



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, April 17, 2018

Day 18

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker



## Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

### Fourth 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),  
Alberta Party Opposition House Leader  
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),  
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Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)  
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)  
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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 (AP)  
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Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
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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)  
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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, Fort McMurray-Conklin  
Vacant, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake

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New Democratic: 54   United Conservative: 25   Alberta Party: 3   Alberta Liberal: 1   Progressive Conservative: 1   Independent: 1   Vacant: 2

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

Let us pray or contemplate, each in our own way. Hon. members, on this 36th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the 1982 Constitution Act may I ask that each of us reflect on how fortunate we are as Canadians to live in this wonderful country. In our deliberations today let us strive to protect the rights of all our children and grandchildren, all Albertans and Canadians to peace, order, and good government.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Peace River.

**Ms Jabbour:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you students who are here from Muriel Martin school in the constituency of Spruce Grove-St. Albert. These students are accompanied by their teachers, Abigail Lawrence and Michelle Kennett, and chaperones Nicole Toshack and Jennifer Conneely. I would ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Mr. Speaker, my group will not arrive until 2 o'clock. May I introduce them then?

**The Speaker:** We will test the House.

The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly four grade 6 classes from the Westlock elementary school. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Robert Weiss, Dan McDonald, Kate Schmidt, Maggie Courmoyer, Angie Bachand, Brock Pierce, and also their chaperones, Debbie Medcke, Michelle Holloway, Michelle Biggeman, and Adam Budgen. I would ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Are there any other school groups, hon. members?

Seeing and hearing none, the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ms Jansen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions. It's my absolute pleasure to rise and introduce to you and all members of the Assembly Janet Riopel, the president and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. Janet has devoted her volunteer time to various boards in the city of Edmonton. She is currently the chair of the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation and sits on the advisory boards of the Edmonton airport and the Edmonton Community Foundation. Janet was honoured with the Queen's golden jubilee medal and has twice been named one of Alberta's 50 most influential people. I invite everyone to give her the warm welcome of this Assembly.

I have one more, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, I would love to be able to introduce to you now and to all members of the Assembly Guy Bridgeman, Brent Collingwood, and Alex Bonokoski of the River Valley Alliance. The River Valley Alliance is a not-for-profit corporation made up of seven municipal shareholders who are connected towards working on a world-class continuous and connected trail system along the North Saskatchewan River valley from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan. I invite them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is such a pleasure to be able to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my guests from St. Michael's Health Group, which provides long-term care, supportive housing, and numerous programs and services to the seniors in our community. I have spent many occasions both at St. Michael's Long Term Care Centre and the Millennium Pavilion Seniors Lodge, and it's such a pleasure to see the great work that they do in Edmonton-Decore, which, I can say, is absolutely second to none. Joining us here today in the public gallery are John Kopeck, our somewhat new president and CEO; Kay Willekes, director, human resources; Géraldine Journeau, director of finance and IT; and Charmon Balcom, executive assistant. I would ask that they now please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you special guests from the Canadian Transplant Association, Alberta chapter. Next week marks National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, which is an opportunity to build understanding about the impact that donors can make and to encourage all Albertans to register their consent to donate. Thank you to the Canadian Transplant Association for the tremendous work that they do in raising awareness and helping to support transplant recipients. I encourage all Albertans to register to donate and to talk to family and friends about your wishes. I invite Neil Folkins, membership director, along with other board members and volunteers, many of whom are transplant recipients, to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

### Members' Statements

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

#### Accessible Playground in Calgary-Klein

**Mr. Coolahan:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to tell you about an amazing project soon to be completed in Calgary's greatest riding, Calgary-Klein. The Thorncliffe Greenview playground is being replaced by a new one which will be completely accessible in its design. The Playground Team, a subcommittee of the Thorncliffe Greenview Community Association, comprised of a group of dedicated volunteers, has been working tirelessly with a mandate of bringing together the resources needed to develop and build the new playground. They have also partnered with Variety – The Children's Charity of Alberta to raise funds for the project.

What does it mean to have an accessible playground? It means embracing all aspects of inclusion through the design, equipment,



parking facilities, and location. It means including innovative equipment like the Merry-Go-All and an assistive zip line. It means that every child will get a wider range of opportunities for play and interaction and will be able to participate fully in activities without the limitations imposed by physical barriers. This playground will create a place for all Calgarians to congregate, socialize, and play. It will be a place where community members from different backgrounds, ages, abilities, and economic levels unite.

We all know that playgrounds foster cognitive, creative, and social development and encourage healthy and active lifestyles, and that is why I am proud to say that our government has given a \$125,000 community facility enhancement program grant for this project. The old playground was both outdated and unsafe, with peeling paint and rusted metal structures. Our community truly needed a new playground.

I would specifically like to thank Maureen O'Brien and Amanda Ocampo for their amazing work on this project. It will be an honour to have this facility open up in Calgary-Klein, and I hope that many more will be built across the province.

Thank you.

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

### Economic Indicators

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are tired of being lectured to by this NDP government and by their Trudeau Liberal allies in Ottawa. What I've been hearing from some of my constituents is that Albertans are losing hope that the economy will ever turn around, the hope that good, well-paying jobs will return. Some oil field workers got back on the job this winter but did so at a lower salary and with a fraction of the crew on the job.

Statistics Canada job numbers for Alberta in March 2018 show that zero full-time jobs were created. Yes, zero. Any new jobs were in part-time employment. Sixty-one hundred private-sector jobs were lost in March. ATB Financial's chief economist, Todd Hirsch, says that people are making less money and that job prospects are still here, but they're at lower paying opportunities. But the Finance minister claims that happy days are here again. At 6.3 per cent Alberta still has the highest unemployment rate outside of Atlantic Canada. Calgary has the third-highest unemployment rate of major Canadian cities, at 8.2 per cent. Who could have imagined saying that just a few years ago?

It just goes to show that the NDP government and their Trudeau Liberal allies' harmful policies and regulations are continuing to drive away investment while other energy-producing economies recovered long ago. From the royalty review to the coal phase-out, from higher personal and corporate taxes to higher electricity prices, chasing foreign companies from the oil sands, and the infamous carbon tax, the NDP wants to tell Albertans that things are just great again, but Albertans aren't feeling it. The proof is in the 2018 budget, a budget that was deadpanned by anyone in the know.

Janet Riopel, president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, says: are the difficult times truly behind us; that's not what I hear; things on the ground appear to be still as much of a struggle as ever.

Clearly, this NDP government is deeply out of touch with everyday Albertans.

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

### 1:40 Father Albert Lacombe's Legacy

**Mr. Sucha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One thing we sometimes take for granted in my constituency is the depth of history in the area. Many would be unaware that this community, 25 kilometres from

downtown Calgary, was once a town with a profound connection to an incredible man, Father Albert Lacombe. In his final years Father Lacombe settled in the town of Midnapore and while there, amongst many things, started St. Patrick's parish and set up a centre for orphaned kids and those with special needs before his passing in 1916. These items were overshadowed by many of his significant accomplishments, including the founding of St. Mary's school and mission, standing up for francophone rights, negotiating a deal between the CPR and the Blackfoot Chief Crowfoot, and the several parishes he opened throughout the province of Alberta.

Today his legacy can be seen throughout my riding. St. Patrick's parish's original building still stands as the Russian Orthodox church after it was relocated to Millrise in the '70s, when the space became too small. This church now provides goodwill to the community, including supporting Syrian refugees through the leadership of the current Father Andrew. St. Mary's University stands in place of the old orphanage, and the Father Lacombe centre and Providence seniors' home behind the university provide support for seniors transitioning with mobility and dementia challenges.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend the Father Lacombe foundation carried on his good work with their annual legacy dinner, which drew people in through its amazing popular cultural themes. Funds raised from this dinner will support the building of their new chapel and healing gardens at the seniors' centre, that will allow seniors to have a calming place to gather in their final years. I was pleased to be able to attend this dinner with my partner last weekend.

I want to thank the board of the foundation for their ongoing support to the community and ensuring that Father Lacombe's legacy never ends.

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

### Official Opposition and Government Energy Policies

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is at a crucial crossroads at this time, and our province's future hinges on a critical piece of national infrastructure. It is time to put partisan differences aside and work together to secure our province's future not only for this project but also for what kind of message we want to send to global investors for future investments. It is very clear where our UCP caucus stands on this issue. The last thing we need is an impasse in the Legislature for the sake of political territory. There is no political territory when it comes to the development of our resources such as the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

I personally think it's great that the government members, including the Premier and the cabinet ministers, have come full circle from protesting against the pipelines in the past to now supporting the pipelines. I think they can also work more closely with the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed, who clearly has Alberta's best interest at heart and knows the path we all need to take. The Leader of the Official Opposition has been providing this NDP government with valuable advice and policy direction, which the government has been accepting. They never do immediately, Mr. Speaker, but a few weeks or a month after he makes a recommendation, they take the route he suggested. This is good. In fact, it's great for Alberta that the NDP is finally listening to our leader.

Mr. Speaker, now I ask the government to ask their best friend Justin Trudeau to do what our leader has been long calling for, to implement section 92(10)(c) and actually declare this project in the national interest, not just hold talks, and to tell Justin Trudeau to hold on to discretionary transfer payments to British Columbia. We all know that the NDP government and the federal leader, Justin Trudeau, all wanted to phase out our industry. If these people now believe otherwise, now is the time for them to show that to



Albertans. I encourage the NDP government, for the sake of Alberta's long-term success, to work together to construct not only the pipeline but also the path of success for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Canada

**Connolly:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition believes that Canada is broken. I disagree. I along with most Canadians believe that we are a great country. There are broken countries in the world, nations that struggle with their human rights, who have little to no environmental protection and have an abysmal lack of labour standards. Canada is not one of those countries.

I am proud as an Albertan and as a Canadian to be working to grow a prosperous economy, to be protecting our human rights, and to be protecting our environment.

When the Leader of the Opposition says that we're broken, I have to wonder what he was doing for the last 10 years as a federal cabinet minister. Was he picking up the tools to build Canada, or was he bringing down the hammer on everyone who disagreed with him? I believe Canada is stronger than ever and that we will get through this. Our cultural mosaic makes us strong, and the diversity of opinion should be welcomed in a thriving democracy, not shunned. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would not so blithely dismiss the work of the many people who've built this country. I wish he would support the strong institutions we have built into our co-operative federalism, which include a strong court system that helps to defend our democracy.

We are working with governments across this country and with all Canadians to build this pipeline, to diversify the economy, to protect our environment, and to have each other's backs. The future of Canada is a bright one, where we will work together for the prosperity and success of every Canadian.

### Ambulance Availability and Response Times

**Mr. Loewen:** The Grande Prairie ambulance service area is roughly 15,000 square kilometres in northwest Alberta. It has not only the largest city in northwest Alberta but also an incredible amount of agriculture, oil and gas, forestry roads, and work sites. This service includes hospital transfers, and at times it is normal staffing level to have only two ambulances available to service this area. This does not account for times when the ambulances are flexed out to other calls, and 25 per cent of the time there is no ambulance within 30 minutes of Grande Prairie.

Now, a stat call is an emergency call that comes in when there is no ambulance available. Quite often there is one stat call a day in the Grande Prairie service area, and once in the last three months there were five stat calls at once. These are alarming statistics. Also alarming is the dispatch system Optima, that selects the nearest available ambulance no matter where it is. Recently there was an ambulance dispatched from Cochrane to go to Fort McMurray, 750 kilometres away. Obviously, there are problems with this system.

Another issue is that the stats on ambulance wait times are calculated by comparing the time of call to the time of dispatch, which gives no real indication of how long a patient might wait. It only makes sense that the ambulance response time should be calculated by comparing the time of call to the arrival of ambulance to give an accurate assessment of the service provided.

The department sometimes suggests long wait times for ambulances are acceptable by the fact that often fire departments are dispatched at the same time and arrive quicker, but firefighters in rural Alberta are volunteers, and although excellent people, most do not have the training of paramedics and probably shouldn't be

subjected to the possible trauma of not being able to save a life that they are expected to. Many first responders are speaking out on these situations with concern.

As the issues have been ongoing and complaints come from across the province, this is an issue that needs to be dealt with as it has been getting worse rather than better. Is there not a better system for ambulance usage than what we have right now? I would hope so.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

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

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got five copies of an article that appeared in the *Financial Post*, by Gwyn Morgan, entitled Trudeau's Cynical Politics Caught Him in His Own Trans Mountain Trap.

Thank you.

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The loyal Opposition House Leader.

### Trans Mountain Pipeline Construction Suspension

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been 35 days since all parties in this Assembly passed a motion calling on the federal government, the B.C. government, and the Alberta government to take immediate action to get Trans Mountain built – 35 days – and still this government has not taken any concrete action on this file. We now know that we are 44 days away from the project being scrapped altogether. When will the NDP government tell Albertans about the steps that are being discussed with Ottawa to bring clarity to this project for Trans Mountain?

**The Speaker:** The Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, our government has been very clear that we have been pushing for and fighting for this pipeline since day one. The Premier has shown exemplary leadership on this. She has met with the Prime Minister, she has met with the Premier of British Columbia, and there is considerable progress. Having said that, we're going to continue to hold the federal government's feet to the fire until that pipeline is built, and we will have it built.

1:50

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, sadly, there's a lot of talk but no progress. The main goal has to be certainty. It's because of this NDP government and their Trudeau Liberal allies that we don't have certainty on this project in the first place. Kinder Morgan said on Sunday: "Our objectives are to obtain certainty with respect to the ability to construct through BC." I'm not looking for rhetoric from the minister across the way; I'm looking for an answer to the question. What is this government doing to provide the clarity that Kinder Morgan is looking for within those 44 days so that we can get this project built?

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can provide perfect clarity for the hon. member. This government will do everything necessary to make sure that pipeline is built. Not everything can be shared with the public at the moment, and it would jeopardize the project to do so, which is perhaps exactly what the opposition wants.



**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, again vague answers.

It's incumbent on this government to immediately – there is no more time left – create certainty for Kinder Morgan's needs. We need to move past the empty rhetoric of this NDP government. When asked if the government investment that is being talked about would reduce risks sufficiently for Kinder Morgan, they said: no; we would be looking for, let me say, final clarity. What is this government doing right now to provide that final clarity for Kinder Morgan? Because what they're saying is that what you're doing right now is not working.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Mason:** Well, thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll let Kinder Morgan speak for themselves, certainly not the hon. member opposite. But I can tell you that this government has said that it's prepared if necessary to take an equity position. That is also the position of the Leader of the Opposition, who also called on the federal government to take an equity position in this pipeline. Now, Andrew Scheer, the federal leader, has said: it's an idea that no one has supported. Does he speak for the United Conservative Party?

**The Speaker:** Second main question.

### Bill 12

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government finally followed the opposition's lead and introduced legislation to allow the Alberta government to turn off the taps to B.C. until they stop blocking the project. Really, they follow. However, B.C.'s Premier said that Alberta's NDP Premier told him that she did not think they were going to even act on that legislation. To be clear, our Premier told the B.C. Premier, who she's in intense negotiations with, that she did not plan to follow through on legislation she tabled in this House. What is the point of bringing forward legislation if our Premier is telling B.C.'s Premier that she's not even going to act on it?

**Mr. Mason:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and the opposition should listen to what the Premier actually says in this place rather than third-hand accounts through the media on their friend over there, the Premier of British Columbia. I want to be absolutely clear that we will get this pipeline built. We do not want to use that bill, but it will be there in case we need to use it. If necessary, we will use it.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader is now insulting the media, trying to say that we work with Premier Horgan. His leader and the Premier of this province used to work with Premier Horgan. Nobody on this side of the House did.

Now, we know that in 2016 when the Premier met with Horgan, she did not even try to persuade him on pipelines. Now we're hearing from the B.C. Premier that she's telling him she doesn't even intend to act on this legislation. Is the Premier saying one thing to B.C. and saying a different thing to Albertans?

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, the question remains why the opposition is taking the word of the media reporting on what a Premier, with which we are having quite a bit of vigorous discussion in case he hasn't noticed, is saying. You know, he can put words in people's mouths better than anyone I know, except his leader perhaps, but quite frankly we've had enough of it. The Premier has been clear in this House and in public exactly on the position of the government of Alberta, which is to get that pipeline built.

**Mr. Nixon:** The facts are that the Alberta Premier has not been clear. There are vague answers. There are vague things that she says that she may or may not be doing. That's all she's saying. She's not being clear with Albertans. When we stand in this House and we ask clear, simple questions about what this government is going to do to get this pipeline built, they will not answer; they will deflect. They'll call their friend Horgan a liar, I guess, is what just happened there with the Government House Leader. That's disappointing. Again, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Government House Leader: what specific actions are you taking today to make sure this pipeline will be built in 44 days? Because you are running out of time, sir.

**Mr. Mason:** Well, thank you for that excellent question. Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Opposition House Leader exactly what we're going to do. What we've done is introduce Bill 12, Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act. This is a bill to make sure that that pipeline gets built, concrete action from a government that is on the ball and is going to get that pipeline built.

**The Speaker:** Third main question.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, this side of the House has been calling for something like Bill 12 for a very long time. In fact, when that minister was making fun of us for calling for that, we were. But I digress.

### Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

**Mr. Nixon:** This government across the way has still not taken any serious action against the federal government and their friend Justin Trudeau or against B.C. and Premier Horgan against the ridiculous attack on our resources that is happening right now. They have not. But they continue to punish everyday Albertans with their ridiculous carbon tax. Again, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Government House Leader: will you finally stop raising the carbon tax and punishing Albertans and start standing up to B.C. and Justin Trudeau?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Well, thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's interesting that the hon. member is suggesting that we should cancel the climate leadership plan, which is exactly what the Prime Minister said was behind their approval of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. If they have their way and the climate leadership plan is gone, then federal support for the pipeline may well be gone, too. That would kill the pipeline. Maybe that's what they want.

**Mr. Nixon:** All this government has is paper approval from Justin Trudeau, which he has not acted on, and a couple of cancelled pipelines.

Meanwhile we see that the West Country seniors' centre in Sundre is back in the news today, having to go hat in hand to the town of Sundre to be able to keep their doors open because this Premier and this government told them to fund raise to pay for the carbon tax. Again, Mr. Speaker, why is this government continuing to punish seniors and other people in Alberta on this so-called social licence when it has been proven over and over that it is not working?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, the Prime Minister was clear at the time that the Kinder Morgan pipeline was approved that Alberta's climate leadership plan was a key element in his decision in favour of the pipeline. It continues to be fundamental to getting that pipeline built. Getting that pipeline



built is fundamental to Alberta's future prosperity, which the opposition would put in jeopardy.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been clear. The Prime Minister has done nothing to get this pipeline built except sit on his hands. If this government is still depending on Justin Trudeau to get this project built, I would suggest that Albertans are very, very fearful of that answer.

Again to the minister. We now hear that school boards are having to reduce kindergarten programs and reduce teachers as a direct result of the carbon tax, that is not working to get this pipeline built. Is it your opinion that the school boards should spend money paying your carbon tax, or should they spend money hiring teachers to be able to teach our children?

**The Speaker:** The Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, the Opposition House Leader should well know that questions should not be soliciting an individual's opinion but be questions about government policy. Government policy is to pass Bill 12 in this Assembly to give us the tools to make sure that pipeline is built. Again, getting that pipeline finished is critical to Alberta's future prosperity and is important to our children, our seniors, and all Albertans going forward.

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

#### Public Service Pension Plans

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many long-term Alberta teachers, including some of my constituents, risk losing tens of thousands of dollars in earned pensions due to poor co-ordination between the Income Tax Act, the Teachers' Pension Plans Act, and regulations. For years governments have informally promised revised regulations that would remove uncertainty about when or if they should retire, but none have been delivered. When will the Minister of Finance fulfill the commitment to teachers so they can make retirement choices with certainty that their earned pensions will be protected?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, all hard-working Albertans, including teachers, deserve to retire in dignity. The previous government shirked their responsibility on this file. They did not move forward on this file, and it is still with us today. I'm in discussions with the Minister of Education, and we are working on this.

**Ms McPherson:** The Alberta Teachers' Association claims that regulations to change the Income Tax Act caps would have impacts very small in relation to the value of the plan and would not result in increased liabilities for the two plan sponsors, the government and the ATA. The ATA also says that contributions from plan members would not need to increase if the regulation were to be fixed to resolve the ambiguity for over 600 teachers. When will the minister commit to making life better for these 600 long-serving public servants?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member has her facts correct in terms of implications on the Income Tax Act and the benefit it will have for that number of retired teachers. We

are, as I said, working on this, and we'll have something hopefully very shortly to return and talk to this House about and, obviously, those people who will benefit.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Finance minister is legislated as the sole trustee of the local authorities pension plan and the public service pension plan even though all other provinces use a joint worker-employer governance model. More than 300,000 Albertans in LAPP and PSPP deserve to decide how their pensions are run, with changes negotiated and agreed to by both sides. When will Alberta's public-sector workers and employers be in control of their own public pensions through joint governance?

**Mr. Ceci:** Well, let me set some context, Mr. Speaker. Of course, our pensions are doing well in this province, to the point where the employer contributions were reduced, saving our government money. We're committed to looking at this issue of joint governance. We're going to continue to work with our partners to ensure that their pension plans are well governed, and we'll have more to say on this in the near future.

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

#### 2:00 Petrochemicals Diversification Program

**Mr. Piquette:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As someone who has advocated for the petrochemicals diversification program, I'm gratified to see the uptake from industry and the projects it has incentivized. I know that Inter Pipeline has begun construction on their \$3.5 billion polypropylene production unit in the Industrial Heartland. To the Minister of Energy: could she update the House on progress at Inter Pipeline and other ongoing PDP projects?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're focused on the right priorities for Albertans such as creating good jobs in a more diversified economy. This means getting Alberta off the boom-and-bust roller coaster we've been on for many, many years. The Inter Pipeline project is under construction, as the member notes, and at peak will have 2,000 people working on-site. That's not to mention all the procurement that is going on, and I can tell you that the company is making every effort to procure as much in Alberta as they can. It's well under way, and it's a great project for . . .

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

**Mr. Piquette:** Thank you, Minister.

That sounds encouraging, but what does it mean to my constituents in terms of direct jobs and other spinoffs? To the same minister: what is the total economic impact of projects announced to date, assuming all go forward?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, in addition to creating a new value chain which we do not have in Alberta, it's creating new markets, perhaps new manufacturing down the road. At the end of the day, when this project is built, it's going to be \$3.5 billion of private-sector investment. It will be thousands of jobs in construction, and it will employ approximately 180 full-time jobs. While it's being built, we're enjoying taxes in the



municipality and in the government. People are working. Again, it's a great project for Alberta, and it's history making.

**Mr. Piquette:** Thank you, Minister.

Given that the Official Opposition is against these types of industrial incentive programs and given your own understanding of international competition for these types of projects, again to the Minister of Energy: would these welcome developments have happened without the assistance of the petrochemicals diversification program?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, when we looked at all these programs, we looked at the strengths we have here in Alberta, and absolutely resources are one of them. We have a skilled workforce, creative people. I can tell you that when I was down in Houston, we did learn that it's a competitive thing, and we need to find a way to get those investment decisions over the line. Indeed, Inter Pipeline has told me on more than one occasion that it was this very program that made the final investment decision go. We're following the same vision Premier Lougheed had many years ago, and we're very proud to do that, something the Conservatives ...

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

#### Medical Examiner Positions in Calgary

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A grieving mother whose daughter died under suspicious circumstances in December 2016 called my office. She received a final death report 11 months later, unacceptable by any standard. Both the minister and the Chief Medical Examiner assured Albertans in 2017 that with two new pathologists they'd reduce the turnaround time for death reviews by 50 per cent. Not happening. Now four out of five pathologists in Calgary are leaving or have left, presumably for better pay and working conditions. Given that extra-trained forensic pathologists in this minister's ministry are paid well below trained general pathologists in the health system, what is the minister doing to rectify ...

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We're proud of the changes that we made to the office of the Chief Medical Examiner to ensure that they have enough staff to deal with the number of issues we've asked them to deal with. It's presently the case that we do have some staff turnover, which is normal in an organization. All of those individuals have private and personal reasons to leave. We have secured replacements for three of them already, and that will not have an impact on services. We will continue working with them to ensure that they have everything they need.

**Dr. Swann:** That's an incredible statement, Mr. Speaker, when four out of five, 80 per cent, of the MEs are leaving Calgary. It's not going to impact services? I'm already hearing that it is.

Given many years of instability in the Calgary ME's office and now the loss of four out of five pathologists, when are you going to pay them equitably?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Again, in Canada there are, according to the most recent data, 50 working, practising forensic pathologists. We have 10 of them here in Alberta. All of those individuals that have left the Calgary office have left for individual, private reasons. There are different considerations, and obviously they're inappropriate to discuss in this House. We have secured replacements for three of those individuals already. We're well under way on the hiring of the fourth, and we will absolutely continue to support that office to ensure that they have everything that they need.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, let me ask the minister: if you're a lawyer with two extra years of training, how long would you stay with a firm that was paying you 20 per cent less than a standard trained lawyer? How long would you stay in a firm?

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, you're identifying an interpretation of an individual minister. Is there a way that you could ...

**Dr. Swann:** She doesn't have to. She doesn't have to answer it if she doesn't want to. It's obvious what the answer is.

**The Speaker:** No, it's not quite that obvious, hon. member.  
The Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to send my love to those at the Humboldt memorial in Edmonton today.

#### Economic Indicators

**Mrs. Aheer:** Mr. Speaker, the government is completely disconnected from real, everyday Albertans. Perhaps within the dome they've been able to convince themselves that their disastrous economic policies have resulted in economic recovery, but I can tell you that the average Albertan doesn't feel that way. Here's the real story. The Calgary Food Bank hasn't seen any decline in their needs for services, still distributing 5,000 baskets every month. To the Premier: are you expecting to improve the economy through the repetition of sunny-side messaging alone?

**Mr. Mason:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Mr. Speaker, given that the government has kicked Albertans and their businesses and not-for-profits when they're already down with a crippling carbon tax and labour changes that make it harder for small businesses to succeed in Alberta and given that the Airdrie Food Bank spokesperson stated that our numbers have stayed high – they're not going down – and the drop-in programs are increasing even more, how does the government justify their storytelling that our economy has recovered thanks to social licence and a carbon tax that is not really worth the paper it's written on?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, 90,000 new full-time jobs over the last year and the unemployment rate falling to the lowest in two years are something that is very real. However, our government recognizes that that recovery is not a true recovery unless it's shared by everyone. That's why we continue to invest in things like social services, to invest in education, to invest in child care and school nutrition programs. We know that these are all programs and services that the Conservatives across the way would cut in favour of financing a tax cut to the top 1 per cent. That's not our priority.



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

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the UCP has been listening to Albertans – we hear from them every day – regular folks that are struggling to get by and have not seen the magical end of the recession that the government keeps referencing. Given that the not-for-profits in my riding of Chestermere-Rocky View have seen a \$5,000 increase due to the carbon tax alone – and that's actually not including fuel costs either – and given that new statistics show that the number of those receiving income supports who are Albertans who are ready to work but unable to due to the economic downturn has more than doubled over the past four years, how can the government honestly claim that the recession is over?

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is absolutely committed to making sure that Albertans get the supports they need during these tough economic times. If we were to take advice from that side, who thinks that we should have frozen spending in 2015, many Albertans would not get the supports that they are getting from the income support program, AISH program, PDD program. They even suggested that we should reduce the spending levels to B.C.'s, which means another 20 per cent cut. It's threats coming from that side, that they're advocating for these . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Calgary-West

#### Police Release of Information on Serious Incidents

**Mr. Ellis:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister continues to claim that naming the deceased man in the Calgary shootout with the police might prejudice the case when, in fact, police often identify offenders to seek information from the public to assist in their investigations. Minister, if public safety and trust can be furthered by releasing the man's identity, why would you hide behind the notion of prejudicing the case?

2:10

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is absolutely correct. There are instances in which the case can be furthered by naming an individual who has been injured by the police or has been a victim of crime or any other number of things. In those instances, those agencies and ASIRT also are guided by their policies, which are consistent policies to ensure that we're all following the same rules. If that is the case, then they would make that decision, but it's not appropriate for me to intervene and make it for them.

**Mr. Ellis:** Let's talk about consistency, Mr. Speaker, given that two days after Constable Forget was injured in Calgary, a Mountie was wounded in a shootout near Evansburg, Alberta, and the shooter was also killed and given that that shooter's name was made public because police wanted citizens to know that the threat to the public safety was over. Minister, yesterday and just a moment ago you spoke at great length about consistency. Can you explain the inconsistency in the naming of the offenders only days apart?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, there is no inconsistency. It's absolutely the case that they follow and are

guided by principle. Sometimes the facts of a case are different, which means that the same principles applied to those different facts have a different result. In some cases, public safety is the overriding concern; in other cases, investigation of the matter is the overriding concern. We will always keep public safety front of mind, and we will always be guided by principle.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, given that the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights Act includes a victim's right to information, including details about the offender's conditional release, and given that ASIRT does not name people killed or injured in incidents and that that practice is inconsistent with the federal bill of rights, Minister, why are you not also concerned about this inconsistency?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely the case that there are a number of different concerns that operate in this particular area. With respect to this policy it is, in fact, not only consistent within ASIRT, but it's consistent with all of the civilian oversight agencies across the country. They've put a lot of thought into these policies. They are flexible to deal with different circumstances and different cases. We're quite confident that they are making those decisions in the public interest.

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

#### Highway 40 and Grande Prairie Economic Development

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two months ago the ministers of Energy and economic development attended the Growing the North Conference in Grande Prairie and spoke of the intensive energy development occurring south on highway 40. The minister of economic development acknowledged that, quote, industry moves very, very quickly, unquote, and infrastructure needs to be in place. Minister, can you please indicate why properly staged infrastructure is so important for economic development?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we know, for example, that up where both the member and I live, there's immense development happening in the energy industry, and we know that many of the roads up there were not made necessarily for that kind of activity. Certainly, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and myself have been looking and working with other ministers to see how we can be ready for when that activity ramps up, as it is doing now.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Minister of Energy acknowledges that the Grande Prairie energy industry has experienced unanticipated explosive growth and given that the minister has also confirmed the importance of her government's need to, quote, do something, unquote, on highway 40, which has become a pinch point for industry, to the Energy minister: what do you mean by "doing something" on this dangerously overused highway?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. We recognize the importance of highway 40. It is a very key economic artery. It's important that it be improved in order to support the economic growth and to improve safety, quite frankly.



So we are widening 104 kilometres of highway between highway 16 and Grande Cache. It includes bridge and culvert improvements, a new bridge over the Berland River, new safety rest areas, intersection improvements, and passing lanes. There are many more. If the hon. member wants to come back to me, I can elaborate.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that two key ministries acknowledge the need for ensuring that infrastructure is in place to avoid restricting economic development in the Grande Prairie area and given that they confirm that the hazardous and restricted state of highway 40 is impeding economic growth and given that I thank the minister for securing the contract for engineering and design and tender ready for twinning, to the Transportation minister: will you put this on your priority list in next year's budget?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Mason:** Well, thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member knows that that's a premature question, but it's very much on our radar. We've heard loud and clear from the communities along that highway and from the industries that use that road. We're paving 55 kilometres between the Kakwa River and the Canfor intersection, six kilometres between the Wapiti River and the city of Grande Prairie, and we're designing 18 more kilometres of twinning between Grande Prairie and the Norbord plant south of the Wapiti River.

There's more, Mr. Speaker. If he gets another question, he can ask me again.

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

#### Tax Policies and Economic Indicators

**Ms Kazim:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on continuous engagement with my constituents I have been asked why the government employed progressive taxes, especially during the recession and downturn of the economy, when Albertans were losing jobs. To the Minister of Finance: how did the progressive tax help improve the economy of this province?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the questioner from Calgary-Glenmore. A progressive income tax is what exists federally in Canada as well as in every other provincial and territorial jurisdiction in this country. A progressive tax results in more stable revenue for government to fund important programs and services and build infrastructure like schools and hospitals that Albertans require.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Ms Kazim:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What impact would a tax cut for the rich have on the bottom line of the government, and how would the majority of Albertans be affected by the tax cut?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Returning to a flat tax, as the Official Opposition is proposing, means that the richest 1 per cent in Alberta will see a \$700 million tax cut. The vast majority of Albertans will see no benefit at all but will pay for the tax cut through overcrowded classrooms and longer ER wait times. Returning to a

flax tax means taking services away from working people to benefit Alberta's wealthiest. Albertans deserve better than this half-baked idea.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms Kazim:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta's economy is looking up, what factors and sources show the rise in the employment rate and boost in the economy?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you. The members opposite are in denial. They don't see any economic recovery at all. But let's lay out the facts. In 2017, Mr. Speaker, 90,000 full-time jobs were added, mainly in the private sector. Alberta led all provinces in GDP growth in 2017 at 4.5 per cent and will show a strong growth again in 2018-19. This is how we know we're seeing recovery built to last. The members opposite can keep their heads in the sand, but the truth is that things are looking up.

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

#### PDD Administrative Review

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The public fatality inquiry report into Betty Anne Gagnon's tragic death included several recommendations to improve outcomes for persons with development disabilities in rural communities. Recommendation 6 was to "review and ensure that there are adequate programs, including transportation for persons with developmental disabilities who live in rural areas." To the Minister of Community and Social Services: what has been done to start the review, and when will Albertans see improvements from the review?

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Betty Anne Gagnon died in horrible, horrible circumstances. My thoughts are with the family and those who are grieving Betty Anne's loss. Since 2009 we have made a number of changes that will ensure that we can avoid similar incidents from happening again. That will include changes in the file closure policy, changes in the transfer policy. We are also planning to launch a helpline where Albertans can report such incidents.

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

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that yesterday the minister said that communication and co-ordination have improved by not requiring clients to reapply for services when they move, which is great, but that there's still more to do and given that the report notes that these changes do not address long waiting lists, lack of backup plans, lack of respite options, and lack of resources for service providers to plan, train, or offer services proactively, when will PDD services no longer be confusing and no longer require strong advocacy for vulnerable people to receive services?

2:20

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are absolutely committed to providing services to those who rely on these services, and that's why we have added \$150 million to this program. We have heard concerns with respect to access. That's why we are moving ahead with the review of the program, which will help us look at access to



this program, look at outcomes of this program, and look at engagement means, how we can better engage with the community, with individual advocates, and with service providers.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the report detailed numerous times that front-line workers, family members, and service providers had the chance to intervene in Betty Anne's case but, very tragically, did not, resulting in isolation and stress for her family caregivers beyond their capacity to cope, to the same minister: what are you doing to protect and improve services for Albertans with developmental disabilities and their caregivers regardless of whether they have formally requested services from your department?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by saying that no Albertan, no one, should go through the circumstances that Betty Anne went through. There have been recent changes which ensure that families are part of the planning process, and risk identification is part of that planning process. At that point we can identify the risk and prioritize the needs. We will work with our community partners on all of these recommendations. As I said, some improvements have been made, but the review will be an opportunity . . .

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

### Fisheries Management

**Mr. Loewen:** The recent release of the 2018 Alberta sport-fishing regulations has been received with significant disappointment. Increased restrictions have been added to over 100 lakes. The input from large numbers of Albertans has been ignored. This creates a loss of tourism and economic benefit, not to mention jobs. The result of 20 years of significant fish harvest restrictions with closed commercial fishing and significant restrictions on pike, walleye, and even whitefish is that Alberta is further reducing harvest and consumption of our fish. When will the minister admit the failure of fisheries management?

**Ms Phillips:** The time to have admitted failure was over 40 years of mismanagement of our fisheries resources by the party that the hon. member now sits in. We have invested significantly in recovering our fish populations, Mr. Speaker, to the point where we have opened eight lakes to walleye fishing this year, many of which had been closed since 1996. We have reopened those lakes, demonstrating the importance of conservation and sustainable harvesting. We are taking sound management of our lakes very, very seriously. We are a leader in fisheries management, and we are increasing funding for groups to rebuild those damaged waterways.

**Mr. Loewen:** Given that your department initiated the eastern slopes fishing closure and you had to back down, saying that the science wasn't strong enough to support the shutdown, and given that it's the same department that came up with the regulations that have drastically restricted fishing in over 100 lakes, how can you suggest that the science is any more solid with the lake restrictions than with the eastern slopes plan you cancelled?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we have an Official Opposition that does not waste an opportunity to sneer at science or at the public-sector workers and the public

servants that work very, very hard to protect our environment every day to make sure that there is something to fish and something to hunt and that we have a healthy environment with appropriate enforcement. I will leave that attitude to them. On this side of the House we're investing in things like whirling disease, native trout recovery, and, yes, we are seeing some rebound in some of our wildlife populations as a result of turning the page on the decades of mismanagement from his own party.

**Mr. Loewen:** Given that the buck stops with the minister when it comes to fisheries management and given that fishing is important economically and proper management of the resource could create many economic benefits such as tourism and commercial fisheries and given that the 2018 fishing regulations have completely ignored the public input showing that there was near unanimous support for slot-size harvest and shortened seasons for smaller lakes, both of which have been completely ignored, showing the consultation was a complete sham, why did you not listen to the people that you consulted with?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, on the northern pike and walleye species management frameworks we're engaging with Albertans for feedback on the draft framework and to move forward with the implementation and adjust some of those regulations. We're also investing significantly in whirling disease and native trout recovery, including habitat management. This is in stark contrast to the kind of ideological cuts that would be imposed on public-sector workers, who are working very, very hard every day to make science-based decisions and protect the environment in this province.

### Government Procurement Process

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, to maintain the integrity of a procurement process that ensures best value for the taxpayer, pricing criteria must be clear, measurable, and consistent to enable comparison and provide proponents with sufficient direction to develop a submission. It should not include secret calculations or subjective elements, and conditional bids cannot be allowed. Doing otherwise may be fatal to the process. My first question is to the Minister of Service Alberta. Could she generally explain within the context of her ministry's procurement policies how it ensures RFP pricing provisions are fully disclosed to and understood by vendors to enable them to bid with confidence?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Service Alberta and of Status of Women.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Certainly, it is the goal of all of our procurement efforts to ensure that there is a transparent process. In fact, this is something that is required by all of our vendors. So when we go through the procurement process, we have transparent criteria that we post publicly online. Then vendors can go onto the online posting and review. There is also opportunity to engage with government to answer questions if something is not clear to them, and afterwards there is also a process to contest if they believe that there has been something that's gone . . .

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

**Mr. W. Anderson:** My second question is again to the Minister of Service Alberta. While I recognize that there may be exceptions,



would a proponent that submitted conditional pricing that offended the RFP provisions be disqualified?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Obviously, it's very, very important to all Alberta vendors and businesses that we have a robust procurement system. This is something that has been under review by our government as we have found contracts dating back over a decade where that has not been the case, and we have found some very, very questionable practices. So I'd be happy to get back to the member with further detail about our policy, how the rubber hits the road with respect to his exact question.

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, my third question is to the Minister of Health. If she was aware that Alberta Health Services had accepted a bid subject to conditional pricing that offended the RFP provisions, would she direct that bid to be disqualified? If not, why not?

**The Speaker:** The Associate Minister of Health.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been answered in this House before, unsuccessful bidders have every right to bring their concerns forward through the courts or the New West Partnership. I understand that in the process that the hon. member opposite is referring to, this is currently occurring. Because it's still before the courts, I cannot comment any further.

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

### Charter School Funding

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Charter schools are important for students who learn best in the tailored programs these schools offer. Charter schools are also publicly funded but are funded differently when it comes to inclusive education funding, such as the nutrition programs. That's harder to do with this government's carbon tax, which raises overhead expenses on all schools. Minister, do you think it's acceptable that schools spend more on keeping the lights on as a result of your carbon tax and less for programs that parents and teachers care about?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would answer that question with another question to the member opposite. I'm wondering if he thinks that it would be appropriate to cut funding to schools by 20 per cent or freeze levels at 2015 levels – we're not entirely sure because the members opposite won't come clean with their financial plans for the province of Alberta – and whether or not cutting taxes for millionaires would be an appropriate way to fund schools and these education programs that they seem to think are important.

**Mr. Gill:** Given that parents in northeast Calgary are upset because their kids can no longer take a yellow bus to their charter schools and given that one of my constituents wasn't pleased to be told that his 12-year-old child can take public transit rather than a school bus and given that the NDP are on public record always, for your information, Minister, opposed to choice in education and now lots of NDP supporters and special-interest groups want to get rid of choice in education, Minister, when was the last time you spoke to parents in northeast Calgary about the issue of transportation?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we are focused on the priorities of regular Albertans, like making sure that our kids have great schools and that they can get there safely. That's why we reversed cuts that the previous Conservative government planned to make, including cuts to student busing. In fact, we've increased our investment in student transportation by over \$20 million since taking office. If the members opposite had their way, they would cut tax breaks to millionaires, and all of our kids would be walking to school.

2:30

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently, northeast Calgary is not part of Alberta.

Given that choice in education for northeast Calgary is not an important issue for this minister and given that the Premier, when she was in the opposition, called private and charter schools "havens of elitism" and that that shows the NDP's opposition to choice in education, Minister, is your government intentionally pushing parents to enrol their children in public schools, and if not, why have you not addressed these important issues in Calgary northeast?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, Mr. Speaker, our government has increased investment. We've funded for enrolment in every public school, including charter schools, in the province, and we're proud to continue to do so. Of course, the member opposite is concerned about choice. Here's the choice that Albertans will be facing in 2019. Do they want further enhancements for private schools and cuts to public schools, or do they want to invest in education for every Albertan regardless of the size of their wallet? I believe that the people of Alberta will make the choice that will benefit the most students, and that will be to continue to fund public education.

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

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

### Government Policies and Economic Indicators

**Mr. Malkinson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Conference Board of Canada recently released their economic outlook. Fun fact: despite what the opposition would have you believe, it shows that Alberta's economy is among the leaders in growth in this country. Can the Minister of Finance explain what was done during the downturn to help Alberta's economy turn around so quickly?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the Calgary-Currie member as well. I can tell you what we didn't do. We didn't turn our backs on Albertans. We didn't make deep ideological cuts to programs and services just when many Albertans needed them most. The members opposite would try the same old failed austerity budget that led to thousands of teachers and nurses being fired and leaving this province. Instead, we chose to invest. We chose to build schools and hospitals and keep Albertans working. That choice is paying off.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the recent economic outlook report shows that Saskatchewan's economy is lagging behind and given that both provinces are dependent on resource revenue and that both provinces went through the same



economic downturn, can the Minister of Finance tell us what choices Saskatchewan made during that same period?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan made the choice that the members opposite are still demanding. They cut services, like closing down transportation companies, cutting funding to libraries, and hiked taxes on new construction. In Saskatchewan jobs are stagnant, small-business confidence is down, and growth is lagging. Meanwhile here in Alberta things are looking up. More Albertans are working than ever before. Our economy is leading the country, and private investment is returning.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's great news, that the economy is looking up. Obviously, more work needs to be done, of course, so my question to the Minister of Finance is: what are we doing to ensure that all Albertans fully feel this economic recovery?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the beginning our government chose to have the backs of Albertans through the worst recession in two generations. We invested in diversification like the petrochemicals diversification program, we invested in craft brewers and distillers, and we invested in infrastructure. The result is a more diversified economy with good, mortgage-paying jobs. This was a critical choice, but given Alberta's strong and broad-based recovery, it's clear we made the right decision. We have more work to do, but we'll make sure this recovery reaches every Albertan.

#### Public Service Size

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, given that in estimates the Finance minister, when asked if he thought the government was efficient, said yes and given that the public service here costs about 20 per cent more per citizen than it does in British Columbia and that when we asked the Finance minister, he said that the size of the public service was in the neighbourhood of 30,000 people in Alberta, does the Finance minister still contend and still agree with what he said in estimates, that that is about the size of the public service in Alberta?

**Mr. Ceci:** I think the member opposite is trying to pull a trick question, Mr. Speaker. There are about 27,000 direct employees of the government of Alberta. There are more than I think it's 270,000, 280,000 employees who receive government cheques. That's people who work in health care. That's people who work in education, in schools. That's people who work in advanced education. All of those people get monies through the government of Alberta, so there are many more public servants than there are Alberta public service direct government workers.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister actually agreed with what I said – so I don't know where the trick is – and given that he also said in estimates that the total number of people paid out of the public purse is actually north of 220,000 people, to the Finance minister: if the people that aren't in the 27,000, those in health care and education, are not public servants, who does he believe that they're serving?

**Mr. Ceci:** Mr. Speaker, people who are serving Albertans are public servants, I guess. We're making sure that we are treating all

public servants with the respect they need. We're making sure that they are well compensated, but we have some difficult challenges right now, so we're looking for common-sense agreements from all negotiated labour settlements, and that is happening as we speak.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the minister is as confusing in question period today as he was in estimates and given that he's not sure, it seems, whether the number of the public servants is 27,000, not including health care and education, or whether it's 220,000 – he's forgotten that number, but I'll help him out with that number; that does include health care and education – again I'll ask him: how many public servants are there, and if there are only 27,000, who do you think the hard-working Albertans in health care and education are serving?

**Mr. Ceci:** Mr. Speaker, this sounds like *Groundhog Day* all over again and the same question being asked and asked and asked. Public servants are hard working. They're doing the job that needs to be done for all Albertans. They are properly compensated, and on this side, this government, they have the respect of this government. That side tried to cancel pensions of public service workers. That side tried to bring in bills 9 and 10, and remember what happened out there as a result of that activity? You had to back down. We're respecting people and their work, and that will always happen from this side.

#### Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition

**Mr. Loewen:** Tzaporah Berman and Karen Mahon have been protesting the pipeline in B.C. The other day the economic development minister said regarding Mahon and Berman, "With all due respect... their positions and their opinions are quite irrelevant." Well, Mr. Speaker, this begs the question: if their comments and opinions are irrelevant – and I agree – why did the Premier appoint them to the oil sands advisory group?

**Mr. Mason:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to respond to that, to answer. This opposition keeps putting an awful lot of emphasis on a couple of people. Now, they had some specific expertise that was useful, but they sure as heck don't speak for this government. They don't speak for the people of Alberta. This government has been clear that we are going to get that pipeline built. We're going to do that despite the best efforts of the members opposite to try and bring in irrelevant points.

**Mr. Loewen:** Given that the Premier put them in charge of that oil sands advisory group and given that the NDP government has said over and over again that the Trans Mountain pipeline was approved because of the carbon tax, an approval that is worth nothing as they are now talking about inflicting pain on B.C. residents, buying into the pipeline, and a myriad of other initiatives and threats to get the pipeline built, how can you say that the carbon tax is getting the pipeline built when there are multiple initiatives and threats that have nothing to do with Alberta's climate change plan and carbon tax that are required to actually get the pipeline built?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, what is going on here is a repetitive series of questions going back to, over and over again, the same questions that have very little to do with government policy. What government policy is is to put in place a climate leadership plan that led to the approval of two pipelines, something that the Conservatives could not get done for over a decade.



**Mr. Loewen:** Given that this government seems to be embarrassed with these answers – and that’s the only thing repetitive here, the answers – and given that the city of Victoria pumps raw sewage into the ocean, including the area of Victoria that is represented by the Green Party leader, and given that the Green Party leader has joined forces with the B.C. NDP to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline, does anyone else see the hypocrisy of these actions, and did the Premier raise this at the failed Sunday meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Horgan?

2:40

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, it’s really unfortunate that the Official Opposition wastes perfectly good questions asking us to comment on political parties and individuals that live in other provinces. What’s important, I think, is this government’s actions, the bill that we’re bringing in to make sure that we have the levers to make sure the pipeline gets built, the fact that we are continuing to fight for that pipeline. Quite frankly, the Official Opposition is doing a very poor job, in my opinion, at defending the interests of Albertans and

is more interested in trying some sort of weird guilt by association. Well, it’s not going to work.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I believe the daily Routine is now completed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) and the Budget 2018 main estimates schedule the House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30. The legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon and tomorrow morning for consideration of the main estimates. This afternoon Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for Environment and Parks in the Rocky Mountain Room, and Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Status of Women in the Parkland Room. Tomorrow morning Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for Environment and Parks in the Rocky Mountain Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:41 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]











## Table of Contents

Prayers .....	567
Introduction of Guests .....	567
Members' Statements	
Accessible Playground in Calgary-Klein.....	567
Economic Indicators .....	568
Father Albert Lacombe's Legacy .....	568
Official Opposition and Government Energy Policies.....	568
Canada .....	569
Ambulance Availability and Response Times .....	569
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	569
Oral Question Period	
Trans Mountain Pipeline Construction Suspension .....	569
Bill 12.....	570
Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals.....	570
Public Service Pension Plans.....	571
Petrochemicals Diversification Program .....	571
Medical Examiner Positions in Calgary .....	572
Economic Indicators .....	572
Police Release of Information on Serious Incidents .....	573
Highway 40 and Grande Prairie Economic Development .....	573
Tax Policies and Economic Indicators.....	574
PDD Administrative Review .....	574
Fisheries Management.....	575
Government Procurement Process.....	575
Charter School Funding.....	576
Government Policies and Economic Indicators .....	576
Public Service Size .....	577
Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition.....	577



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