obligation to return workers to the job after they have suffered a work-related injury and illness.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to get people healthy when they do have an injury. We need to get them back to their employers so they can be productive for their employers because they know how to do the job and they know how to make sure that their employer is successful in the marketplace.

Another exciting new addition, of course, will be an independent fair practices office, that both the employer and worker can access for help to navigate through the WCB, and we had quickly discussed that a little bit earlier. This office can also be available to let people raise concerns as well as monitor trends that are occurring within the workers' compensation system. So if we see some things that are going on that maybe aren't so positive or aren't working so well, they'll be able to identify these things and help guide us to make the system even that much better.

Bill 30 proposes to remove the insurable earnings cap of \$98,700 per year so workers can be compensated at 90 per cent of their

actual earnings. I know, Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of friends that work up in the oil and gas. They're very, very successful electricians, and I can tell you that they happen to make more than \$98,700. The reality is that if they were to get injured and only get 90 per cent – I mean, they happen to have built their lives around that basic income that they worked very hard to get, and I think they have a bit of a right to ensure that they're able to take care of their families, should they be injured, until we can help them get back to being productive for their employer again.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, with Bill 30, workers will see a WCB system that doesn't treat them as a number but as a person, helping them get back to work while still caring for their families. Employers will see an effective and sustainable system while still having among the lowest premiums in Canada. As I said, as I alluded to earlier, when you have a safe workforce, when you have a healthy workforce, you don't have any lost time in accidents. You don't even have high premiums; again, my example from where I'd worked before.

Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed in Bill 30 are based on extensive input through the public and through reviews. Again, we've had organizations that have been working a very, very long time to see some of these changes come through.

Hard-working Albertans will be better protected from injury and illness while receiving better support if they do happen to get hurt on the job. Employers will have an effective and sustainable system that they can count on to be there for them as well. I think Albertans deserve these changes, Mr. Speaker, and these changes deserve our full support.

So I am going to recommend to all my colleagues in the House that we support Bill 30 through second reading and then, of course, on through Committee of the Whole and third reading and get the changes that hard-working Albertans have been looking for for a very, very long time. They deserve it. We owe it to them, and we now have the chance to get that work done so that they are protected to the best they can be.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Any questions or comments to the Member for Edmonton-Decore under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your speech, hon. colleague. I just want to ask about – you were telling me a story earlier today. The Member for Calgary-Elbow was talking about how the vast majority of employers do a great job trying to protect people at work. There's no question. However, sometimes in their enthusiasm to protect workers, they do things that are somewhat misguided in their, you know, approach to helping. You were telling me a story about that. I thought that was pretty interesting in how the new legislation with the joint health and safety committees might be helpful.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah. I remember telling him that story. Essentially, again, as I kind of alluded to a little bit earlier, once that decision is made to really buy into that – how can we make our work sites as safe as possible? – quite honestly, some magic almost starts to happen between the workers and management. They start, you know, watching each other's back very, very diligently.

We were in one health and safety meeting talking about how there was a potential risk of some stuff that was going to fall off a

conveyor in the plant. Management, in their excitement, said, "Well, you know what? We'll just put up these guards, and we'll get this done, and that'll just absolutely, you know, solve the problem," which it absolutely would have. There were a few of us on the committee on the workers' side that kind of had to say: "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Slow down. Do you have any idea how much that might cost?" We thought that there might be some other ways that we could have worked with that, maybe reduced some of the costs to try to make that safe. The good news, of course, is that we did manage to do that. It was significantly less, and as far as I know, it still protects those workers from any items falling down to this day.

Again, when you start talking about some of the buy-in, not only from the employers' side but from the workers' as well, to come together, the best vehicle to do that is through a joint health and safety committee: you know, work towards making that workplace safe, make sure that everybody is going home at the end of the day, and thereby make sure that the employer is profitable and competitive so that they're able to continue to pay their workers and not have to worry about all the other associated costs when a worker does get injured.

I thank the member for that question, and I'm sure there's still more of the story that I can tell later on.

The Speaker: Any other questions or comments to the Member for Edmonton-Decore under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Cyr: Yes, sir.

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have, I guess, a general question for the member. The member across is making this sound like we're breaking ground here and going into new areas.

I have a *Hansard*, October 22, 1973, speech by Dr. Hohol. Unfortunately, we just had this gentleman pass on, but I will tell you that his words live on for generations now because he's in *Hansard*. His quote is:

I should now wish to outline some of the new provisions for compensation. I suppose the most important one is compensation for death. Presently, provision is made for burial expenses, including the plot, transportation and other related costs. New legislation would provide future pensions to the surviving spouse and equal the pension the worker would have received, if living and 100 per cent disabled. The allowances for children would be included within this pension and expenses in connection with the funerals would be consolidated and adjusted. An important principle of the recognition of loss, whether it is by complete inability to work or by cause of death, is [important] in this new approach to this particular disability benefit.

Then he goes on to say how WCB has broken ground in this area.

Now, if we look at the legislation, it seems to mirror a lot of what they had said when they first set up WCB in 1973. I guess what we need to reinforce here is that these aren't new ideas. So if they're not new ideas, how come this government voted down a referral motion to a committee? They came up with the same ideas that we're coming up with now. Wouldn't it be ... [Mr. Cyr's speaking time expired]

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Klein. Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Right riding, wrong city. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just quickly before I start, to the member that just spoke, yes, we were implementing these things in the WCB back in '73; however,

we haven't updated them. That was the issue, but I'll talk more about that.

I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 30, An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans, today. I know that it's been a long week for all of us, so I'm going to give you a break today. I'm not going to dwell on the inaction of the previous government for 40 years on WCB and 15 years on OH and S.

But I will say, though, to sort of set this up, that what it does demonstrate is a government's priorities. That's okay because Albertans are smart people, and they recognize which parties are looking out for their interests and those parties who are kind of stuck in antiquity, if you will, and complacent, with outdated labour legislation and economic ideas. Those ideas are ideas that leave Albertans and Alberta's economy vulnerable and on the wrong end of history, in a place where we don't want to be.

With all that said, you know, these changes to OH and S and WCB are long overdue. These changes will better protect workers so they can stay healthy and safe and also better support workers if they get injured or sick on the job. Alberta's workplaces and the way we work have changed over the years. A lot has changed since these acts were introduced, and we need to ensure that our standards and practices meet the needs of modern workplaces. These changes, quite simply, bring us up to par with the rest of Canada. That's a very reasonable approach to legislation.

Every year hard-working Albertans are killed or injured on the job. These incidents don't just affect the workers, Mr. Speaker; they have a devastating impact on families and friends and co-workers and employers, too. It's devastating to the employers. Workplace illnesses and injuries and fatalities are not an inevitable part of life, and we can't approach it like that because many of these are preventable, and that's what this legislation is about. It's about being preventative and not reactionary.

4:00

You know, this legislation will ensure that Alberta's health and safety system is continually improving to better prevent illnesses and injuries from happening, to respond to changing hazards, and to support injured workers and their return to work.

Now, we've talked quite a bit about consultation. I'll just reiterate that there were more than 1,300 online survey responses, 90 written submissions, and eight in-person round-table discussions with over 200 stakeholders. The big piece of this was, of course, that in June 2017 the independent panel reviewed the WCB to ensure that the system continues to support Albertans and maintain its sustainability and affordability.

I'll touch a bit on – it is a large bill, and we've talked about that, but I'm going to focus a bit on kind of the OH and S piece first. With OH and S, the changes up front on this, the foundation is on three tenets, and they are the worker's right to know, the worker's right to participate, and the right to refuse unsafe work. Those are rights that all Albertans should have.

A big piece of this for me – and my colleague spoke to this a bit, too – is the introduction of a mandated joint work-site health and safety committee. I think that's really one of the best examples that demonstrates the three tenets that I just mentioned. I kind of alluded to this yesterday as well in a 29(2)(a), but, you know, the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka had a very cynical view about joint health safety committees, and he actually expressed the fact that he thought that they would create more conflict on the job site. I really do think that that is absurd. [interjection] Well, it is, and I'll tell you why.

This is what joint health – I'll just name a few. There are a few really fantastic ones in here. What the joint work-site health and safety committees will do is that they will develop and promote

programs for education and information concerning health and safety. They develop and promote measures to protect the health and safety of persons at the work site and check the effectiveness of such measures, and they participate together in identifying hazards to workers or other persons arising out of connection with activities at the work site. You know, when you work together, that's how you make people safe, and that's how you have an understanding of what is dangerous at work.

I absolutely agree with the Member for Calgary-Elbow, who earlier said that the evolution of safety has occurred over time. Absolutely. It's become better and better over time. I can't tell you the things that I've done on job sites when I was younger. If I ever told my parents what I did, my father would pass away again, and my mother would have a heart attack, I'm telling you. Some of those things were just outrageous. But you know what? I didn't know any better at the time. I was getting paid. I'm lucky to be here, and I'm sure there are many of us in here that have these same stories, absolutely.

The other piece I'm very pleased with under OH and S is the right to refuse dangerous work, which, of course, as I'm talking about things I did when I was a teenager and in my late 20s at work – I mean, we would have never done that. I would never have refused it. That was just the way it was. My colleague alluded to this, to the change being the right to refuse dangerous work. That is the big difference. That is a nuanced difference, but it makes a very big difference from a duty to refuse work. Actually, what it does is that it commits the employers to ensuring that we have a safe workplace as well, and it commits the employees as well. Through the joint work-site health and safety committees, together: that's how we're going to make our workplaces much more safe.

There was some mention yesterday, I believe, too, about having to report near misses. We've never had to report near misses in Alberta before, but in most other provinces they have to. I think this is a great addition to the OH and S Act, and the opposition should really like this, too, because they really like to talk about empirical data and having data to make decisions. This is what's going to help us make decisions about what's dangerous at a workplace and how to make it safer, and through that, you can also develop training programs that help to make it safer.

Now, in my previous life, before being elected, some of the companies that I would negotiate with – we actually had it in our contracts, and smart companies get this. They had set aside \$30,000 a year just for training and for very specific training, which isn't much, but they understand, you know, that a trained employee is a smart employee, is a safe employee.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased – I'd like to talk about this – with the fact that this bill does address psychological hazards and harassment in the workplace. As you may know, last fall I introduced a private member's bill to address psychological harassment and bullying in the workplace. Unfortunately, as is the fate of many private members' bills, it did not run the course of debate, and it died on the Order Paper. You know, the idea for that bill walked right in the front door of my office. A constituent came in and told me this horrific story about three years of harassment at the workplace and about her struggle to get any sort of resolution at the workplace, which then turned into this quest to get legislation. Again, Alberta is one of the few places that didn't have this type of legislation until now. So I'm very proud of that. I also tabled a petition for her that had over 1,300 signatures on it.

You know, what I did find funny when I introduced that private member's bill last fall, Mr. Speaker, was that although it didn't make it out of first reading, it sure got a lot of attention. It got a lot of attention in the media, and I did four or five speaking events through different organizations. Clearly, it got so much attention

because it hit a nerve, a nerve that there's a need for this type of legislation in the province. I would like to sincerely thank the Minister of Labour and the ministry for incorporating these types of protections into this legislation and, specifically, for clearly defining what workplace violence and harassment are and defining the roles and responsibilities of employers to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace.

It also requires workers, your colleagues, to not participate in or initiate harassment or violence in the workplace. I've told many stories about things that I've seen as well in the workplace when I did speak at these events, and they're pretty horrific, some of the things that I've seen over the years. Although in doing my research – there were about 70 per cent of employers that already had harassment policies in place – Mr. Speaker, the issue with it was that it wasn't mandated. They were all written, or they were all kind of piecemeal, or, you know, what they said was quite a bit different in each facility. The big issue was that without the legislation, it just simply had no teeth, and sometimes employees didn't take it very seriously.

I had one business in my riding that I went to when I was consulting on that bill. He said: oh, I'm so happy to have this type of legislation in place. He was experiencing people harassing their colleagues at work, and he really didn't know how to stop it. I think a lot of people don't take it seriously if it's not the law. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some of the other numbers I discovered on that were that 60 per cent of Albertans have experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace in their lives. That's 6 out of 10.

Again, thank you so much, Minister, for recognizing the need to include this language on harassment in the workplace.

4:10

I'd like to talk a bit about the important changes to the WCB as well, Mr. Speaker. Of course, as we heard, it's been about 15 years since a WCB review. An independent WCB Review Panel, in delivering its report and recommendations, recommended that the legislative changes be designed to entrench a worker-centred system. I believe that this bill does a very good job in doing this. The first big step is to actually just simply clarify the purpose of the act, which is done in the preamble of the act. Actually, it's really odd that it was never there before, if you think about it. How did we know what it was all about? It's kind of funny that way. At least, it defines what workers' compensation is supposed to do. It's "founded on the principles of no-fault compensation, security of benefits, collective liability, independent administration and exclusive jurisdiction." That's just one part of the preamble, but at least we have that set straight for all of our employers and all of our employees.

Of course, a big piece of this and something that many people are very happy is being introduced in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is new provisions for presumptive coverage and PTSD coverage. This will now be made more available to other occupations, and that's a very important piece here. You know, first responders: nothing will change for them in a sense. There's likely going to be more presumptive coverage there, but now it will include paramedics and presumptive coverage for myocardial events.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Nielsen: Under 29(2)(a), yeah, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. You know, I think the member was getting to some rather crucial information there with regard to presumptive coverage. I was wondering: during his consultations around violence and

harassment what kinds of thoughts had he received with regard to how Alberta was lagging behind? He had made a quick mention that people just didn't know that Alberta didn't have these kinds of things, and I was wondering if you might be able to touch on that at the same time.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Coolahan: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that. Perhaps I'll save the presumptive coverage for a different point. We'll have more time to talk about this in Committee of the Whole.

In terms of talking to many different companies, many different organizations, it was quite humorous sometimes to walk into a very large oil and gas company in downtown Calgary and ask them to consult on this bill and ask them for an endorsement. Almost unanimously the first thing out of their mouths would be: "What? We don't have that?" It's quite shocking to people, right? In fact, I'm not sure I knew it either until I had that constituent come into my office to tell me about her story. Again, even when these large companies would say to me, "What do you mean we don't have that? We have a very solid culture of nonharassment and a harassment policy in place," I'd say: "But there's no legislation, so how do you back up that harassment policy? How do you enforce what you're doing?"

That would spark their interest, and I had unanimous support in consultation on this. There was not one company or one organization that said to me: I disagree with the notion of putting harassment and bullying in the workplace into legislation. Absolutely not. Again, that hearkens back to the fact that the vast majority of employers are fantastic employers, and they want to make their employees safe and happy and healthy. You know, this legislation, that type of legislation, is not meant to vilify employers, and it's not meant to be punitive either. It's meant to be preventative, which is what all of this legislation is. I think that when there's any doubt from the opposition on this type of legislation, we have to always think that this is about being preventative. The more we understand what's happening at a workplace, the easier it is to prevent it, and that's a very important aspect of this.

What was kind of funny, too: when I tabled that petition with 1,300 signatures on it for my constituent, I got another one in my office shortly after, another petition from a different person. You know, unbeknownst to either of them, they were doing the same thing. Through that, I got to know quite well Linda Crockett from Alberta Bullying. What was also humorous about that was that it's a nonprofit organization where they train employers on how to prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace, so as soon as the private member's bill hit the Order Paper, her phone rang off the hook because companies were concerned. This is going to be legislation. Her business skyrocketed, of course, because every employer was calling her up saying: you have to train us; you have to train us.

I had other companies, not just nonprofits but other companies who focus on safety and harassment in the workplace, come to me after it as well and say: "How can I work with the government? I want to make sure that everyone is trained properly on this." Again, this really hit a nerve with a lot of people because, as I said, 60 per cent of Albertans . . . [Mr. Coolahan's speaking time expired]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to talk about Bill 30. I actually have a little

bit of experience with occupational health and safety and the Workers' Compensation Board. I have the privilege of being a national construction safety officer in this country. I owned and operated an occupational health and safety consulting company in western Canada for several years before I went back to work in nonprofits, with the family business, if you will. I specialized primarily in large high-rise type projects, massive construction projects of that nature, and you learn a lot about the technical side of occupational health and safety. You learn a lot about the importance of it as well, making sure that moms and dads can go home to their families after they've been working, which I think all of us certainly believe in.

I've also certainly seen the ins and outs of workers' compensation from that side, working with employees of clients of mine as they've navigated the workers' compensation system in our province, and I've seen first-hand a lot of the problems that we have with the WCB in our province. The government is trying to address some of those issues with this legislation.

There's a lot to talk about in this bill, Mr. Speaker, and fortunately I have lots of time to talk about it. It is a very large bill, a very technical bill that deals with some very technical aspects of legislation that we already have. The occupational health and safety side, which is extremely technical and should be, is a piece of legislation and then regulations that govern many varieties of industries in our province that have to deal with very technical things to be able to keep people safe but at the same time be able to construct projects or produce energy or the things that we do in our province. And then the WCB has been an ongoing source of conflict in our province for a very long time, longer than any of us have been in this Assembly. I don't think the concerns that many of us have with WCB are any secret.

I think, though, that the reason I start there, Mr. Speaker, with the size of the bill, the complexity of the bill – and the fact that it has been brought here late in the session raises a lot of concerns for me, and I think we'll talk about that a little bit, with an amendment that I will move later on in our time together.

4:20

The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein talked about one aspect of this legislation that I would like to start with, and that is, first, around the concept of an employee's right to refuse unsafe work. An employee's responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to refuse unsafe work is already in legislation in our province. It's already a current practice in our province. It's already a responsibility of employers to allow employees to refuse unsafe work. Employees are expected to refuse unsafe work as a result of that legislation. It's certainly part of safety programs associated with the Alberta Construction Safety Association, the manufacturing safety association, the petroleum safety association. It is a common practice.

In fact, I unfortunately was involved in the investigation of an employee that lost his life in a construction accident, that worked for a client of mine. I worked for the client during that investigative process. Mr. Speaker, you may not know that when an employer loses an employee or has a significant accident, including, obviously, the death of an employee, the employer is responsible for also producing an investigation report that will go in. That is one of the responsibilities that they do, and consultants like myself would often be hired to do that task for them in those circumstances. Occupational health and safety officers would be doing the same process on their end, and those investigations would go together. Sometimes they would end up in court. Sometimes certain things would be settled outside of court, depending on the circumstances.

This one situation comes to mind when I think of refusing unsafe work: a site inside Ponoka. In the town of Ponoka there was a

condo, about a three-storey building, if I recall, Mr. Speaker, but it may have been a two-storey building. There were two young gentlemen who were probably in their first year in construction, definitely, as we would call them, greenhorns. They had been assigned by their foreman, who was in charge of the job site and worked for my client, to operate a scissor lift. They would go up and down the scissor lift. They were removing stucco from this building.

Along the way their foreman positioned them with another gentleman, a man who had been in the trade a lot longer. He was operating the scissor lift, and he was supervising them. They went to the other side of the building. They would go up, and the gentleman asked them to go out and move the bottom power line, which is the neutral line of these 14,400-volt power lines that were above their heads, so that the scissor lift could get above it. Then they would proceed to work with those power lines just above their heads. First of all, it's a good thing they weren't as tall as I am – it was extremely tight by that point – or there would have been something that happened to those two young gentlemen.

They then had a coffee break. The two of them began to talk to each other and said: this doesn't feel right, what we're being asked to do; this feels wrong. They actually said to the foreman: we refuse to do that. They knew their rights. They had been taught that during their safety orientation with the company. They knew that they had the right to refuse unsafe work, in fact that they had an obligation to refuse unsafe work and to bring it to the attention of the rest of the crew. They exercised that right. A very tough thing for 18-, 19-year-old young men on a job site, their first real job, to do, but they did, and good on them.

The foreman made fun of them and then chose to get on that scissor lift himself and then proceeded the rest of the day to go up and down, moving that neutral line, with 14,400 volts above his head running through a line, he and the other gentleman that was in the scissor lift. On the last trip down of the day the foreman was operating the lift, and he asked that man, a father of several children, to go and move that neutral line. That father stood up a few seconds too early as the scissor lift went down, and his head connected with the back of that power line, killing him instantly.

I tell you that story, Mr. Speaker, to point out two things. The first is that the right to refuse unsafe work already exists. I'm not really sure why the NDP is acting like it does not. It makes us as opposition and people in the industry start to ask more questions about what may be going on with this lengthy bill that was handed to us. Either they don't know what's going on with their legislation, or they don't know that you can refuse unsafe work already, or they're trying to do smoke and mirrors, and to what effect I don't know. It makes me question what's going on with the legislation.

The second thing, though, Mr. Speaker, that I point out is that these issues, these technical aspects, these important pieces of legislation have life-and-death implications. They have significant consequences. We have to make sure that we get it right. Safety has evolved, and many members have pointed that out.

My grandfather, who was a coal miner, Mr. Speaker, is still with us. He's about 98 years old. He's been, actually, in this House with you, and I've had the pleasure of introducing him before. When he first started, they still had birds down there in the mines. The stories he will tell you would make my hair as white as yours if I had to go through that. But the culture was different. In fact, when he first started, it was superstitious to allow a female to participate in a coal mine. Ridiculous, of course. So things have evolved, which is the point.

We have learned from safety as we go on. We learn lessons, which is why regulations and practices within the industry evolve,

but what's important is that the people that are in the industry need to be the people that drive that forward.

I know a little bit about commercial construction. I participate in commercial construction. I certainly should not be the guy that moves a neighbour's drilling rig south of Sundre tomorrow. I most definitely in this House would not have the ability to write regulations or procedures or laws associated with something as complicated as that. I see the minister nodding with me in agreement. I think she would agree with me, Mr. Speaker, through you to her, that our capacity as politicians to write that level of detail would be inappropriate.

But if you acknowledge that fact, you also acknowledge that the industry needs to participate in the process. The industry needs to drive the process. For safety to be successful, it needs to be driven by the industry. The reason that we have accelerated in safety along the way, whether it be from mining, like my grandfather, Mr. Speaker, or manufacturing or petroleum or construction, is because we've put the responsibility on the industry to drive that forward. But when we come forward to this House and we have to change a significant piece of legislation, some of it good – and I'm going to talk about some of the good points in a minute – some of it troubling, without having adequate consultation with the industry, it's concerning because I don't think that we are qualified in this place to do that. We haven't even started talking about the WCB, which is a whole other mess.

That brings me to another concern that I have with this. If the government was seriously concerned about doing a good legislative process on important issues like this, important issues that involve people's lives and livelihoods, if the government was seriously wanting to work on that in a serious legislative way in this place, they would not bring legislation that was combined like this on these two important issues just before the end of a sitting.

Nobody can say with a straight face, Mr. Speaker, though I'm sure they will maybe try, that the government seriously wants to work with the opposition, wants to work with the people of Alberta, wants to work with experts involved in this situation, involved in the industry, people that will be impacted by this legislation that's before us. Nobody could say with a serious face that this government is actually wanting to work with them, because they would not want to bring forward this level of legislation – complex legislation, a large piece of legislation – with very few days left in the sitting and without providing enough time to deal with that.

The second thing is that if you broke the legislation apart, it would be easier to manage. You could focus on the occupational health and safety side of it, which is very complicated, Mr. Speaker. Then you could focus on the WCB side of it, which is significantly different than the occupational health and safety side of it. There is some overlap, I will acknowledge to the minister, but they are significantly different issues.

In British Columbia the WCB does the occupational health and safety part in their province for the government. The WCB itself would be the investigative body. They would implement fines if somebody lost their life on a job site. If those types of things were going on, the WCB comes in like our occupational health and safety officers, but here they are two different things. One is primarily on the insurance and compensation end of the safety spectrum and another on the actual regulations, the rules, and the enforcement of occupational health and safety.

Now, I heard some of the members across the way, Mr. Speaker, heckling, but just quietly and politely, which is a change, that they did consult. Now, I've been talking to people in the industry for the last several days, since this government tabled this large piece of legislation, and they certainly do not feel like they've been

consulted. [interjection] The indigenous affairs minister is asking me how many people I talked to. I'll get to it in a minute.

Mr. Feehan: No, I didn't.

Mr. Nixon: Oh, he's not. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I misheard what he said. I've talked to occupational health and safety officers that work for the government that I know from my time in the industry that have called with concerns that there has not been proper consultation on this legislation and that there could be consequences as a result of the speed of this legislation going through this House.

4:30

I have talked to former colleagues of mine that run large health and safety programs for massive, large companies in our province, significant construction companies and energy companies, that say that they have not been consulted about this. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the fact that I articulated the story that I told you and the fact that workers already have a right – they already have a right – to refuse unsafe work and that this is the government's biggest talking point of this legislation so far today make me really wonder even more now if they consulted people, because that is a very simple thing to know.

In fact, if you were to go, Mr. Speaker, to a large commercial construction project in Edmonton or Calgary right now, it would be fenced off. You see it when you walk around downtown. I'm sure you've seen it before. They'll be fenced off. There'll be safety signs. There'll be those type of things. You would enter the work site, and the first thing that would happen is that you would be brought to a trailer or an office of some sort, and you would receive a safety orientation. That is the very first thing that would happen. I know I've done many of them. You'd have to fill it out, and you'd have to sign that you'd received that safety orientation. They would go over some standard things. They would also go over some unique things for that job site specifically that were there.

When the company has their safety audit in order to get their COR requirement, whether they're with the Alberta Construction Safety Association or some other type of safety association, that is one of the first things the auditors will check. I know this, Mr. Speaker, because I'm a COR auditor. That is one of the very first things that I would check when I was doing audits, whether those safety orientations happen. And on those safety orientations, which would include all sorts of stuff, some of it very specific to that job site – where to go, the muster points if there was a fire, those types of things, what the alarm systems are for that job site, what would be required of them, where certain fall protection things have been put in place, unique things for that job site – before you got to the unique things for that job site, there would be a bunch of lines of standard process. In them that company would remind you of the legislated right of an employee to refuse unsafe work.

The incident that I talked about of those two young men who exercised that right – and good on them. I really think it's a great story of why it's important that that rule is in place. When I did the investigation that was associated with that and I interviewed those two young men, I asked them how they knew they had that right. It was like their first or second construction site, just out of high school. It's because they were told by the safety officer for the company in that orientation that that was their right under the legislation.

So it already is a right. It's important that we acknowledge that. That is not something that is new. We support it. You want to change the wording around it. That's fine, but to try to say that employees do not have a right to refuse unsafe work is troubling. It

shows, in my mind, there has not been enough work done on this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and brings me to the amendment that I would like to move at this time. I have enough copies for the page. I'll just wait till the table receives it.

The Speaker: We will refer to this amendment as REA1.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The amendment that I'm moving says the following. I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 30, An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 30, An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans, be not now read a second time because the Assembly is of the view that the government has not provided Albertans enough time to be consulted on the specific changes being proposed and, further, has not provided assurances that a full economic impact analysis has been completed detailing any potential negative impacts on the economic well-being of Albertans.

Now, I move this amendment, Mr. Speaker, for several reasons. Some I have already talked about, one in particular that is an example of the government coming to this place, clearly, and not talking to anybody from the industry because anybody who has been in the industry would already have told them that the right to refuse unsafe work has been taking place on construction sites and petroleum sites for a very, very long time.

I see some of the members across the way shaking their heads. I would challenge them to stand up and tell me how many safety orientations they've been involved in on construction sites – clearly, it's not very many – because that is how it goes.

There are parts of this legislation that are good. There are parts of this legislation that are important, that we consider before this House, particularly, right off the bat, on the WCB side but also on the occupational health and safety side. There are lots of aspects of this bill that I think are important. There are more protection and benefits for injured workers. From my time working for clients with workers that have been hurt or on job sites that I have participated in, I know what a challenge workers' compensation and getting benefits when you've been hurt can be. I know what a challenge it is for people, particularly, that have had injuries that last a very, very long time or that they will never overcome again in their lifetime. They have been through, I think, in their view – I think the minister would agree with me – the wringer as they've tried to deal with workers' compensation on that and the catastrophic consequences to them and their family.

It gives employers access to assistance during appeals. It used to be, Mr. Speaker, just for workers. Speaking as somebody who represented, during my time in occupational health and safety, many employers, I can tell you that this was actually a big issue. It's very complicated for the employer as well as they're interacting with workers' compensation. I think this is a good idea, so I commend the minister for bringing that forward.

It protects workers from getting in trouble or having something done to them by their employer for not complying with the act. I think that's a great idea.

It protects workers from being penalized for their employer's lack of compliance. Another good idea.

It protects cross-jurisdictional renegotiation of OH and S and WCB regulations if standards are equal or better. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy again. I pointed out another thing last night in this House that the NDP was doing that was very conservative, and this is another great conservative idea, so I have some faith that some of our conservatism is rubbing off on the other side. I know I'm standing

right now beside the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, one of the most conservative individuals I know, and I think, through you to him, that maybe it's starting to go over there a little bit. I think they've got a long way to go, but keep it up there, hon. member.

But there are other parts of this legislation that are deeply concerning, particularly if the government has not taken time to consult, if the government has not taken time to work with the industry to make sure that what they are bringing forward will work, will not have other consequences.

One of the ones is – and the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein talked a little bit about this – the job-site safety committees. Job-site safety committees have been going on a long time as well. I understand that this legislation would change that to make some of that more mandatory. It already is a standard part of all safety audit programs in the province. I can't think of one audit protocol for COR in any of the industries that does not make this already a mandatory requirement of their audits. If you're with the Alberta Construction Safety Association, manufacturers' safety association, petroleum safety association – you name it; the list goes on and on – this would be a standard practice for their audits. So I guess the question would be, one, Mr. Speaker, why we would need to bring that into legislation when it is already happening within the industry.

Second, if we take it too far, we actually could end up having another problem. Safety committees have an extremely valuable role to play in occupational health and safety on job sites, but if you make it too restrictive or prescriptive and do not allow flexibility on certain job-site applications for what that looks like, you ultimately end up really forcing companies to spend a tremendous amount of money, that will actually end up being diverted from their actual safety training programs. That's maybe an unintended consequence that the minister did not think about with this legislation, but there will be a point, if you force all that money into just being spent on tool box meetings or those types of meetings – some of us would be more familiar with that language – when you will see companies end up having to just divert a tremendous amount of their safety training into that.

4:40

Occupational health and safety committees are not enough training for many of the safety applications that companies have to deal with. When you work on high-rises – I spent a lot of time building multiple-storey buildings. Fall protection training, in particular, on some very complicated issues: you know, working on forms that are coming up, structures that actually did not exist that morning that are being brought up; ironworkers who are walking steel in certain applications, literally now walking in a place where a few minutes ago there was no structure because they are the first ones there, that had to build the structure. That costs people their lives. We would all agree on it. But if you don't train people on how to properly use that equipment because you end up diverting so much of your time and safety resources into just the tool box meetings or the health and safety committee side of it, you could have unintended consequences as a result of that.

Unintended consequences in health and safety are scary. I can think of a time when eye protection became a real big deal in the industry, Mr. Speaker. Workers' compensation rates were going up as a result of lots of eye injuries. There was a lot of pressure from WCB on employers to deal with that issue, and rightly so. So almost a blanket policy came in. Everybody had to wear eye protection at all times. Young safety officers would be on job sites. I ended up on a large project in southeast Calgary where the ironworkers were working. They were my clients. They were walking out of hoarding,

a heated area that was being heated in the middle of the winter behind tarps, and they had to walk out on steel, on steel beams. This is before you had to tie off on steel beams. At that time ironworkers were exempt when they were walking the iron, a very dangerous job. They were putting Q-deck down as they would come in and out.

There was a young safety officer there who kept insisting that they wear their safety glasses, and the old veteran ironworkers kept explaining to him: "When we're coming in and out of this hoarding, we're freezing up. We're carrying these pieces of steel. We're coming out." I have glasses, Mr. Speaker. Every morning when I come to the Federal building on the way to work – I like to walk here from my condo – as soon as I walk into the Legislature, I freeze up. It gets all foggy. These guys are going in and out of a heated place like that; it's getting fogged up. The young safety officers are: "That doesn't matter. You have to wear that. That's what this says."

The veterans were smart enough to put it in their pocket and just ignore the guy. A 22-, 23-year-old young man who was working with that crew listened to the safety officer and, later that day, walked off the beam and was paralyzed. That's an unintended consequence. The person was trying to do the right thing, was trying to follow the rules, but nobody had taken the time to talk with the people that are in that industry to find out how that rule would impact them. Things impact people, and it's complicated.

So when we come to this Legislature and we see the government bring forward a bill of this magnitude, a bill of this size, and then some of the stuff that's in it – and I'm going to go back to the refusing unsafe work thing because I can't get over it, Mr. Speaker – that tells me that they have not seriously consulted people. The fact that I have had phone calls from people that I trust in the industry saying, "No, we haven't been consulted, and we see problems with this legislation; we see problems and unintended consequences with this legislation," tells me that they have not consulted people, which is why I bring forward this amendment.

I bring forward this amendment because not enough time has been put into this bill, and we need to get it right. We need to make sure that we've dealt with the unintended consequences. We need to make sure that we end up with a piece of legislation that will actually make sure that we don't create more problems within the industry, that we give the tools to the people that are on the front line to do our goal, to make sure that we have a piece of legislation that allows them to increase safety, to keep evolving safety within the industry.

You know, one of the things, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein talked about in his presentation – and I did enjoy listening to his presentation; I agreed with some of it, disagreed with some – was on the harassment side of this. His argument was that there was a bunch of companies – I hope I'm not mischaracterizing this because I'm not trying to – within different industries that had mishmashed up harassment, different policies. One place would maybe be dealing with harassment this way. Another place may be dealing with harassment this way. Some places may not be dealing with harassment at all, but in the member's experience most places were already having some sort of a policy in place.

Companies or other people associated with the government were now calling him to say: "Oh, thank you. We didn't know how to do this. Now the government is here. It's legislated. Now that it's written down in legislation, we can do this."

In my mind, what I hear when I heard that, Mr. Speaker, is that companies can't do this without the government's help. We've got industries that take concrete and turn it into skyscrapers. We've got people in our province that take sand and turn it into gas in our cars. We have people that are 10 times smarter, many times smarter, than most of us politicians in the room. I have never been and I don't

think any of my hon. colleagues on this side of the House have ever been in a meeting with anybody in the industry or in any capacity that said: "Oh, whew. Now that government wrote this in, we can finally write this all down properly in our safety books." It's a silly thing to say, in my mind.

It also shows in my mind, again, that the government did not consult with industry. If you spent any serious time within all the industries that this would apply to, you would see that harassment policies have been strongly in place for a very long time in most companies, and the right way to deal with it is to get the industry to address it, to work through their safety associations, to understand the uniqueness of each organization, and they will do it. They've already proven it. There was a time in the 1980s, before we started bringing in the Alberta Construction Safety Association and those types of organizations to focus on stuff like core audits, that our safety record in this province was dismal. It's not perfect now. I would not submit that as an argument to you, Mr. Speaker. But it was really bad. It was front-page news all over the country. It was having significant negative effects on the stability of the oil and gas industry in our province, and the industry started to make local or industry-specific safety associations, and they would begin to address it.

Are we bringing forward legislation to help people write things that they're already writing, or is this a real situation that the minister has come across in her consulting with people in the industry? Maybe it is. It's a fair question. But certainly the people that we're talking to are already dealing with that. It's already a policy that's in place, and it's the government's responsibility to come here and say: the reason we're changing this law, the reason we're making this part of the law, is because this is the problem we're trying to fix, not because we don't trust experts already in the industry to write up their own policies. With due respect to the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein – and I would include myself in this. I can think of many people that are probably better at drawing up policies than I am.

The question with this amendment, the purpose of this amendment is to say that the government has not done their job. This is another example of the government not doing their job. They have not done their job to consult properly with the industry before they bring this forward. I believe their intentions in most of this legislation are well thought out. I support most of their intentions in a lot of this legislation, but I do not believe that they have done their job adequately to get this right. I do not trust the government that they got this right. I don't. My constituents certainly don't trust the government. My colleagues that work in occupational health and safety don't trust the government. My friends that own and operate construction companies or those other things don't trust the government to get this right.

Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because this government has a track record of not consulting people before they bring the legislation here. They have a track record of bringing legislation to this House that has not even been discussed outside of the inner circle of the NDP or, as the Deputy Premier once said in this House, outside of the people that have the NDP world view. That is a problem when you're bringing forward legislation of this magnitude that impacts so many things.

4:50

It is the government's responsibility to make sure that the legislation that they bring before this House has been adequately addressed. If not, it should go to a committee. It's one of the problems, I think, with the Alberta political process. Unlike Ottawa, legislation of this magnitude can just come here and be forced through this House, the government using their supermajority to

force it through and get beyond that consultation whereas in Ottawa this would have an opportunity to be able to have a proper discussion. We could bring in experts. We could talk to occupational health and safety officers. We could talk to industry representatives, safety experts, people from the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering. We could talk to people who have been impacted by WCB. We could talk to WCB co-ordinators. We could talk to WCB. We could bring them in, and we could have a real conversation.

Then the government would probably have learned that employees have a right to refuse unsafe work. They probably would have learned many other problems that I don't even know about that are happening because technology is moving on. We would have been able to get this legislation right. Instead, what the government did with this was took two significant issues, workers' compensation and OH and S, lumped them into one big bill, put it in this House near the end of a session after they had adjourned debate for days and adjourned the House for days because they didn't have legislation ready, and jammed it all in at the end.

Mr. Speaker, what was interesting to me at the time was that this legislation didn't even come from the Queen's Printer when it was given to the opposition here in the House. It was photocopied on a photocopier here.

An Hon. Member: No, it wasn't.

Mr. Nixon: I would assume. It definitely wasn't from the Queen's Printer. It was a package . . . [interjection] It was not from the Queen's Printer when we got it, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Yes, it was.

Mr. Nixon: Well, not when we got it in this House.

That is not consultation. If you're preparing a bill the night before on the fly, it is not consultation, Mr. Speaker. You cannot look at the opposition with any seriousness when you continue to bring legislation over and over to this House that you have just prepared hours before you table it.

An Hon. Member: How much longer do you have?

Mr. Nixon: The hon. member wants to know how much longer I have, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure, but it's quite a bit. I'm happy to help, but the Clerk may be better off to tell you.

You cannot tell the people on this side of the House, who have a responsibility, like you do, Mr. Speaker, and like every member of this House does, to our constituents and to the people of Alberta, that you consulted on a piece of legislation that you are doing basically overnight and bringing into this place. You're not ready, and if you're not ready, how do we know you're not making mistakes? How do we know a bill of this magnitude, a big, thick bill with lots of complicated issues, has actually been thought out?

They wanted us, Mr. Speaker, to take their word for it when it came to Bill 6, a very similar area of law or legislation, that they had consulted about it. I remember it clearly that week: they consulted. They talked – it was the same thing. It was the same type of bill. It came in here. It hadn't been prepared in advance. It came the night before. We began to read it, and then we went home, those of us who represent large farm communities, like me, whose neighbours were ranchers and were farmers. We went to our constituency offices, and the phones were ringing and the e-mails were coming. Every major player in the agriculture industry was saying: "We never knew about this. We never saw it." That's not consultation.

It's no different with this bill. There's no difference with this bill. They brought forward a bill with good intentions, lots of it. Parts of

the bill, just like, you know, parts of Bill 6, were with good intentions but not properly consulted with the industry, no time taken to make sure they got it right, no time to have a discussion about what impacts there will be. In this case the big hot-button issue became family farms. This bill will be something different because there is no time to address it. The government took forward the piece of legislation.

When you have a track record like that, Mr. Speaker, as this government has, a track record of not consulting Albertans, of not consulting the people their legislation impacts – and then they continually want to come into this House and say: "Hey, it's okay. Hey, it's okay. It's okay. It's fine. We consulted. Take our word for it." Well, I apologize. I'm done taking the government's word for it. I'm done taking the government's word for it. This side of the House is done taking the government's word for it. If they're not willing to do the job, then we will have to continue to do the job for them, which is why we're bringing forward an amendment like this to say: "Stop. You have not done your job. Send this to a group of people that can do the job. Make sure that experts get to participate in the process. Take your time."

What is so wrong with that? What has taken place in the last couple of days that would require this government to try again to ram through a piece of legislation like this in the dying hours of a session before Christmas? What has taken place that would take that to a level of emergency? I'll tell you why I ask, Mr. Speaker, because this side of the House would be happy to take that part out once we understand it and get it passed immediately in one day and then take time to get this right.

Now, I get passionate about it because I'm concerned about the people it will impact. I also happen to think that probably in about, you know, 18, 19 months this government will be fired by the people of Alberta. That's up to them, but that's what I think is coming.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I don't think so.

Mr. Nixon: They don't think so. That's fine. We have an election.

But my point is that I think that they will be sent a very clear message at the polls largely because of stuff like this. Then this side of the House has to go over to that side of the House and fix the mess they made. In the meantime people, real people, are being impacted by the legislation that they write. Employers are being impacted by the legislation they write.

That doesn't mean that I don't want employers to make sure that they work on safety. I think safety is important. I've been on job sites where I've seen people lose their lives. I get it. It's important. I've got a son right now who's working in construction back home, my oldest son. I would not want to see him get hurt. I would, certainly, when I go home this weekend – he lives just inside Sundre near me, and if I stop to visit him, I hope that he is there, just like I know you would for your daughters or your grandkids. We all do. That's not what is at argument here. Keeping people safe, making sure that the system evolves, that we take safety seriously, that we continue to give tools to the industry, that we continue to say as a province that we demand that mom and dad get to go home after work: nothing wrong with that. But why not take the time to do it right?

Why take two big issues, WCB and OH and S, and jam them all into one? Why? It's a good question, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you wonder. Why move legislation through at the last minute? If this was such a big issue and a priority for this government, why did the government not have this ready at the beginning of the session? Why did the government not send it to one of our standing committees to begin to have discussions and make sure that we were talking to the people in the industry? Why am I getting e-mails

from occupational health and safety officers who work for the government saying: "Oh, my gosh. Have you read this part of the bill? Do you understand what this means? Do you think the government has?" That's the most common one I'm getting right now: do you think the government, the NDP and the bureaucrats that are involved in this legislation, understand what the implications are of what they've brought forward? That's pretty scary, that occupational health and safety officers are feeling the need to reach out to an opposition MLA and say: whoa, you've got to go talk to them.

We're going to talk about a lot of those details as we go through this legislation, the concerns they have. I'm on a reasoned amendment, so I'm going to focus on why this needs to be stopped for the time being and go back to being consulted with Albertans. But we will talk about some of this, and we will try to change some of the most significant issues that the industry and people have with this legislation. It will be determined at that time, Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to co-operate with that. I don't know. I don't want to guess that until we see what happens.

Occupational health and safety: big act. You know, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon spoke the other day on this bill, and he pulled out a little book that they hand out, usually called an OH and S handbook. This one had a blue cover, which is similar to the Occupational Health and Safety Act's actual cover. There are other books that are red that come out from different safety associations, and they summarize the act. It's a big book, and he was showing you, Mr. Speaker, at the time, and I'm not actually sure how you let him get away with using a prop like that, but he was on my side of the House, so I didn't argue. They've got this book. It's big. It shows the significant components of this end, you know, of occupational health and safety. That wasn't even the act. That's a handbook. If you were a superintendent on a job site right now or a foreman working with a drywaller crew, that's the handbook they give you to try to summarize the act. I've got the act still sitting on my deck – or on my desk. It's not on my desk; otherwise, it would probably be wet. It's pretty snowy there. It's old because I've been out of the industry for a long time. I know the act has been updated since then. It's like this. That's what we're talking about right now.

5:00

The opposition now knows that the government hasn't consulted with people because we've heard from the people that they should be consulting with saying: we haven't even been talked to. We've seen the government stand in this House and talk about things that they would have known if they had talked to anybody in the industry. Now we have to go through this legislation and find out everything that they got wrong on behalf of Albertans. We have to reach out to the stakeholders that are impacted by it – safety organizations, safety officers, construction companies, road companies, and the list goes on and on – because we know that they didn't do it. That's why I have to bring an amendment like this, Mr. Speaker, to this Assembly, to give a chance for that to happen.

The question for the minister, in my mind, is: why was this consultation not done? Why the speed? Why, if this was so important, are we not dealing with at least two pieces of legislation so that we can get it right? Why mix it all together and complicate the issue? Is the goal, Mr. Speaker, to have a good piece of legislation at the end of this? It's a good question. If it's not the goal, I don't know what the government is doing here, but I want to give them the benefit of the doubt. If that is their goal, then why not do it? Why not do it right? Why not separate these issues? Why not deal with these in separate pieces of legislation? Why not send it to

a standing committee with a reasonable period of time, get people to that standing committee, let them present?

Let's make sure that we get it right. Let's make sure that the next government doesn't have to clean up a mess. Let's make sure that there are not some consequences that are going to cost more jobs or hurt different industries. Let's make sure that the ability is in place to make sure that we go beyond those two young men that I told you about, Mr. Speaker, that refused to do unsafe work, and do other things to make sure that we're putting money into education for our young workforce and that we're teaching people about their rights so that they understand that on a workforce. I could support that. But what I can't support is bringing forth a massive bill that's been prepared, basically, the night before, dropped on the opposition's desks, hot off the presses.

An Hon. Member: The night before?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, some of the hon. members are laughing about me saying: the night before. I suspect that is because it was being printed the morning of, but fair enough. The night before is maybe a little bit too generous. I've had legislation of late in this House that still felt hot from the photocopier. That's what we're dealing with at the end of the session.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we were sitting in our seats, the opposition, eagerly excited to be at work, and the government is adjourning the Legislature hours early because they haven't got a bill ready. Now here we are at the end of the session – and we're going to talk a lot about some of the other bills between now and February or whenever we'll be able to finally get this work done – and we're talking about this one, and this is a big bill. Nobody on this side of the House can argue with me about the size of this legislation. It is a big bill, a big bill that we now know the government never consulted on with any large number of people.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I suspect that they get excited and they say that they consulted with people, but I've talked to the people that they should have consulted with, and they say that they haven't. I don't know, Madam Speaker – welcome to the chair – if that's just because they were only consulting with occupational health and safety officers that have the NDP world view. I don't know if that's because they're only consulting with employers that were friendly to them about this legislation. The question that's being heckled at me and that I'm going to try to answer is: do these occupational health and safety officers not care about safety? That just proves, again, the problem.

These occupational health and safety officers work for the government. They're responsible for enforcing the rules. They're responsible for investigating up to even when people have been killed. It's a pretty big responsibility.

Madam Speaker, maybe I heard the member wrong, so I want to be careful about that.

An Hon. Member: You did.

Mr. Nixon: Okay. It sounds like he's saying that I misheard him. It wouldn't be the first time. My wife says that I do that quite often. So I will apologize to the hon. member.

The point is that we are here again with large legislation that needs to be sent to be properly consulted on with the people that are impacted by it. The problems with the legislation itself, Madam Speaker, will take several hours and days of debate to address. We will bring amendments in good faith to try to help deal with the mistakes the government has made in this legislation. But the right

thing for this House to do is to pass this amendment. Stop this bill from being read a second time, get it to a standing committee, make sure the industry gets to participate, and make sure the people responsible for enforcing the laws get to participate because they're actually the ones that have the biggest concerns right now with the legislation. That's troubling.

Then we can start talking about the WCB, because I don't think the government is going to split these apart. I don't know what they're trying to do, but they're mishmashing the whole mess together and creating a superbill. The same point stands on that amendment. Send it away. You have not properly consulted. Through you, Madam Speaker, to the government side of the House: they have not properly consulted. They have not done their job.

Have you seen, Madam Speaker, an economic analysis on the decisions of this legislation? [interjection] The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway is pointing out that in his time in the Legislature he probably hasn't seen one ever from the government, which is why we have to spend so much of our time standing up talking about referral and reasoned amendments.

An Hon. Member: Except for the leaked ones that they send us.

Mr. Nixon: I do appreciate that, Madam Speaker: except for the leaked ones that we do get. The government really should be careful about where they leave their documents lying around, but I do appreciate it.

This government has a responsibility to do that. This amendment says that they have not. I'll give you a couple of reasons why they have not. I'm going to give you some more before I sit down, but the purpose of this amendment that I brought before this House is to stop the process because the government has not done its job.

I think it's also important that the members of the government who rise to speak to this legislation who imply that because we have concerns over on this side of the House, we don't care about the safety of workers or that we don't want to see safety advance or that we want to see, you know, construction sites and petroleum sites in our province stay in the Dark Ages correct that tone as well, Madam Speaker, because that's not what we're saying. I've been very clear in my presentation today that we support many aspects of this bill, including more protections for workers, clarification of issues around workers' compensation, making sure that workers can't be punished for exercising their rights.

As I said briefly earlier, Madam Speaker – you weren't in the chair at the time – putting in the ability for employers to get help while navigating the WCB system is something that was not there before. It can be very complicated for employers as well as they're dealing with the system, extremely complicated, particularly when you get to large employers and complicated injuries and those types of things. I think we all agree that we want that to work better.

Now, I spent a lot of time, Madam Speaker, talking about the occupational health and safety side of it, but let's talk about workers' compensation. One thing that's interesting is that the NDP and my former legacy party, before we were the United Conservative Party, the Wildrose Party, agreed that the WCB was broken. It was one of the few things that I think both of these parties agreed on very, very openly. It's why at the time we were shocked that the NDP was going to take that broken system and put it on the farmers and ranchers that we represent despite the fact that they had better private insurance at the time that was taking better care of their employees.

5:10

At the time, Madam Speaker, I'm sure you heard from some of your constituents that the biggest concern they had was that they

had better coverage and fewer problems, because of the problems that we're talking about here today with WCB, and they were also protected in bed. They weren't just protected at work; they were protected in bed or when they were on vacation or when they were driving their quad or when they were doing other things, for less than the WCB cost their employer. That was the biggest thing on the WCB side of Bill 6. They were scared that they were going to lose all that coverage. Employers were going: man, I'm going to have to pay way more, and my employees are going to be less protected.

Mr. Gill: It doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Nixon: It doesn't make any sense. The system is broken. The minister is trying to address some of those issues with the system, and I agree with that. But, again, now you've got a complicated system that has now been forced upon the farmers and ranchers that I represent, that the rest of the industries in our province are forced to work under, that is broken. The government's intention to fix something that has been going on for decades and that is a mess in some cases is to bring that forward by printing the legislation the morning of or the night before – between the heckles earlier I'm trying to figure out which one it was; but, either way, within 24 hours – bring it in here hot off the presses, and say: "Pass it. It's going to be good. The whole system is busted. It's broken. We've been complaining about this situation for years, and rightly so. So have you. It's all good. We fixed it."

An Hon. Member: Trust me.

Mr. Nixon: "Trust me. It's good, Jason." Oh, sorry; I said my own name, Madam Speaker. "It's good, hon. member. All good. Your constituents are fine. I've got you covered. I've got you covered." We don't accept that.

This is the party that the last time they were talking about WCB had bureaucrats or at least some people that were associated with them telling farmers of ours not to put their bulls out with their cows at nighttime so the calves would come in the day. I can tell you that if you consulted a rancher, they'd tell you that's not how it works. I suspect that if you consulted a few other people, they may be able to help with that as well.

No, we don't trust them, Madam Speaker. It's not our job to trust them. It's not our job to come to this place and say: "Sure. Give us 200 pages of legislation overnight, and we'll let it go through. We'll let it go through. Nah, you don't need to consult on something as important as workers' compensation. Why would you consult on that? That's silly."

Occupational health and safety: something that governs and puts forward rules that make sure workers and employees are safe at work in places where they could die at work. And this side of the House wants us to go: "It's all good. They've got it." Madam Speaker, we don't think they've got it, and that is the point of the amendment. If you don't even know that workers already have a right to refuse unsafe work, then you have not done your job. You have not done your job. All you've done is reword it, which is fine. It's cool. I think the wording is fine, the new wording. But to imply that that is some major difference and why you're trying to bring this legislation through the House is ridiculous.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I think tomorrow I will begin tabling safety orientations from all across the province. I will table the current act, that says that you have the right to refuse unsafe work, and then we can move forward from that. [interjections] Because you do. They laugh. I have met and interviewed two 18-, 19-year-old men that are still here because they knew that they had the right

to refuse unsafe work and did. They did. They exercised their right to refuse unsafe work.

They consulted, Madam Speaker? They didn't consult, because this government doesn't consult on anything. This is a problem. But it becomes a bigger problem when you're dealing with legislation of this magnitude. It becomes a significant problem when you're dealing with legislation that impacts people's livelihoods. It becomes a significant problem when you're dealing with legislation that impacts people getting compensation after they've been hurt at work and they're trying to pay their family's bills. It becomes a significant issue when you're addressing legislation that is associated with individual workers that will climb up on large buildings tomorrow and expect to still be able to come home to their families, and rightly so. They should expect that, but they should also expect this government to consult properly before they bring in legislation like this.

They should also expect this government not to bring forward legislation with almost no time left in a sitting. We're happy to be here as long as it takes, Madam Speaker. I want to be clear on that. In fact, I was a little bit shocked in the last few days by how frustrated the NDP appeared to be that session was going late, particularly given that they tabled a piece of legislation like this and many more in the last days of their scheduled sitting after they never brought any legislation forward for days and days and days and kept adjourning the House early, early, early because they weren't ready.

If this bill was really consulted on – I want you to think about this, Madam Speaker – if there was extensive consultation done on this bill, certainly I would know people that had been consulted. I've worked with many people in the industry. I've talked to them as recently as today. I think that at least a couple of my colleagues would have heard of some organizations and stakeholders that they've been talking to that had been consulted. I certainly think that our shadow minister in charge of this issue would have heard from many stakeholders that had been consulted.

I know that they would have been ready to bring in the bill at the beginning of the sitting instead of sending everybody home sometimes as early as 4 o'clock in the afternoon because they weren't ready. Why was that? Because the legislation was not ready. They did not take the time. They're ramming this through, like they always do before Christmas, legislation that impacts people's lives. It is so ridiculous that this keeps happening in this place, which is why I moved this amendment. The government has not done their job. They have not consulted. They have not done economic analysis. They have not shown Albertans that they know what they're doing. Why does this keep happening? Why?

If the minister was serious about this legislation, it would have been handled, actually, a lot like the government handled the MGA: proper consultation, taking the time to talk to people, making sure things are being discussed. Now, in that case, they still should have gone to a proper, full committee, made sure it was addressed in a democratic way, let the opposition talk to certain experts that only the government has access to to make sure that we're getting this right. But they got closer with it, certainly a lot closer than with Bill 6. What scares me here, Madam Speaker, is that we see the government now going back to where they were with Bill 6.

Now, there are not as many problems with this piece of legislation as with Bill 6 from what we've seen so far. The content itself is different, but the consultation portion of it is the same problem. It's the same problem, and over and over and over we have to rise in this House, stand up and say: why are you not doing your job? That's what this amendment does, Madam Speaker. It says: "Stop. You have not done your job. Stop this. Make sure it is not read a second time. Properly consult some people."

I mean, here are some questions. Has the minister – she may have; I don't know the answers to these questions, Madam Speaker – consulted with the Alberta Construction Safety Association? Has the minister talked to the Manufacturers' Health & Safety Association? Has the minister talked to the petroleum health and safety association? Has the minister talked to the new association that is trying to start up for farmers and ranchers as a result of the legislation that was forced through this House by the government with their supermajority? Those are fair questions. The people we're talking to associated with those agencies do not feel that they have been consulted.

Has the government talked to representatives and a variety of different levels of officers in occupational health and safety? Has the minister met with front-line occupational health and safety officers and asked how this would impact their work? It's a fair question. If you haven't, you haven't consulted. It seems logical to me that those would be people that you would address. Has the minister met with some of the leading experts on law in occupational health and safety? What about the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering? Have you met with the Canadian registered society of safety professionals? I'm talking to many people in their leadership that say: no, but we're here.

5:20

The WCB side. Have we talked to workers that have been impacted about the consequences of their frustration with the system? Have we brought in large employers or representatives of different levels of employers and talked about how these changes will impact their businesses? Have we made sure that we put in proper portions of this legislation to make sure that we're going to educate people associated with these changes? Do we know that we've fixed the problems?

Here's the one I'd really like to know, Madam Speaker: did they identify the problem they're trying to fix? In my time in the Legislature most of the time the government has not identified the problem they're trying to fix. They're just randomly fixing stuff, and they end up making it worse. The focus so often for this NDP government, just like it is now, is on the ideological portion. When you're dealing with just ideology, you'll sometimes get parts of it right, but you'll be blinded, and you won't realize the other stuff that's going on because you don't want to hear the other part, the other concerns, the things that aren't the NDP world view or don't fit in with the manifesto. Did they identify a problem?

Why is this important, Madam Speaker? Let's talk about Bill 6 because it's a good comparison. We are now two years or so away from the Bill 6 debates. We've still got committee messes, and nobody knows what's going on with Bill 6, but put that aside. The government never clearly identified the problem they were trying to fix at that time. They never made it clear what would be accomplished as a result of their legislation that at the time was going to crush the family farm until the opposition showed up and the good farmers and ranchers of this province came to this place and forced the NDP to pass an amendment. But they never put forward clear objectives and said what they were attempting to fix with this legislation. So do we know if Bill 6 is a success? I would argue that it was not. Nothing has really happened with it because it's bogged down in committees, just like we said it would be. But we would not know.

How do we know how to judge this legislation in the future? How do we know or how does the next government know or how do the next people that sit in these seats know which way they've got to go to adjust what we did? They could say, "Hey, they got that part right; they recognized that issue; that one worked, but they were trying to fix it for this issue, and it didn't work," and they could

make adjustments. How do we know? I mean, we just come here and we have a government that continues every day to stand up and randomly throw out legislation without consulting people and then tells the opposition, "Hey, we consulted people." Then the opposition gets called and told: "No. We weren't consulted." Then we're, like: "Oh. Well, which one is it? What's real here? Were they consulted? Were they not consulted?" They try to balance that. Then you come to the Legislature, and you hear the government get the current law so wrong that you get confused.

Then we have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to hold you accountable for the legislation that you're bringing forward, to make sure that you consulted Albertans, to make sure you're bringing in proper legislation, to make sure you're doing it right. If you're not talking to the people that are impacted by it, we don't know if you're doing it right. Then we're getting called by the people that are impacted. They're saying: "No. They're not getting it right. They're not listening to us. They're not talking to us. They only want to talk to people with the NDP world view."

This is too important. This is too important. I get really offended when hon. members across the way get up and try to imply that because we're doing our job and saying that you guys didn't do your job, that means that we don't want people to be safe or that we don't care about safety in workplaces. I remember the first time I was on a large construction project. The tower crane operator took two two-by-sixes and put them across to the building we were working on – and we were probably up 18, 19 storeys by that time – and was walking across them on the flat, back and forth from this tower crane. I remember looking at that and going: "Oh, my gosh. That guy has got a wife and kids at home, and he needs to get home." I want people to get home from work. I care about them. I've got family members who are working out there now.

But this government wants to ram through their ideological portions, only focus on certain aspects of it that are a priority to them. It's fine that it's a priority to you – there's nothing wrong with that – but you've got to recognize that it has other impacts, and you've got to make sure it's right. You know, in my experience, the problem that this government, the NDP Party and the NDP members across the way, has is that they meet with stakeholders, and when the stakeholders say, "No, we don't agree with you; you have this wrong," instead of listening and saying, "Oh, that's an interesting aspect to that; they have a different view of that; what does this individual do for a living, and what experience do they have with that?" they go, "We want nothing to do with you."

They live in a bubble, Madam Speaker. They live in a bubble, and they prove it time and time again, and they've proven it again with this legislation, that they don't want to expand out and hear from other people. And it's sad, because there are many parts of this legislation that are good, that I support. I would like to be able to support the whole thing, and maybe I will be given the opportunity if we go to committee. Assuming that the government is going to continue with their pattern and vote down my reasonable amendment to get this to consultation, then we will continue to do our jobs to try to make this legislation better. Because this government is not listening to the people they should consult with, we will do it for them.

That's what we've been doing the whole time, but it is a heck of a lot more effective if the government does it the right way, if the government includes everybody in the process, if the government takes their time, gets legislation right, makes sure that this will be in place for many years to come and will have the positive impact that they want, and, even better yet, Madam Speaker, as I've already said, if the government identifies the problem they're trying to fix before they fix it.

In my view, the NDP in their time in power have created more problems than they've fixed. It is our responsibility to try to prevent that. We are sent here to hold them accountable, to hold them accountable for ramming through legislation at the end of a sitting and hoping that the opposition just goes: oh, we want to go home. You know what I find funny about that, Madam Speaker? They've been in here with us long enough that they should know we aren't going to go home when we still have to stand up and do our job for constituents. Not one member on this side of the House is scared to consult with people. Not one member on this side of the House is scared to stand up in this House and do his job. Now that we've gotten there, you may try to ram through legislation hoping that we're tired. We'll stay here all night, and we'll do it again tomorrow, because that is our job, and we're proud to do it.

Mr. Barnes: I bought you your Christmas present.

Mr. Nixon: Perfect.

It won't work. You'd think they would learn. I get how they tried that the first time. They thought: "Wow. A rookie opposition, the first fall sitting, heading towards Christmas, and they're missing their families." Most of our members, like some of their members, including you, Madam Speaker, are far away from their families and their homes and their kids. They thought that we would cave on behalf of our farmers and ranchers. They learned, without a doubt that we weren't caving, that we would stand with our farm and ranch community, and we won't cave on this piece of legislation either. We will continue to stand up.

Here we have a piece of legislation and an amendment from me that says: hey, let's stop. That doesn't mean that we don't pass this legislation. That doesn't mean that this is not important or that we don't take the time or that we don't actually accomplish this in the end. What this means is that we say: stop, get it to the right group of people, make sure everybody gets to participate that will be impacted by it, and let's get a good piece of legislation. I strongly think that if this went to a committee process and everybody was allowed to participate, we would have a better law. We would have better legislation that would have a better impact on the people that we're trying to help with this legislation. I also think that if you sent it to a committee, very quickly you would separate the WCB and the occupational health and safety aspects of this bill and deal with them in two different components so that you could do a really good job.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe we would go through a consulting process and I'd realize: "Oh, this makes sense. This is a good idea. We should put these two pieces of legislation together." I don't know. I can't see it right now, from the limited time that we've had with this legislation, but if we went through a proper process of consultation, there may be very reasonable reasons for going that way. That's why you consult.

Madam Speaker, when I talk to people about the work that we do here in Edmonton and they realize that legislation could come forward on a Monday and clear this Assembly by Thursday or Tuesday, but often within a week, before any of us who work for the people back home – okay. I work for the people of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. The members across the way do not work for the Premier. They work for their constituents and do a good job of it. I don't agree with some of the ways they do it, but I'm sure they're trying to represent their constituents. Then their constituents find out – I know they feel the same way as mine – that they don't even go home and talk to them about a bill as big as this, that this government expects the opposition just to fold and say: yeah, let's pass that.

The minister said: “Don’t worry. I called them. It’s good. Good, hon. member. We’re good to go.” Then I’m always so disappointed because my phone starts ringing off the hook, and they say: “No. They don’t get it. They missed it completely.” We have to continue to stand in this Assembly and do the same thing over and over. It’s important that we do it. But what would be more effective is if the government actually took the time, listened to a reasonable amendment like this, and then said: yeah; you know, the opposition has got a point.

5:30

The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre pointed out a bunch of people that I had never even thought about that would want to be consulted on this legislation. Some people over on the other side of the House have some expertise in this issue as well. It would be good to hear from some of the people that the hon. member is pointing out. Let’s send this through a committee process. Let’s make sure that we get this legislation right, and then we can pass it in January.

Until the government can stand up in this House and say, “Here is the economic analysis, here is what we’ve figured out, this is the impact that it’s going to have on people, here are the people that we’ve properly consulted with, here are their concerns, here is what we’re trying to accomplish, here is the purpose of this legislation, this is why we printed a multiple-hundred-page bill in the morning and threw it on your desks and asked you guys to pass this,” they haven’t done their job.

The biggest question is: why did this legislation take so long to get here in the sitting? They weren’t ready. They were putting this legislation together, Madam Speaker, in the middle of the sitting. Hence, why we were going home at 4 o’clock in the afternoon was because the government was not ready to proceed. Then they put that legislation on our desks and said: “Pass it. Trust us. Everything is fine.” It’s not like the biggest blow-up, the biggest mistake that this government ever made, wasn’t already a WCB and occupational health and safety bill. “No, no. Forget about that. We learned our lesson from this one.”

When I heard it was coming, the day before, Madam Speaker, I thought: “Oh. Maybe they did learn their lesson. This is going to be interesting. It’s going to be interesting to see who they talk to and if they have taken the time to do the job right this time, if they have learned from their mistakes, if they have learned better ways to proceed with this type of legislation.” I was sorely disappointed. The same thing.

Less content problems with the bill. There’s some really good stuff in this legislation. There was not much in Bill 6 that you could stand up and say was good. In this bill, though, we can stand up and say that some of it is good, but there are problems with it. The government still has not shown that they’ve consulted, which is why a reasoned amendment has been brought forward in this House by me. Through you, Madam Speaker, to the members across the way: you have not done your job. You have a responsibility. Do your job. There’s nothing wrong with taking your time and doing your job right.

If there was an urgent reason in this legislation that this needed to be passed immediately, life and death or significant consequences that were associated with parts of this legislation, why is that not identified and passed right away and then proper work done on this legislation? Why do we go halfway all the time with the NDP government? Why? We’re here, two years into their mandate, and we’re still losing 12,000 jobs in a month because they’re going halfway. They’re not doing their job. They’re not admitting the problems. They’re not identifying the problems and then trying to fix them. They’re just randomly throwing out pieces

of legislation not fully thought through and then rushing it through the legislative process.

Madam Speaker, if we were in Peace River today, you and I, and we sat in a coffee shop and we told them that the government expected legislation of this magnitude to be passed with only a few hours and a couple days of debate, I know, without a doubt, that they would be shocked to find out that our system works like that. They would be shocked. Most of them would think the government was going through a proper process, was taking time, was consulting with people. Most of them would think that there would be independent experts and people that understand the legislation that we’re working with, that would have come as witnesses and would have addressed these issues with members, allowed members to ask questions. Most of them would have thought that we together would go through this bill and go, “This line here: I think there’s a mistake here; this doesn’t work,” through a committee process.

That doesn’t happen here. Instead, the government plays games. They put through a couple of bills at the beginning of a sitting. They adjourn, send everybody there, and then they get it all, load it all up, hundreds and hundreds of pages of legislation, dump it all on the members’ desks, and then say: “Okay. Let’s get out of here. We were scheduled to be out of here on Thursday.”

I can tell you that the hon. members of the government, the hon. NDP members across the way, that had the responsibility and the privilege of sitting in opposition in this place in the past didn’t like this either. They recognized the problem, rightly so at the time, when the Progressive Conservative government would do this to them. It’s not right. Often what we see when we talk about these types of issues is that the hon. members rise, and they say: well, the PCs did it to us.

Madam Speaker, my kids do that to me sometimes. My daughter threw a little toy car at my son the other day when I was down in the basement. When I asked her why, she said: well, he did it to me. What? I get that from 11-year-old twins, but from the government, “The PCs did it to us”? They were wrong when they did it to you. That’s why the PCs don’t have a party in this House no more. [interjections] That’s why the PCs do not have a party no more.

Mr. Coolahan: Because you joined them.

Mr. Nixon: That’s correct. I actually want to help the members across the way. They are correct. There is one member who is identified as a PC member in this House, but they do not have a political party no more. I know. I wrote the agreement that oversaw that.

Anyways, the point is that it was wrong. Albertans didn’t like it, so why would the NDP continue that behaviour? Their only justification to Albertans – forget about the partisan politics – is: oh, the PCs used to do that, so we’ll keep doing that. I mean, it’s the oldest story in the book. Two wrongs don’t make a right. A lot of people have tried to figure out how to make two wrongs make a right, but it doesn’t usually work out. In fact, all of us have probably done it. It doesn’t work.

We’re talking about something as serious as this, an issue that impacts Albertans, impacts workers, employers. It deals with life and death. When I was last working in safety – it was a long time ago. I left safety a long time ago, Madam Speaker. There used to be a workplace injury or death every three – I could have these stats wrong, but it was high. A workplace death almost every three days – that would have included long-term illness that was associated with work, cancer and those types of things – and an injury, I think, every three minutes. So it’s serious. We recognize that. We also recognize if you don’t get it right.

I'd like to close with another topic. There is a lot of stuff to talk about in this bill, and we're going to talk about a lot in the days to come, but that's the near-miss aspect of this. The government has talked about near misses as part of this legislation. I think near-miss reporting is important. They used to call it the iceberg kind of idea, that so many near misses would be floating down below like an iceberg, and then the accidents you can see above. It's an important thing. But now with mandatory we went too far, it appears, with what we're doing in this legislation. Do you know how many near misses would get reported on a job site? It's part of it, near misses. You're going to go too far. Then what's going to happen is that organizations are going to try, but employees aren't going to report. There has to be a threshold of what type of near miss; otherwise, that iceberg thing will happen.

So a hammer falls off a scaffold, doesn't hit anybody: that's a near miss.

An Hon. Member: It has to be reported.

Mr. Nixon: Yes. Absolutely. It's already in the safety protocol for the company to report it but not to occupational health and safety.

You know, here's the problem that they're not understanding. I represent one of the largest constituencies in this province, okay? Many provincial parks, two national parks, some of our most precious wildlife resources are there. Our headwaters, waters to almost every town in central and part of southern Alberta, flow through my constituency on the way to the towns that you represent. A big, big area, a beautiful area. Lots of you guys vacation there. I talk to you guys when you go there on rafting or canoe trips. It's a beautiful place to represent. Do you know how many fish and wildlife officers are covering these areas that are larger – larger – than most European countries? Do you know how many are left? One or two in those areas. Occupational health and safety: how many officers are going to be able to come in and deal with hammers falling off a scaffold? These are reasonable questions to ask.

5:40

Reporting near misses is important. It's already being dealt with within the safety protocols of companies. Again, you cannot pass a core audit if you do not have a near-miss reporting process in your organization, one of the very first things that an auditor will check when he does a safety audit in order to get your core audit. It already exists. Now you take it so far. What are the consequences of it? Now, there may be a reason. Let's talk about it.

Have we priced out what the increase will be to occupational health and safety as a result of this? Have we priced out what the impact will be to the taxpayer? Then what will be the benefit? It seems to me it would be cheaper to continue to allow the safety associations to address that in their audit protocols and make sure that near-miss reporting is happening and being followed up on. But maybe there's a reason. I would have enjoyed being in the committee and would have heard about the reason. Instead, I'm standing here tonight with a big piece of legislation and being asked to pass it on faith. I'm not going to pass legislation of this magnitude on the faith that this government has got it right because I haven't seen them get almost anything right yet.

This is a government that has been in power for over two years that has had more of a negative impact on the communities and the people that I represent than any government in the history of our province. If they thought that I stood up in this Assembly and just rubber-stamped their legislation on their word, I would sure have a problem in the Sundre A&W Friday, when I get there for a visit. That's not our job, and it's not their job either, Madam Speaker.

Their members who are not in cabinet should be asking the same questions. They should be demanding the same proper consultation process from the government on behalf of their constituents.

We've seen this on so many issues that relate to this. The crime thing was the most recent example, where you've got one side of the House standing up and representing constituents that are being devastated by a situation taking place, and the other side of the House, I know, is worried about it. I know they're worried. I've talked to rural members across the way. I've talked to people from the community. I know they're worried about it. They should be. It's terrible what's happening to people. But they're not up on their feet saying to the government: get it right; fix it.

No different with this bill. They're taking the government at their word. They're taking the hon. minister, who I have a tremendous amount of respect for, completely at her word that she got this right. Open your e-mails. Call your constituency assistants and find out what they're hearing from people on the ground. Talk to some of your largest employers. Talk to some occupational health and safety officers. Call in some national construction safety officers. See how this impacts them. That's your job. Their job, Madam Speaker, is no different than our job, and I think they forget it a lot in this House. I think that's unfortunate. I really hope that this side of the House, when and if they are given the privilege of forming government, don't forget that. It is our job to hold the government, those front seats, accountable for their decision. It is our job to make sure that they make the right decision, that they consult the people in Alberta, that they get legislation right, that they do not go halfway.

Madam Speaker, the members of the NDP Party that are not in government should be just as offended by this process as I am. They should be just as offended that this legislation was dropped on their desks and that they were asked to make decisions for their constituents without proper consultation. They should be just as offended that they don't get to participate to make sure this legislation is done right. They should be just as offended and insulted, in fact more because it's their own party that's doing it to them, bringing in this legislation and demanding that they pass it on trust and showing nothing that they did their job right, showing no economic analysis, showing nothing about consultation, no clear consultation process, all done behind closed doors. Who was consulted? That's not consultation, Madam Speaker.

We spend so much time talking about this in this House, it's ridiculous, but it's become the theme of the NDP government. It's become the theme of the NDP government. We don't consult. We just live inside the dome. We just live inside the dome. We talk to people. I'm just assuming now at this point, Madam Speaker, but they talk to people outside the dome that already believe what they've heard. They limit the people that they communicate with because if they were communicating with the same people that I communicate with all across Alberta, not just in my constituency, they would be hearing these same concerns because I hear it everywhere.

This party on this side of the House just underwent two major campaigns in the last year all across the province: one, to unite the conservative party, to bring like-minded conservatives together, something that has happened in the House; and, second, then to elect the new leader of the United Conservative Party and the next Premier of Alberta, the Hon. Jason Kenney. From one side of the province to another all of us have travelled during that process campaigning for different candidates, campaigning for unity, standing in town halls. I've been in many town halls along the way, and the theme is constant. I've got 22 counties and towns and school boards in my constituency, not counting the small ones like hamlets

and stuff, and every one of their councils feels the same way, no consultation. No consultation.

This government is making it up as they go, and they're in charge of one of the largest economies in the world. It's scary. Start doing your job. Madam Speaker, through you to them: start doing your job. For the backbencher MLAs that are across the way, start doing your job. There's nothing wrong with saying: we expect better. There's nothing wrong with saying that when you want to bring a piece of legislation to this House, you will make sure that there's enough time to properly debate it. You won't complain when the opposition does their job and debates it. You will make sure that there are committees and that the job is done right. And most importantly, you will consult Albertans before you bring in laws that apply to them and impact their lives and their livelihood.

That doesn't mean that what you're trying to do is wrong. In this case I think that most of it is pretty good. What's wrong is that you're not doing it right. You're not doing it right. Instead, you come to this House every night once we get to this stage, and you sit there frustrated because we talk too much. Again, Madam Speaker, my wife will probably agree with that.

Well, get up and start talking. Get up and start asking your cabinet ministers what they're doing about this. Get up and start asking what's going on with this bill. Demand better. Demand that the right people are consulted with. Demand that your constituents are consulted with. Demand that this goes to committee. That's what this amendment does. And if the members across the way vote for this, that's what they're doing, saying that we expect better.

The Deputy Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know what it's like to be standing in this Legislature speaking, be in the middle of a thought, and then have the timer run out. So I just want to give the member some extra time to finish his thoughts and continue on. Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you. I think that a few more minutes is helpful. I felt a little bit tight on time there. You know, my point as I was closing, Madam Speaker, to the hon. member's question – I appreciate it – was on the need for all of us, no matter what our political stripes are, which side of this House we sit on, for those of us MLAs that are private members of this place, that are not in cabinet, to have a responsibility to do our job in this place. I don't get in my car on a Sunday night and drive from my beloved Sundre to this place, for a week away from my wife and three kids, my horses, my farm, the places that I love, to sit here and just talk.

We have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to say to ministers when they bring legislation forward here: "Did you get this right? Did you do this? What is going on with this? I think you got this wrong. This is what I've heard from my constituents." That is our job, and it's their job, too, and that's why we're bringing an amendment like this. When a minister, who I respect, brings forward a bill like this and then we find out from many people that they weren't consulted with and we hear comments from their backbencher MLAs that show that they haven't been consulted with, then it is our job, no matter if you're NDP, Alberta Party, or United Conservative Party, to stand up and say: "We expect better. Do better."

We are not going to take bringing in a piece of legislation like this and trying to force it through and then we're just going to rubber-stamp it. The people that elected to send us to this place would be offended, and rightly so, if they thought that's what we were doing. It is not our job to rubber-stamp on this side of the aisle,

certainly, and it is not the job of members across the way to rubber-stamp either. They have constituents, just like you and I do, Madam Speaker. They have a responsibility to those constituents to fight for those constituents, to make sure that things are being done right for those constituents, and certainly, at the very least, to represent them in this place and to make sure that they're being consulted with before legislation is passed.

5:50

They should be offended, in my mind, Madam Speaker, like I am, which is why I moved this amendment, that this legislation was not properly consulted on. They should be offended that there is no clear economic analysis of the consequences of decisions in there. They should be offended that there is no clear objective with this legislation. They should be offended that the minister and the NDP government have not articulated what they're trying to fix so that we can make sure that the bill, that they propose will fix it, will fix it. They're essentially just saying: "Here's a bill. Pass it." Well, we say: "What are we doing with the bill? What are we trying to fix?" And they say: "Oh, it's good. We talked to people." They should be offended by that.

They should stand up in the Legislature, and they should stand up for their constituents. I'm not saying that they're not representing their constituents back home in their ridings. I don't know that. I assume that most of them are doing that. What I'm saying is that in this place they have a responsibility. They don't get paid to drive here to just sit and do nothing. Their job is to hold the government to account, just like us, and they have a better ability to do it than we do. We will continue to do our responsibility as the Official Opposition, but government private members should do their job, too.

Demand better from your cabinet ministers. Demand better from the government. You guys make them the government. Your Premier is not the Premier if you don't say that she is, so you can demand better from her. You can demand that we get the job done right in this place. Or you can continue doing what you've been doing, which is rubber-stamping legislation without even a peep, which is standing by when important things like rural crime are just punted away or bills like this are put in front of this Chamber without proper consultation. Those are the two choices that are before every member of this House.

The members on this side of the House continue to stand up, and we will right up until the next election is called. I believe, Madam Speaker, that Albertans will fire that government and replace them with this side of the House because of that. But even that – even that – is not why you should do it. You should do it because you took an oath in this place to do it, and you should do your job. You should do your job and not continue to allow this behaviour to go forward.

That is what I was talking about. That is what I think is important. I think that it is a fair point, and it speaks directly to this amendment that I have brought forward in this House.

The Deputy Speaker: On the amendment, the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Are we under 29(2)(a) here? [interjections] We're speaking to the amendment?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Coolahan: Okay. I will speak to the amendment, then. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have to say that that was really impressive from the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. It was really impressive.

It felt like it was a long, blustery summer's evening, but what ended up happening was that that bluster turned into a tornado. You know how a tornado acts in an urban area, where it hits one house, it misses a few, and then it hits another one? Well, that's kind of what happened there. He got one thing right, got a few things wrong, got one thing right, got a few things wrong. So let's talk about that. [interjections] That was pretty good.

Mr. Gill: That's very disrespectful. Homes are getting affected every day.

Mr. Coolahan: Okay. Anyway, I don't think that was disrespectful at all. I'm telling you that he got some things right and he got some things wrong. That's just the way it is. [interjection] Just calm down over there.

Talking about the amendment here, you know, of course, I don't want to stop. We need to carry on with passing this legislation. Again, we need to talk about that this is not radical, Madam Speaker. It's not radical. This is bringing much of this legislation up to speed with the other provinces. That's not radical whatsoever.

A few of the things that the member got wrong, when I said that he was missing those houses in the tornado, were that, you know, he said it was silly of me to say earlier that because legislation is put forth on harassment, it actually helps the employers, that they couldn't do the job without it. I mean, come on, Madam Speaker. Have you not seen that every other week there is an article in the paper about harassment at a different workplace? Like, two weeks ago there was a series on it. It was huge. Clearly, it's not working, the unlegislated harassment policies in these workplaces. So we are helping employers in that respect, and we are helping employees so that they're safe at work.

The other thing that I believe was incorrect was when he talked about how we already have a right to refuse work, and that is not the case. The actual wording prior to this bill was that an employee has a duty to refuse imminent danger at work. At the risk of repeating myself – I talked about this the other day, too – it's a nuanced difference, and words are very important. So duty and right are very different. We know that from legislation. We know that from collective agreements and from contracts.

What changes when you call it a right rather than a duty is that when workers are assigned a duty to refuse unsafe work as it was,

it effectively shifts the responsibility from employers to workers. That's the big difference. Establishing a right to refuse unsafe work improves the ability of workers to protect themselves and others from unsafe work. The changes also protect workers from reprisals for exercising these rights and complying with workplace health and safety laws.

You know, we need to move forward with this legislation. And I understand that the opposition is complaining a lot about this being a big bill, okay? Again, at the risk of repeating myself, WCB and OH and S are intrinsically connected, and it's very logical to put these together. They want to not read this a second time. It's about three pieces: consultation, economic impact, and potential negative impact. I'm going to disagree with that.

In terms of economic impact, administering a joint health and safety committee should not cost employers any more money other than meeting time with employees. Also, I mean, we understand fully that for every one dollar spent on training and safety in the workplace, three dollars are saved because we don't have time off in the workplace for workers.

We need to move forward with this. Sometimes, Madam Speaker, you just need to do the right thing. This is doing the right thing. You know, this all started with Bill 17, the changes to the labour code.

Economic impact, too. I mean, lives are priceless, Madam Speaker. That's why we need to enhance our health and safety policies. You can't put a price on a life. You can't put a price on your husband or wife coming home from work. You can't put a price on your children coming home from work. I mean, really.

We know there will be some costs to WCB, and we are working on that. Most of that won't be implemented until June anyway, six months down the road. So there will be time to work on that.

Again, you know, this is not radical legislation. It does drive me a bit crazy when the opposition talks about how, you know, these are ideological changes. I mean, every government in Canada, do they enhance their . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member, but the House now stands adjourned until 7:30 tonight.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Statement by the Speaker	
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women	2317
Introduction of Visitors	2317
Introduction of Guests	2317
Members' Statements	
Greenhouse Gas Large Emitter Regulations.....	2319
Grade 6 Student Engagement and Bill 212.....	2327
Blackfalds.....	2328
Neighbourhood Watch in Calgary-Northern Hills.....	2328
Pipeline Approvals	2328
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women	2329
Oral Question Period	
Greenhouse Gas Large Emitter Regulations.....	2320, 2323
PDD Service Delivery	2321, 2325
Education Concerns.....	2322
Veterinary Education.....	2322
Carbon Policy Economic Impact Analysis	2323
Trans Mountain Pipeline Construction Carbon Policy Economic Impact Analysis.....	2324
Caribou Range Plans	2324
Highway 3 Twinning.....	2326
Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement.....	2326
Rural Emergency Medical Services.....	2327
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 34 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2017	2329
Bill 212 Tobacco and Smoking Reduction (Protecting Children's Health) Amendment Act, 2017.....	2329
Bill 215 Tow Truck Safety Act	2329
Tabling Returns and Reports	2329
Tablings to the Clerk	2330
Orders of the Day	2332
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 30 An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans	2332

Alberta Hansard is available online at www.assembly.ab.ca

For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875