



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, April 30, 2018

Day 21

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

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

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Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
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Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)
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Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
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Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
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Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
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Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (NDP),
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Vacant, Fort McMurray-Conklin
Vacant, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake

Party standings:

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, April 30, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Hon. members, let us each in our own way pray or reflect about the rich contributions immigrants and refugees have brought to our nation and to our province. They inspire all of us with confidence in our collective future.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. R.J. Chambers. I would invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 31 students from Eleanor Hall school. They are actually here for a week of School at the Legislature. They are with their teachers, Albert Perreault and Chris Lantz, and chaperones Audrey Degner, who is the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit liaison, and Lori Borduzak and Jim Laughy. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups?

Seeing and hearing none, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, it gives me the greatest pleasure to introduce to you and to the House my second visiting grandson from Calgary, Kiel Archuleta. He's artistic, he's athletic, and he has a real passion for the environment. I look forward to many years of working with him as he prepares for the Legislature in 2028. Please welcome him.

Beside him—I don't think I've ever introduced my chief executive, Carmen Remenda. She's been with the Liberal caucus for 25? Thirteen, yes. I knew it was close. Thank you, Carmen. Let's all give her a warm welcome.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I understand that when you're having so much fun, the time seems to race.

The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to the House several representatives of Alberta's vibrant Vietnamese community joining us to mark Journey to

Freedom Day, including Dong Tran, a representative of the Canadian Vietnamese association; Xuân Thạch Nguyễn, president of the Calgary Vietnamese association; Chí Hiếu Trần, president of the Calgary Vietnamese Veterans Immigrants Aid Association; Lily Le, president of the Edmonton Viets Association; Van Ut Ngo, president of the Edmonton Vietnamese veterans' society; and Amy Duong, the vice-president of the Edmonton Viets Association, together with several dozen members of the community. I invite all members to give them a warm welcome to the Chamber.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to introduce to you three guests that I have here seated in your gallery today. The first is my little brother Tyler, who's one of the few people in this world that can look me in the eye. I'm glad to have him walking around the Legislature today because it makes me feel like I'm almost normal height for a change. I'd ask that he stand up. With him is my other little brother, Daniel, one of the funniest guys I know, and I will ask him to stand up. Up here chaperoning and no stranger to you, of course, is my dad, Pat Nixon. I can tell you that with these two guys in town it's a good thing he's up here keeping an eye on them. I'd ask that they receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some of our fantastic ND caucus staff. Here today we have a few groups. From the leg. services staff we have Jodi Learn, Nicholas Diaz, Andrew Douglas, Eric Rice, Emily Springer. During the legislative sitting I very lovingly refer to them as the leg. warriors because that's what it feels like when you start getting into night sittings. Their support is incredibly important to us. Alongside them are also two new caucus staff members who we are happy to have with us, and they are Sidney Sadik, finance and HR officer, and Keith Thomson, our new outreach assistant. I would like them now to rise and to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly guests who are here today from the Alberta Common Ground Alliance, including representatives from Alberta One-Call, ATCO Gas, the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops, the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta, Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, Telus communications, Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association, and the Alberta Public Works Association. April is national dig safe awareness month. The Alberta Common Ground Alliance is reminding all Albertans to visit clickbeforeyoudig.com before any digging project, no matter how big or how small. I will speak more on this later today. Now I'd like to ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In honour of the 22nd annual National Day of Mourning, that took place this past

Saturday, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly leaders from two local organizations that champion the cause of worker safety.

First I'd like to welcome the new president of the Edmonton & District Labour Council, Mr. Greg Mady, and the EDLC labour programs co-ordinator, Perri Garvin. The EDLC has a long history of raising awareness about workplace safety through ongoing advocacy to advance the economic and social welfare of workers and their families. They organize the annual National Day of Mourning event at Grant Notley park, which recognizes those workers killed and injured at work and recommit to working towards ending workplace deaths and injuries.

I'd also like to welcome Chris LaBossiere, the CEO and cofounder of the Edmonton-based education technology company Yardstick and proud resident of Edmonton-Centre, with the business located on 104 Street, as well as the executive assistant, Sue Broderick. Just a few weeks ago Yardstick launched a new homegrown technology, LearnerVerified, which responds to the global problem of e-learner fraud, which puts workers and the general public at risk. LearnerVerified is a moderate solution that uses facial detection and biometric data to authenticate e-learners. Yardstick anticipates that it will help to significantly reduce workplace injuries and fatalities around the world.

I see that all of my guests have risen, and I'd ask now that we provide them with the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Education.

1:40

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly leaders of the Edmonton Sikh community. Harpreet Singh Gill, Pal Singh Purewal, Gurcharn Singh Sangha, Harjinder Singh Gill, Culzar Singh Nirman, Charanjit Singh Dakha, Maghar Singh Ubhi, Surinder Singh Hoonjan, Navtej Singh Brar, Avtar Singh Gill, Zora Singh Jhaji, and Ranjit Singh Powar have all demonstrated a commitment to fostering inclusion and celebrating diversity both within their communities and the province as a whole.

Our government knows that different cultures make our province stronger, as evidenced today throughout our Legislature galleries. We are very proud to recognize April as Sikh Heritage Month. I would like to acknowledge the many contributions of the Sikh community to Alberta. We know we will work very closely together to foster inclusion and a better place for ourselves and for our children.

I would ask them all to rise – they already have – and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you Mr. Jason Gold. Jason is one of the bravest people I've ever met. Jason has been here before; I know he's going to be here again. In addition to being a member of the Alberta Party provincial board of directors, one of the many things that Jason did to contribute and make his community a better place was a tremendous amount of work in support of people who were displaced by the Fort McMurray wildfire. Jason, if I could ask you, please, to rise and receive the warm, warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Any other guests today? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today to introduce to you and through you Mrs. Kate Potter from Sexsmith. She's from the constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky. She's a strong, intelligent, hard-working, and lovely conservative woman, and she's here to enjoy the Legislature today. Kate, if you could stand and accept the warm greetings of this House.

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

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you a constituent of mine. He's a young advocate for an organization known as Grassroots Alberta. His name is Josh Andrus. If he'd please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. Josh is also the newly minted protege of the founder of the Taxpayers Federation, Mr. Kevin Avram. Josh, please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

National Day of Mourning

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday, April 28, the Calgary & District Labour Council hosted a memorial service at the city of Calgary's workers' memorial for the National Day of Mourning, commemorating workers killed, injured, or made ill by workplace hazards. We took the time to honour and remember the 166 workers taken from us too early. We know these people as our co-workers, colleagues, community members, family, and friends. Any death in the workplace is one too many.

Mr. Speaker, to honour her late husband, Darlena Upton courageously shared online how she lost Myles to a workplace accident. An eight-foot trench collapsed on him while he was repairing a broken line for watering livestock. Only 47 years old, Myles was known in his rural community as a kind man, a hard worker, and a devoted husband and father. He is missed every day. We remember Albertans like Myles who have lost their lives, who have been injured on the job, and we renew our commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace.

I'm proud to be part of a government that has passed An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans, the first significant update to Alberta's occupational health and safety laws in over 40 years. Taking effect June 1, 2018, these new laws give Albertans the same rights as other Canadians when it comes to workplace health and safety. These changes mean stronger rights and protections for everyday Albertans, including the right to know about hazards, the right to participate, and the right to refuse unsafe work without fear or recrimination. Joint workplace health and safety committees will ensure that work-site parties are sitting down to discuss health and safety in the workplace and will collaboratively find ways to address any issues.

Our government has the backs of families, and these changes make a real difference for everyday working people across the province and are making lives better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Journey to Freedom Day

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Journey to Freedom Day. It marks the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, when

the democratic South Vietnamese republic fell to the communist north, causing widespread persecution of the opponents of the regime, some 60,000 of whom were executed, some 1 million of whom were put into communist re-education camps. An estimated 165,000 people died as a result of this political violence following the fall of Saigon.

These events led to a mass emigration of Indochinese refugees on the high seas in Southeast Asia between 1976 and 1983, during which time it is estimated that as many as a quarter of a million lost their lives as a result of marine accidents and piracy. Thankfully, many millions did reach shore, Mr. Speaker, and initially were housed in UN camps. Canada opened its arms with great generosity, receiving some 60,000 of the Indochinese boat people in the first few years and another 100,000 in the years to follow. Indeed, as minister of immigration I was honoured to partner with Canada's Vietnamese community to welcome hundreds of the stranded boat people from the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand to join us here in Canada.

To those representatives of our Vietnamese community in the gallery and to the entire community: we salute them for their remarkable story of courage, of heroism, of tenacity, and of fidelity. They have never given up the dream of freedom and respect for human rights for all of the people of Vietnam, and on this Journey to Freedom Day we join them in that aspiration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dig Safe Month

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year thousands of buried facilities are accidentally damaged by digging activities. Services are interrupted in nearly every case, and incidents put our workers, our communities, and our environment at risk. Recently a number of communities have been impacted by incidents involving severed underground lines. In my own constituency the town of Athabasca lost nearly all telecommunications services for a full day. This affects many communities across the province. In 2016 there were 4,305 of these incidents, of varying severity, across the province.

Societal cost research shows that over \$350 million in damage is caused every year in Alberta due to damage to underground infrastructure. Average societal cost of a single incident is estimated at more than \$80,000. These incidents put a strain on emergency services, require expensive repairs, and result in lost business during service outages.

April is national dig safe awareness month, and many hon. members are sporting the Dig Safe pin here today. The Alberta Common Ground Alliance is reminding all Albertans to visit clickbeforeyoudig.com before any digging project, no matter how big or how small, even when digging a garden or putting a fence in your backyard. Clicking before you dig is a free service. Not clicking before you dig could cost everything.

This year they have also partnered with the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and the Grey Cup to raise awareness of these issues. Just as football teams have their own playbooks to guide them on the field, the Alberta Common Ground Alliance promotes a safe-digging playbook for excavating around buried utilities. Not to stretch the football analogy too much, Mr. Speaker, but whether we're going deep on the football field or into the ground, safety should always come first.

Thank you.

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

Alberta Summer Games 2018 in Grande Prairie

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a few months Grande Prairie will host the 2018 Alberta Summer Games. It's been 18 years since our community last had that honour, and everyone is excited about it. Close to 3,000 of Alberta's best young athletes and top officials will participate in the multisport competition from July 19 to 22. A variety of athletic pursuits are on the agenda, from soccer and football to mountain biking, kayaking, track and field, swimming, and many more. The games will also provide athletes with opportunities to forge friendships because that is an important part of youthful development.

While the competitions are the focal point, the games' cohosts, the city of Grande Prairie and the county of Grande Prairie, hope that the 5,000 to 7,000 people expected to visit for the games have the opportunity to discover the region's cultural and outdoor offerings. Allow me to point out that the logo for the 2018 Alberta Summer Games includes a dinosaur. That's because we are home to the world-class Philip J. Currie museum, which is located near a rich fossil bed.

1:50

Mr. Speaker, the people are proud to host the 2018 Summer Games and to showcase our region, but a lasting legacy will result as well because the games will generate funds that will go towards projects and funding for our sporting communities. There is no one more proud, and I would like to highlight that 2,000 residents will be volunteering their time to ensure the games are a success.

Mr. Speaker, hosting is a valued part of our culture in Grande Prairie. I invite everyone to come and see how well we do it.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Federal Carbon Pricing

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the government of Saskatchewan filed a reference at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal challenging, effectively, the constitutionality of the federal government's threats to impose a federal carbon tax on provinces. While the Saskatchewan government is defending its taxpayers from Justin Trudeau, our NDP government surrendered and agreed to raise their carbon tax by 67 per cent. My question is: will this government join the government of Saskatchewan in challenging the Trudeau tax?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we have indicated that we will do is to move forward with the climate leadership plan, as we put forward in November 2015, because our view is that we need to take seriously our responsibility to address climate change while still working to build our energy industry and to support the good work that they are doing to become more sustainable and to lower their emissions per barrel. That's the work that we've started, that's the work that is paying dividends, and that is the work that we will do.

Mr. Kenney: The Premier says that it is paying dividends.

With the cancellation of Northern Gateway by Trudeau, his killing of Energy East, his surrender on Keystone XL, and his doing precisely nothing to ensure the construction of Trans Mountain, Mr. Speaker, that begs the question: why is the government of

Saskatchewan defending its taxpayers from a threatened federal tax on this consumption of energy when our provincial government is instead abetting this tax-hiking agenda of the Trudeau Liberals?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, in fact, what we are doing is that we are working very carefully and very aggressively and with great rigour to get a pipeline to tidewater. This is a pipeline that has been approved as a result of the overall work that this government has done on the climate leadership plan. This is a pipeline that has been approved and that will get built, unlike what happened under the watch of the member opposite and his former boss, where not one pipeline was built to tidewater. We will get the job done. We will not fail like the members opposite.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of pipelines, I've discovered that in 2015 the Premier, who was then the NDP leader, said that she was opposed to the Northern Gateway pipeline. She's admitted that she was opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline. Her federal party, of which the NDP is legally a part, opposed the Keystone XL and the Trans Mountain and the Northern Gateway pipelines. I'd like to ask the Premier: does she regret her opposition to Northern Gateway, which is part of the reason that we now find ourselves stuck with only one potential coastal pipeline?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, when it comes to Northern Gateway, it was actually the incompetence and the failure of the previous Conservative federal government to do the job right. That is the fundamental reason for why that pipeline failed.

With respect to Keystone our government just a few months ago announced that we would support the Keystone construction going forward by committing barrels to it. We've actually put our money where our mouth is, and the thing is going forward. Finally, as I've said before, our government has done nothing but work to get the Trans Mountain built, and we will get it done, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Carbon Levy and Pipeline Development

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the reason why we are now so dependent on this one remaining project, Trans Mountain, is because of the cancellation of Northern Gateway, the federal government killing Energy East. In April 2015 – she can try to pass the buck if she wants – the Harper government approved the Northern Gateway pipeline, on which she said in April 2015 that, quote: Gateway is not the right decision. She also said that she was opposed to Keystone XL. Will the Premier now rise and admit that she got it wrong in opposing Northern Gateway and Keystone XL?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interestingly, what happened with respect to Northern Gateway is that the courts ultimately said that Gateway was not the right decision because the members opposite failed to consult appropriately or respectfully with the people that it was impacting.

In addition, as I've said very clearly, our government has put significant money behind Keystone to make sure that it gets built. That was a decision that was taken by our government. As well, our government has done nothing but advocate for Trans Mountain, and that is why this time it will get built.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has told us various times that she will not raise her carbon tax by 67 per cent unless Trans Mountain is completed. I'd like to ask if that is still the policy of the NDP. I ask because on April 18, before we rose, we brought forward a motion, to the Chamber here, saying that the government would not proceed with any further increases to the carbon tax until Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion project has completed construction and commenced commercial operations. The NDP refused to allow that to go to a vote. Why? Is that still their position? Why did they vote against their own position?

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

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we have indicated very clearly and as I've said all along, our support for the pan-Canadian framework was incumbent upon the Trans Mountain pipeline being successfully commenced and all of the objections to it removed so that it is very clear that it is under way and that it's going to be built. That continues to be our view. We actually believe that we are very close to getting it done, much closer than the member opposite would like. I would suggest that the member opposite work with us because support is growing and success . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Okay. We'll give this another shot, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier then join with us and, I would hope, all parties in adopting a motion indicating that Alberta will not raise its carbon tax by 67 per cent unless and until the Trans Mountain pipeline is built?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I've really answered that question several times already and indeed did that at the very outset, when we worked with the federal government with respect to the pan-Canadian framework about a year and a half ago. Our position remains the same.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite needs to focus on supporting the growth in support of this pipeline rather than taking potshots from the side. I appreciate that he's very familiar with failure on this issue. We are getting very close to success, though, and I would suggest that he start contributing to it rather than trying to detract from it.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, a motion that is based on the government's policy is not a potshot. That is constructive. We'll bring it forward again, with the expectation of support.

Alberta Energy Regulator Application Timelines

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, with respect to our energy industry Imperial Oil has announced that it will be making no further major investments in Alberta's economy in part because of endless delays on projects. In particular, they've been waiting now four and a half years for approval on their Aspen oil sands project, using cutting-edge technology that shrinks the carbon footprint of bitumen extraction. Why is it taking four and a half years for the government of Alberta to give a green light to a \$2 billion job-creating investment?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, the project that the member opposite is referring to is in fact subject to the review of the Alberta Energy Regulator, an organization that, in fact, was created under the watch of the members opposite when they were in government, that is still staffed by the folks that the members opposite put in place. But you know what? We have been working with the AER to help them find ways to work faster while at the same time maintaining the breadth and depth of the review that they are doing because they are contributing to ensuring that our energy industry is the most sustainable and responsible in the world, and we'll continue that work.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's not going to be much of an energy industry if it takes us several years to approve projects such as this, waiting for \$2 billion to flow into the economy to create jobs. I understand that the AER is a separate regulatory body, and I respect their independence, but the system doesn't seem to be working. Will the Premier agree with me that just in principle four and a half years is too long to get to a yes or a no on a \$2 billion job-creating investment, and shouldn't we fix that system if it's not working?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, in fact, as I just indicated, our Minister of Energy has been working with the AER to find ways to streamline the process and make sure that things can go faster while at the same time maintaining the level of rigorous review and responsibility that has helped position Alberta's energy industry as one of the most responsible in the world, and that's something that we are very proud of.

But while we're in the business of quoting energy CEOs, here's one that I'd like to go with. Quote: I would tell you that the support we have received from the current federal government – that support would not have been evident a few years ago under the previous one.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, does the Premier understand that the four-and-a-half-year delay on the \$2 billion proposed investment by Imperial is just illustrative of a much deeper problem? Does she understand that we have lost tens of billions of dollars of capital from our oil and gas sector going to oil and gas elsewhere around the world, including the United States? What is her plan to attract that capital back to Canada? What is her plan to cut red tape and to speed up the approvals process to move at the speed of business?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite loves to lecture and explain things to people, but for his benefit we are fully aware of all the things that he just said. As a result of that, we have been doing nothing but working on finding ways to attract investment to Alberta's energy industry, up to and including working very, very hard to get our pipeline capacity increased and to get the pipeline to tidewater and to undo the nine or 10 years of failure that Albertans were subjected to because of a Conservative federal government and a Conservative provincial government.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Nonrenewable Resource Revenue

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently in the news there has been speculation about how oil prices could be driven higher by

the reductions in OPEC production, decreasing production in Venezuela, and political instability elsewhere in the world. Some are forecasting that oil could even go as high as a hundred dollars, and that price differential will go down as demand begins to exceed supply. However, getting that value requires access to export markets. To the Premier: with all the delays in getting pipelines approved and built, is Alberta going to be in a position to take advantage if prices for oil head higher?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite outlined something that I think most Albertans are incredibly aware of, which is, of course, that we have a problem with pipeline capacity. We need to have more pipeline capacity. That's why we're very pleased that with the federal government we've had line 3 approved and also the Trans Mountain pipeline approved. Of course, as I've said before, our government is working with TCPL to support their work on getting Keystone done. We understand that pipeline capacity needs to be increased. We are working on every front to ensure that that can happen because we understand that all Albertans and all Canadians benefit from a healthy energy industry.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previous fiscal updates have shown that when this government gets unexpected resource revenue, it tends to spend that money before Albertans even find out about it. Last year's Q3 update saw the government collect an extra billion dollars over budget in royalties and then shovel it out the door just as fast as it came in. In the face of mounting debt and deficit, that could be seen as irresponsible. To the Minister of Finance: will you stick to the spending outlined in your budget and commit any unexpected resource revenue windfall to reducing the debt so that future generations don't get burdened with debt?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. Q3 brought good news to the province here, Mr. Speaker. We were able to prepay \$800 million to municipalities so that they could better address the important infrastructure needs and keep Albertans working. We certainly understand that if the price of oil goes up, there will be potentially some benefit to Albertans – that's a good thing – but we will stick to our budget. We're committed to making sure we deliver the best value for Albertans.

Mr. Fraser: While everyone in this House would be happy to see energy prices return to a healthy level, we need to be doing more to reduce government reliance on resource revenue. Recently the outgoing Auditor General suggested that Alberta would benefit from long-term financial planning as a part of introducing more certainty and predictability to government spending and revenue collection, which is especially relevant given how optimistic your budget's long-term projections were. To the same minister: will you detail some actual plans for getting us off the resource roller coaster and release some realistic long-term financial projections?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, the AG's report reinforces our position that Albertans need to get off the resource revenue roller coaster. The previous government spent recklessly and cut drastically, depending on the price of oil that day. We're doing the job to balance the approach so that we can support

working families in this province and continue to drive the economy forward, as it did in 2017 at 4.5 per cent GDP growth.

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

Supports for Seniors and Caregivers

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My riding of Calgary-Currie is a growing and diverse neighbourhood and is home to many different generations of Calgarians, including seniors. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what are you doing to support seniors and their caregivers?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much to the member for the question. Seniors are vibrant members of our province, and we are committed to supporting them. It was my pleasure to join that member in Calgary-Currie last year to talk to some of the seniors living in the constituency. We know that seniors would like to age in their communities, close to loved ones. One of our core programs, the Alberta seniors' benefit, provided financial assistance to more than 150,000 seniors last year. That's just one of the many examples of our government committing to protect vital public services for working people.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know our government is committed to supporting seniors and has made a significant investment in programs to support them. However, my constituents want to know specifically what we are doing to support seniors in our community. To the same minister: what are we doing to help seniors in Calgary-Currie?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Again, having the opportunity to visit Calgary-Currie and talk with seniors there meant quite a lot to me. The Minister of Seniors and Housing has also done the same, and that is why earlier this year we were pleased to announce that our government is investing \$250,000 in planning funding for Spruce Cliff Downs. Last year the minister toured this facility, and the Member for Calgary-Currie strongly advocated for the need for new units. This investment shows our government's commitment to protecting public services.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As our economy recovers, many seniors and their families in my riding are still having trouble making ends meet. Seniors are especially vulnerable. To the same minister: how are you ensuring that vulnerable seniors are not left behind?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government invested more than \$3 billion in seniors' programs just last year. We are supporting seniors to access up to \$40,000 for home repairs through the seniors home adaptation and repair program. Our opposition's reckless plan would give big tax giveaways to those at the top and cut the support seniors depend on. Our plan is focused on Albertans' priorities: jobs, affordability, and protecting public services.

MLA Compensation and the Provincial Budget

Mr. Fildebrandt: As MLAs we have a lot of priorities and policies that we need to balance, but perhaps the most fundamental duty of any legislative body is to oversee the management of our public finances. At its most basic, if a government can't balance its budget at least once a decade, we're not doing our jobs. To focus our collective minds on the task, I'm proposing that we cut all MLA pay by 5 per cent until the budget is balanced. Can the Premier support this?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, this matter refers to an item that is on the Order Paper for later today, and it is therefore out of order.

The Speaker: I believe that the hon. Government House Leader may be correct on that matter.

Is there another subject matter that you wish to direct to the government, to cabinet?

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, I understand why the government might not want to answer the question, but I'm not referring to any motion on the Order Paper.

The Speaker: No, no.

Mr. Fildebrandt: I'm not referring to a bill. I'm not referring to . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm going to pass to the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Electricity Regulated Rate Cap

Mrs. Aheer: Mr. Speaker, with the return of money-losing power purchase agreements to the Balancing Pool after this government hiked the province's carbon tax on heavy emitters and the Balancing Pool's finances crumbled to the tune of close to \$2 billion – we don't even know what those updated numbers are – and given that in the deregulated market consumers are protected from volatility, can the government please explain how a 6.8 cent cap, which is actually more than double what Albertans pay right now for electricity, is supposedly going to protect consumers?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2013: those were all years when the pool price of electricity was more than \$100 per megawatt hour. Here's the common denominator: Conservative government. Today we are at about a third of that. The reality is that Albertans have been exposed to an electricity price roller coaster. We've taken them off that ride, and we're fixing a broken system with common-sense reforms that will reduce price spikes and uncertainty.

2:10

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, everything that this government is doing now is actually ensuring that the taxpayer is on the hook for all of the risk while the companies that they choose reap all of the rewards. With respect to that, given that the Minister of Energy has extraordinary powers to bring renewables online and the related infrastructure without consulting consumers or the Legislature and given that this could cost anywhere from \$800 million to \$2.5 billion just in transmission upgrades and given that the ratepayer and the taxpayer are the same person, can the minister please explain to Albertans what this cost is going to be for the average Alberta family?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2013: those are the reasons that we're fixing a broken system that was given to us by the Conservative government. As we move to a more stable and affordable system, we've capped energy bills to protect families and businesses from rate spikes. Our government is on the side of regular Albertans. I'm not sure why they aren't.

Mrs. Aheer: Mr. Speaker, the minister had actually said that Albertans are responding to the costs that are rising on their bills and asking questions, rightfully, and the minister also said that the government's actual focus is on developing a clean grid, and that's not even with consulting Albertans. When will the government take responsibility for the fact that the government's mismanagement of this file will ultimately take way more money out of the pockets of Albertans despite the smoke and mirrors that she's using to disguise the costs resulting from these NDP policies?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One correction on that question: we have consulted. We've consulted with Albertans, we've consulted with industry, we've consulted with environment groups as we come together with this plan. The Conservatives over there seem to want to keep defending insider deals that cost Albertans thousands and millions of dollars. We are acting by capping and protecting Albertans from price spikes. The deregulation caused the roller-coaster ride that we have been on. We're fixing that. We're implementing common-sense reforms and reducing uncertainty. Again, we're on the side of Albertans. I'm not sure why they aren't.

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

Police Release of Information on Serious Incidents

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta lacks consistent rules for naming perpetrators of serious crimes and victims of homicide, and the result is a confused and possibly misinformed public. ASIRT's decision to withhold the name of a man killed in a shootout with police because protecting his family was more important than the public disclosure has highlighted a serious issue. Minister, why do you insist on sweeping this under the carpet? This is not going to go away.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think we've been clear on this issue several times. This is a decision and a policy that were put in place by ASIRT. ASIRT is an independent organization, and they have to be able to operate independently and exercise their decision-making independently of government. It is the case that their policy is consistent with those policies across the country, and that is, I think, a very reasonable position for them to take.

Mr. Ellis: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the minister keeps insisting that ASIRT is independent and given that ASIRT was created to ensure that police are not investigating other police and that ASIRT is supposed to answer to the director of law enforcement, also known as your deputy minister, Minister, is ASIRT a force unto itself, or will you admit that it falls under your authority, or are you just not in charge of your ministry?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Well, in the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General there are a number of things that need to operate independently. ASIRT is under the ministry – they're there to perform an important function – but it is important that they are able to perform that function based on where the evidence leads them and not where political direction leads them. There are a number of things under my ministry that are in the same position. For instance, Crown prosecutors also are permitted to exercise jurisdiction.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, given that a year ago the minister said that it's important to have consistency when it comes to naming homicide victims and given that she also said that she would work with the Alberta police chiefs to develop a consistent naming policy yet we still see some police services naming homicide victims one day and not the next day, Minister, how can Albertans have faith in our justice system when police and ASIRT are allowed to arbitrarily and randomly conceal names from the public?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member is right. It is important to have consistency across the province. That's why I asked the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police to come together to create a consistent policy. Police chiefs have done that due diligence. They consulted with the Privacy Commissioner as well as victims of crime, and they adopted a new standard that was released in August.

Thank you.

Carbon Levy and Seniors' Expenses

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, 42 per cent of Albertans are finding it difficult to cover their monthly expenses. That problem gets even worse for our fixed-income seniors, who are living on a fixed income in our community. Now, what does this government do? They bring in a carbon tax that raises the cost of everything. They bring in a rebate that they give to seniors, but then they turn around and claw back 30 per cent of that rebate just to seniors in our communities. My question is: is it this government's policy to continue to allow seniors to be disproportionately punished by this ideological tax?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Making sure that we support our seniors is a high priority for our government, and that means making sure that while we diversify the economy and invest in energy efficiency, seniors also have the resources that they need. I'm so proud that at a time when the opposition was advocating for slashing public services, including the health care that our seniors deserve and the education that their grandkids rely on, we are investing more than ever in seniors' lodges, the Alberta seniors' benefit, and the carbon levy rebate. Last year there was more than \$3 billion in services for seniors.

Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, given that the minister can just look at her notes and go off canned answers – they're saying that they're standing up for seniors in our communities? That is one of the most ridiculous things I've ever heard. The fact is that they're allowing 30 per cent of seniors' carbon tax rebates to be clawed back. They're making them have to pay stuff. This is a government that

told seniors in my community to fund raise to pay for the carbon tax. Again, is it this government's policy to make seniors disproportionately pay for the carbon tax? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're making life better by protecting front-line care and making life affordable for seniors in this province. Approximately 260,000 seniors are eligible to receive up to \$300 annually for the carbon levy rebate. We've also provided \$500,000 in grants to the four largest housing management bodies to conduct energy efficiency audits. We continue to work for seniors, not against them. We've protected more than \$800 million in seniors' benefits over the last two years.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, given that all this government has done is actually raise the carbon tax by 67 per cent at a time that 70 per cent of Albertans are feeling that their economic situation is getting worse – that's all this government has done. The Premier indicated that if Trans Mountain was not built, we as a province would not see the carbon tax go up by 67 per cent. I moved a motion that the Premier and her colleagues voted against. I will move it again just shortly. Will this government support that motion? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to talk about the pipeline. With the lack of capacity that we're experiencing going to the coast, \$40 million a day into the Canadian economy is being lost. That's money that we could be using to help seniors. It could be helping to build hospitals, schools, other social programs, rural crime, you name it. That's money that's being left on the table. We're fighting very hard on this side of the House for that pipeline. The opposition needs to join us.

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

High School Construction in St. Albert

Mr. Horne: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. St. Albert is a community that has been growing consistently, and that growth has put many pressures on our infrastructure. In particular, our school system has seen a 30 per cent growth in K to 9 enrolment over the past five years. Now, in that time we have seen several K to 6 and K to 9 schools built. This demographic wave is soon to put that same pressure on our high schools. St. Albert has been advocating for more high school space for several years now. I was very pleased to see that through Budget 2018 Paul Kane high school will be replaced. To the Minister of Education . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

2:20

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got the general idea of the question. We're very happy to announce that Paul Kane high school will be a part of the 20 school projects that we announced during our budget this year. Certainly, the hon. member is correct that this is one of the areas. Suburban, metro Edmonton is one of the highest areas of growth. Building a replacement school in St. Albert was long overdue. The previous government ignored this need for many, many years. Now we're building a new replacement school, 1,500 spaces in a beautiful location in St. Albert. Very proud of that.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Paul Kane high school has been a centrepiece for the community for many decades now. To the same minister: why replace Paul Kane when a modernization and expansion could prove more cost-effective?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we always defer to the needs of school boards. It's good to have local government as part of that decision-making process. Certainly, it was important because of the advanced state of disrepair at Paul Kane and how it was ignored by the previous government. It's past that point where you can actually do that modernization. It gives us a chance to upgrade CTS and other modern equipment and computer processes, to build a school that is going to have reduced energy use, increased energy savings, and it's just a great way by which we can contribute to the city of St. Albert.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Horne: Thank you. Now, Paul Kane is only a piece of the space crunch that our schools will be facing. Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: how does Bellerose composite high school fit into the St. Albert space solution?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, again, we deferred to the decision-making processes of school boards to make determinations, and we like to help to satisfy what needs they see. Certainly, there are a lot of needs not just in St. Albert but right across the province. We are now in the midst of more than 200 school projects across the province of Alberta. It's something that we should all be very proud of. Our economy is growing, and our young population is growing as well. We have the youngest population in the country, and we have to make sure that we have schools and teachers for each of those kids to make sure that they have the best start in their lives.

Provincial Debt-servicing Costs

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, for decades Albertans benefited from Conservative governments not having to siphon substantial sums of tax dollars to pay interest, and Albertans received lower taxes and more services instead. In contrast, this government will be spending \$2 billion to pay the cost of this government's massive debt increases this year and \$3.7 billion annual interest by only 2023. To the minister: why do you prioritize Bay Street bankers to the detriment of Alberta families and Alberta communities?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what our priority is. Our priority is standing up for regular Alberta families. That's why we stopped the opposition, whose plan was to lay off tons of nurses and teachers, a billion dollars in cuts to health care. The Leader of the Opposition is talking, in local weekly newspapers and so forth, that 20 per cent cuts seem realistic. That's not realistic. It's not realistic that you can say that you're going to protect health care and cut billions of dollars. The math doesn't add up. You know what? It's time that you guys came clean with Albertans.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that in 2015 Alberta's NDP chose to follow the past example of former Ontario NDP Premier Bob Rae over the financial cliff and given that both governments destroyed wealth, killed jobs, accumulated debt, and ballooned bureaucracy and that families and communities have suffered from reckless

fiscal mismanagement by paying interest instead of receiving services and that the term “Rae days” is now synonymous with failed government policy and a government in trouble, to the minister again: why are hurting Alberta families and communities with your losing playbook?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, you know, the Leader of the Opposition, when he was in government – let’s just look at this whole thing about who’s hurting Canadians. When the Leader of the Opposition was in Ottawa: six straight deficit budgets, \$58 billion deficit in just one year alone. He added, that government added \$145 billion to our national debt, and they paid \$309 billion in interest rates. Why don’t they talk about that? There is nothing we can learn from that side except going down the wrong road. We’re not going to do it. We’re going to continue to support Albertans. We’re going to continue to invest in this province.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Barnes: Given that in the years since he was Ontario’s Premier, Bob Rae has reflected and changed his view – “As I grow older, I have had to discard some ideas and policies because they no longer make sense. This strikes me as entirely healthy. I would invite others to do the same” – to the minister: why, then, are you planning \$96 billion in debt, \$4 billion in annual interest, and destroying job-creating investment when another big government, a former NDP leader, now knows how wrong this is?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you. You know, let’s fast-forward to today, Mr. Speaker, or even look at last year: 90,000 full-time jobs over the past year were added in this province, most of them in the private sector. We know that not all Albertans are feeling that yet, but they are starting to feel it. We are continuing to support good jobs. We’re continuing to build a diverse economy, where the Conservatives want to take us back to the future and continue to invest in boondoggles that don’t help this province. They had situations in place where salaries were excessive, perks were there. We’ve changed all that. We’re cutting their waste.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon minister.

Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization

Mr. Loewen: When the climate leadership plan was first announced, the Premier and the environment minister promised that the carbon tax would be revenue neutral. It didn’t take long before we found out the truth, that it wasn’t revenue neutral at all. Why did this NDP government try to deceive Albertans with something they knew was not true?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, our climate leadership plan got us two pipeline approvals, Trans Mountain and line 3. We are doing this in the best interests of not just Albertans but of Canadians. Our plan will cut emissions drastically, a projected 30 per cent reduction by 2030. We’ve capped oil sands emissions at 100 megatonnes. To do all that, we’re reinvesting back into industry as well as helping everyday Albertans manage their costs.

Mr. Loewen: Given that after the government backtracked on the revenue-neutral aspect of the carbon tax, they said that every dollar of the carbon tax would be recycled right here in Alberta and given that it didn’t take long for an Ontario company to be hired with the carbon tax dollars to install light bulbs, which the government admits sent carbon tax dollars to Ontario, showing that the recycled-dollars-in-Alberta promise was also not true, when will this government just come clean and tell the truth about the carbon tax, that it’s just a tax and it’s not making life better for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we’re supporting good jobs in a diversified economy. We’re investing \$1.4 billion in innovation projects. All that is funded by the climate leadership plan: \$440 million for oil sands innovation to help companies increase production and reduce emissions while adjusting to the improved rules for large emitters; \$225 million for innovation projects across sectors that support research, commercialization, and investment in new technologies that reduce emissions; \$240 million for industrial energy efficiency projects that help companies reduce emissions.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the government talks about how their good friend Justin Trudeau approved the Trans Mountain pipeline because of the carbon tax and given that approval appears to be not worth the paper it’s printed on and given that this government has had to resort to wine boycotts, to threats of inflicting financial pain on B.C. residents, and even offering to pay for the pipeline in an attempt to get the pipeline through, this is ultimate proof that the social licence sale job on Albertans is just as much a sham as the rest of the promises this government has made on the carbon tax. So, please, will you quit inflicting pain on Albertans and scrap the tax?

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not sure what the question was there, but I’ll continue: \$63 million in grants for bioenergy projects, including biodiesel and ethanol; \$400 million in loan guarantees to support investment in efficiency in renewable energy measures. When we talk about small business, we’ve reduced the taxes for small business. That’s created 90,000 new jobs in the last year. Our opposition continues to want to rail against the federal government, to rail against the plan, but we know the plan is working. We are caring for our seniors. We are taking climate leadership seriously.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Federal Response to Pipeline Opposition

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, a recent poll commissioned by CBC indicates that pipelines are top of mind for Albertans. Janet Brown, who conducted the poll for CBC, stated that many people in the province believe that “the future of the economy depends on the ability to build pipelines,” yet this government can’t bring themselves to support our leader in calling for the suspension of federal discretionary transfer payments to B.C. for as long as they oppose the Kinder Morgan pipeline. To the Minister of Energy: why do you not support cutting off these discretionary transfer payments?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're working hard since day one to get the approval for pipelines, which we did back in November 2016 because of our climate leadership plan. We're fighting every day to get our natural resources to tidewater because we know that's the number one competitive advantage that gives our industry what they need. At the end of the day, there's only one outcome for this province, and that's to get Trans Mountain built.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we wouldn't be in this mess if the government had stood up for Northern Gateway when they had a chance and the federal government hadn't killed Energy East by meddling with the NEB and given that the only actions this government has taken to date were to adopt suggestions put forward by our leader months ago, suggestions the government initially dismissed out of hand, to the minister: instead of following months behind, why don't you catch up with our leader in calling for the federal government to suspend discretionary transfer payments to B.C. until they stop their objections to the pipeline? Are you not tired of catching up?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it was our climate leadership plan that got the two pipeline approvals, and it's our climate leadership plan that's going to get it. You know, the Conservative leader did not do a thing when he was in Ottawa to get any pipeline to any tidewater. Let's be clear about that. We are working very hard on this side of the House to get that pipeline built, and – make no mistake – it is going to be built.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government has presided over two pipeline cancellations and given that one participant from the CBC survey stated, "It's all been talk and there hasn't been any action," and given that Premier Horgan has openly stated that he doesn't believe Alberta will actually turn off the taps and has stated that the Alberta Premier told him that she wouldn't use the legislation, again to the Energy minister. B.C. doesn't believe you'll take action. Albertans don't believe you'll take action. You haven't done anything yet. What proof can you offer Albertans today that you will ever take action?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member opposite is used to governments making promises and not following through on them or governments claiming grandiose plans and spending many years in Ottawa failing to get a product to tidewater, but on this side of the House we set our path, we set our mind very clearly on this outcome. That's why we brought forward a climate leadership plan that resulted in two approvals. That's why we won't back down. That's why we brought forward Bill 12, why we want to ensure that we have every tool absolutely necessary. Mark my words: that pipeline will get built, and we invite you to the party when it does.

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

Flood Recovery and Mitigation

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Rosedeer Hotel and Last Chance Saloon in Wayne, Alberta has been a fixture in the Rosebud valley since 1913 and has survived numerous high-water events over the last century. The flooding occurring in the last few weeks was a close call, and other than some damage to the grounds behind this historic business, they are confident that they will be ready to return to business after a bit of hard work. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what programs, if any, are being made available to businesses and landowners impacted by recent overland flooding?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Obviously, we all know that there are a lot of people dealing with flooding across the province right now, and particularly up north there are some ice jams that are happening. We have people on the ground in a lot of communities across the province. Alberta Emergency Management has field operations people out there, and Environment and Parks has folks out there. We do have some programs through us in Municipal Affairs, which are the disaster relief programs, which come after. They take assessments on what has happened and what goes forward. We're looking forward to continuing to work with municipalities and understanding what they might need going forward.

Mr. Strankman: Again, Mr. Speaker, given that my colleague from Grande Prairie has asked this question during budget estimates and given that despite updating her answers previously and given that flood mapping should be a priority in light of our history, Minister, in estimates in 2016 the assistant deputy minister of Environment and Parks stated that there was no update to the 70 per cent completion rate of flood mapping but there were new studies of priority river systems being done. Now, given that we are in 2018, I think it's fair to ask: what is the current completed acreage?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. Yes, there is updated flood mapping going on through Environment and Parks. As technology is involved, it's getting more intense, and there are more and more extreme events going on across the province, so there are a lot more factors to take under consideration. We are doing that, and we'll continue making sure that we get it done right the first time.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, it's a given that flood mapping will be a living document and sometimes land and waterways change, and given that this is a complex and costly process involving both provincial and municipal governments, Minister, what steps has your department undertaken or has your department laid out objectives to further achieve a higher level than 70 per cent of Alberta's flood mapping being completed? I am sure that many affected Albertans would like to know.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you. To the particular question that the member has: I appreciate that. Whatever details he would like, we could get specifically from Environment and Parks, but I know that we have been working with folks on the ground across the province. As I said, we have been adapting as technology has changed, and we will continue to do that. We would be happy to get particulars for the member.

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

Postsecondary Education Concerns

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The demand to attend postsecondary has always been high in Calgary, but with the downturn and the price of oil, the need is greater to help diversify our economy. There is a strong criticism that for many years Calgary did not receive adequate funding for postsecondaries compared to regions like Edmonton. To the Minister of Advanced Education: what is being done to ensure that funding to postsecondaries is fair and equitable?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for his question. We know that the recession was a difficult period for Calgarians and that many sought to upgrade their skills during that time. That's why our government has been proud to increase funding for our universities and colleges every year that we've been in government. These increases are ensuring that postsecondary education remains accessible and affordable, and without this funding, students would have been left out in the cold with crumbling classrooms and sky-high tuition. If the Conservatives ever get the chance, they'll cut postsecondary funding sharply just to give tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires and make postsecondary education out of reach for many Alberta families.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you. Given that past Conservative governments generally provided roller-coaster funding that was disruptive to student life and that semesters do not resolve around a fiscal calendar like governments do, what are you doing to provide stable, predictable funding?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the member for that question. We've heard from students that being able to plan ahead for costs is just as important as the tuition freeze has been. As I stated previously, we've been proud to increase funding every year. Our increases have meant a 2 per cent increase to the operating grant of every university and college, keeping pace with cost growth and protecting equality. In Budget 2018 we were also proud to provide backfill funding to compensate for the tuition freeze on top of the 2 per cent increases to the operating grants. This has meant an additional \$100 million in operating funding just in Calgary alone. This funding has been clear and consistent, making it easier for both our institutions and . . .

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

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we hear concerns related to the equity of funding for certain universities and given that there are concerns about postsecondary universities' performance measures, to the same minister: what is being done to ensure that postsecondaries perform properly with our valued tax dollars?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member for that very insightful question. We've seen the impact of not funding schools properly, and students and institutions are still

suffering from the cuts of the past. Our government has been clear that we expect that the funding that we provide is being best used to the benefit of students and in keeping their education affordable. I've been meeting with students, staff, and the postsecondary boards regularly, and we will continue working with everyone in the postsecondary sector to ensure that this is exactly what happens. We know that stable and predictable funding is so important to our postsecondary institutions and our students, and that's exactly what . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

University of Alberta Honorary Degree Awards

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that the Senate of the University of Alberta is independent in its decisions to grant honorary degrees, but I would like to know if the government would join with the Official Opposition and a growing number of Albertans in expressing concern about the honour being granted to Dr. David Suzuki, who says that human beings are an invasive species, that immigration is disgusting and crazy and should be stopped, who says that the oil sands are the moral equivalent of slavery, who says that economics is the product of brain damage, and who says that Alberta's major employer should be shut down immediately. Does the government share my concern about the honorary doctorate being granted to such an individual?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I share concerns about some of the statements that Dr. Suzuki has made in the past. However, I'm also very deeply concerned about freedom of speech on campuses, something that the members opposite have expressed as a priority in their upcoming policy platform. I'd ask the member opposite to explain to the House why freedom of speech should be extended only to anti-abortion activist groups and the likes of Jordan Peterson and not to David Suzuki. [interjections]

2:40

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech and David Suzuki don't normally fit into the same sentence because he usually charges \$50,000 for a speech. That's anything but free. And the same David Suzuki, who the minister is now defending, has called for his political opponents to be imprisoned. He said that former Prime Minister Harper should be thrown in jail because he didn't agree with Dr. Suzuki on shutting down Canada's energy industry. Again I'll ask the government: do they agree with the decision of the University of Alberta Senate in this respect? Dr. Suzuki is free to say anything he wants anywhere he wants. It's not about speech. It's about giving him the honorary degree.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is in an uncomfortable position because he wants it both ways. He wants to be a champion of free speech, yet he doesn't want somebody like David Suzuki to receive an honorary degree from the University of Alberta. Our position is quite consistent. We're champions of freedom of speech. We are also champions of academic integrity, and that's why, regardless of what our opinions of David Suzuki are, we're going to allow the university – we have no say in what the university is going to do,

and we're defending the right of the University of Alberta to continue . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this is not a complicated question. It has nothing to do with speech. Nobody is seeking to inhibit Dr. Suzuki's speech. What we're seeking to do is to question the wisdom . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kenney: What we're seeking to do – I'm sorry. They're certainly not circumscribed in their heckling, Mr. Speaker.

What we're seeking to do is to question the wisdom of granting a high honour to a man who says that immigration is disgusting and crazy and should be stopped, who wants his political opponents thrown in jail, who says that our oil sands are like slavery and economics is like brain damage. Why can't the minister just stand up and say: we completely disagree with David Suzuki, and he shouldn't get . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, I have said already that I wouldn't necessarily be the first to give Dr. Suzuki an honorary degree. The decision is not mine to make, though. The decision is the University of Alberta's to make, and it's very concerning to me that somebody who is applying for the job of Premier of Alberta is threatening, intimidating, and harassing an independent institution into reversing a decision that is well within its purview to make.

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order.

Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Red Deer Community Activities

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As usual, I stand to sing the praises of my great constituency of Red Deer-North. Today, however, I want to talk about what we can do to give back to the great people and the great communities we were elected to represent.

We know that Albertans have a strong sense of community and family. I am constantly astounded by how much people do for those who are suffering. My calendar is filled with walks and other events that work to raise money for those whose health is affected by diseases. As a former health care worker this community passion for health care strikes a very personal chord. Whether I am walking for Alzheimer's, juvenile diabetes, cancer, or multiple sclerosis, I am always in awe of the people walking beside me. Survivors, family members, and friends all share their time and their conviction that research will someday end or lessen the suffering. There are children, parents, and grandparents present to support their loved ones and to reinforce the importance of living every day for one purpose, an even better tomorrow for everyone.

But it does not stop there. Sponsors step up to the call of their community and support both the causes and the people participating. Volunteers step up who give of their time because of

their conviction that people working together can achieve anything. The encouragement and support from everyone involved is tangible. It is a feeling that everyone who participates can experience and relish. Whatever the cause, I urge all of you to stand together with your communities and help them fight the battle or heal the scars that these conditions have left.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be able to give back if even a little to the community of Red Deer, that elected me, and which is so very active in its fight for a better life for all.

Thank you.

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

Service Alberta and Status of Women Minister's Remarks

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher once said that "if they attack one personally, it means they have not a single political argument left." Usually when we hear baseless political attacks from the NDP anger machine, we can take those words and ignore the attacks for the nonsense they are.

Last week, however, we saw some comments on Twitter from the Minister of Service Alberta and Status of Women that undoubtedly crossed the line and that cannot be ignored. The minister made accusations that implied that the conservative movement in our province and in our country was somehow responsible for the rising tide of anti-Semitism. Mr. Speaker, this was a slander of millions of regular Canadians who have voted for Canadian conservative parties, parties which have been leaders in the world in supporting the Jewish people and in combatting the unacceptable hatred of anti-Semitism.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an issue to be used as a cheap political attack. It is an immensely serious issue that we should be working together to solve. The minister owes an apology to those she slandered, and frankly she owes an apology to the Jewish community for using this serious topic as a tool for a partisan attack against Canadian conservatives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition from a pharmacist regarding the new funding framework for pharmacists if I might read it out.

We, the undersigned . . . hereby petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to reinvest at least 50% of any savings anticipated from generic drug cost reductions resulting from the 5-year agreement recently negotiated between the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance and the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association effective April 1st, 2018, into frontline pharmacy services and programs to ensure the delivery of better healthcare for Albertans and the sustainability and job security of the thousands of Albertans employed in pharmacies and drugstores across our province.

Thank you.

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the appropriate time I intend to move the following motion pursuant to Standing Order 42.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to recognize April 30 each year as Journey to Freedom Day in commemoration of the more than 60,000 Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada in search of freedom and prosperity, following the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, and be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize the valuable contributions of Alberta's Vietnamese community to our province.

The Speaker: The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice pursuant to Standing Order 42 that at the appropriate time I will move the following motion.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government not to proceed with any further increases to the carbon tax until Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion project has completed construction and commenced commercial operations.

I have the appropriate copies for the pages.

2:50

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. Feehan, Minister of Indigenous Relations, pursuant to the Metis Settlements Act Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal annual report 2017.

The Speaker: I believe, hon. members, that there were three points of order, the first one being from the Government House Leader rebutting comments concerning, at the time, Grande Prairie-Smoky, I believe.

Mr. Mason: I'd like to withdraw that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I will also withdraw mine. There are some people in the gallery waiting for the next business, and I think we should proceed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I believe that there's a point of order by the Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Point of Order Anticipation Points of Order

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order is referring to a matter raised by the Government House Leader in question period during my question today. I will begin by referring to the *House of Commons Procedure* on the role of the Speaker during question period and then points of order and questions of privilege during question period.

The Speaker has implicit discretion and authority to rule out of order any question posed during Question Period if satisfied that it is in contravention of House rules of order, decorum and procedure.

It goes on from there, but I'll go to points of order and questions of privilege raised during question period.

Generally, points of order or questions of privilege are not entertained during Question Period. In his 1975 statement concerning the conduct of Question Period, Speaker Jerome indicated that any points of order or questions of privilege arising out of the proceedings of Question Period should be raised at the

end of Question Period. Despite this directive, there have been instances of points of order or questions of privilege being raised during Question Period, but they have been deferred, at the request of the Chair, until after Question Period. However, if a situation arises during Question Period that the Speaker believes to be sufficiently serious to require immediate consideration, for example unparliamentary language, then the matter is addressed at that time.

Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader in response to a question I posed – I believe he didn't cite a section, but if I may anticipate, he was referring to anticipation in section 23(e) of the Standing Orders, which says that a question may not be asked if it "anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day." Now, if the minister wasn't listening too closely, he may have actually had a point, but I was not referring specifically to any motion or bill on the Order Paper. My question was of a general nature. Surely, it involves a topic matter, but previous rulings by yourself and many, many other Speakers have generally allowed some latitude as long as we're not referring to specific bills or specific motions on the Order Paper.

I will very quickly refer you to the exact wording of what I said today, and you can judge for yourself if it includes specifically referring to a bill or a motion. I will go right to the end of it, to the question. "To focus our collective minds on the task, I'm proposing that we cut all MLA pay by 5 per cent until the budget is balanced. Can the Premier support this?"

Now, I am proposing things. I have proposed an alternative budget. I've proposed a number of ideas in my time in the Legislature here, and I am proposing this. I'm not referring to a specific motion, I'm not referring to a specific bill, so I would believe that any ruling on anticipation would not be proper if applied in this case.

It's also important to note that points of order are not to be dealt with during question period unless they are of a "sufficiently serious" nature. I don't believe that any unparliamentary language was used. I don't believe the question even created disorder. I think people were rather polite and restrained during it. So I don't believe that the matter should have been dealt with at that time. The Government House Leader was free to raise a point of order, but it would have been appropriately dealt with afterwards. But because it was effectively a point of order posed as an answer to a question, I did not have the ability to argue a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

This was effectively a backdoor point of order that should not have been ruled on at that time without proper debate as we're having now. So I would request that the Government House Leader's intervention be ruled out of order, that it was essentially a backdoor point of order that should not have been dealt with at that specific time, and that I have my question rotation returned to me for tomorrow's Routine orders.

Mr. Mason: Oh, Mr. Speaker, where to begin? Well, let's start with the first point, which is that the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks is arguing that the point of order was made at the wrong time in the Routine. Now, normally you stand up and register your point of order, and it's dealt with at the end of question period. But he put a question to the government that was clearly out of order because it was on the Order Paper. In my answer – and it was an answer, not a formal point of order – I simply stated that the question anticipated something already on the Order Paper and was out of order, and I sat down. I was prepared to stand up and respond to supplemental questions as well.

It is also wrong of the member to say that any time a point of order is made or a ruling of the chair that everybody has to have a

chance to stand up and debate the matter. That's not the case. You, Mr. Speaker, as the arbiter of the rules of this House, have every authority to make rulings without first asking for submissions, particularly when it's a matter of routine like whether questions are in or out of order. That's not normally something that you can deal with in the routine of dealing with it after question period. By then, of course, it's too late.

Now, there are a couple of other things, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is suggesting that because he used the words that he was proposing it that he somehow escapes 13(2). No, that's not quite the right one. I'm sorry.

Some Hon. Members: Standing Order 23(e).

Mr. Mason: Let's see. Standing Order 23(e), which I'll just repeat, Mr. Speaker:

A Member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion, that Member

(e) anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what he did. He referred to a matter that was on the Order Paper. The fact that he used the word "proposing" and didn't specifically name his bill is completely irrelevant. He is still in violation of that rule.

Now, a couple of other points, Mr. Speaker. First of all, it's a responsibility of the member to stand up at the time the actual offence or purported offence occurred. This hon. member went out of the House, came back, and made his point of order at that time, so he quite literally missed his opportunity to make his point of order.

Most substantial, Mr. Speaker – I think this is the greatest thing that the hon. member is offending the rules by today, among many – is that if someone has a problem with the ruling of the Speaker, they have two options. They can stand up under Standing Order 13(2) and ask the Speaker to "explain the reasons for any decision on the request of a Member." The only other recourse, Mr. Speaker, if one disagrees with the Speaker, is to move a motion of nonconfidence, and of course that triggers an immediate vote. If the vote is in the positive, the Speaker is removed from his office and from the chair. Those are the options that we have in this Assembly.

3:00

In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I think you acted quite correctly, in accordance with the rules, and I would respectfully request, on multiple grounds, that the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks's point of order be ruled out of order.

I would request unanimous consent to continue with Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: I'm still dealing with the point of order, I believe. Past practice has been that if we've done the Routine – so we're going to continue with the point of order, hon. member.

New information, hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I just want to add briefly. I was hoping perhaps that we'd have the Blues available to us. Unfortunately, this is the one piece of the Blues that is not quite available yet.

I just want to reiterate the hon. Government House Leader's point, that it's very, very clear, not just from the Standing Order of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta 23(e), that a member would be called to order by the Speaker if that member "anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper" – that's any matter already on the Order Paper, not just a bill – "or on notice for consideration on that day." Very clearly, this

matter is. When the member did ask about the 5 per cent, those words are right here in Motion 502, which is on today's Order Paper. No less an authority, of course, than *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, section 409(12): "Questions should not anticipate a debate scheduled for the day, but should be reserved for the debate."

I think that very clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order here, and I believe your ruling was correct. Thank you.

The Speaker: To the Member for Strathmore-Brooks, certainly that has been the practice and normally is the practice, that we would wait until the end. Now, it hasn't been that way, but generally I would say that the point that you're making is correct, that I would or any Speaker in past practice would wait until Oral Question Period is complete. However, in this situation, as several members have cited, under 23(e) it says, "A Member will be called to order," and I believe, as I think the Member for Calgary-Elbow indicated, it was related to a matter which is on the Order Paper today, Motion 502. At the time that's why I asked, hon. member, if you had another question in your supplemental that you may wish to address. But you chose not to opt that way, so I had a responsibility and a duty, in fact, as 23(e) suggests, to rule the question out of order. For closure, I ruled that it was a point of order, the comment made.

Motions under Standing Order 42

The Speaker: I believe we are at Standing Order 42. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Journey to Freedom Day

[Unanimous consent granted]

Mr. Kenney moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to recognize April 30 each year as Journey to Freedom Day in commemoration of the more than 60,000 Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada in search of freedom and prosperity, following the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. And be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize the valuable contributions of Alberta's Vietnamese community to our province.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members and all parties for their unanimous support for this motion, a motion that echoes a private member's bill which was adopted in the Senate and House of Commons of Canada and became the Journey to Freedom Day Act in 2015. I would like at the outset to acknowledge and thank Senator Thanh Hai Ngo for his leadership in this respect. He was the initial mover of the bill in the Senate which has become the Journey to Freedom Day Act. I'd like to thank Senator Ngo for having proposed to myself that the Alberta Legislature replicate this important historical recognition here in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Vietnamese war of the 1960s and '70s was a long, tragic, and bloody affair, which ultimately led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives both of combatants and of innocent women, men, and children. While we acknowledge the great suffering that occurred during the war, in adopting this motion, we also acknowledge what is often forgotten, which is the suffering that continued in the immediate aftermath of the war.

On this day in 1975 the southern Vietnamese republic fell to the communist north. Saigon fell. People will remember or will have seen archival images of Vietnamese in Saigon seeking desperately

to find any way out of the country. They had good reason to be afraid of the new communist regime that took total control of Vietnam at that point, Mr. Speaker, because it was a regime that had already been culpable of incalculable human rights violations. The people of South Vietnam had every reason to fear reprisals, repercussion, persecution, and violence as a result of their resistance to communist aggression. That's exactly what happened following the fall of Saigon on what is known as Black April Day in the Vietnamese community around the world, this day, April 30.

Mr. Speaker, in the days and years that followed, suspected enemies of the communist regime in Hanoi were rounded up. They were imprisoned. Some 65,000, it is estimated, were summarily executed. It is further estimated that some 1 million were put into communist re-education camps, particularly the senior members of the military of South Vietnam, the political leadership, intellectuals, the so-called bourgeoisie, small-business owners, and anyone who resisted the ideological agenda of the Hanoi government. A million people in re-education camps. Many of them never left those camps.

Others faced widespread political violence. There was a program of agricultural collectivization. We've seen that. Of course, history has seen similar programs of collectivization result in the violent persecution of small landowners throughout South Vietnam.

Further, Mr. Speaker, there was widespread religious persecution of several different faith communities, including many of the Buddhist community in South Vietnam as well as Protestants and Catholics and members of other faith communities who faced arrest and detention. Countless churches and temples were bulldozed and destroyed because these places of faith represented an imagined threat to the regime insofar as they did not succumb to the ideology of the government in Hanoi.

3:10

As a result of these and other acts of political repression, starting in late 1975 a wave of emigration began from Vietnam, including members of some ethnic – I should add, Mr. Speaker, that, of course, there was also persecution based on ethnic origin. We often refer to the Indochinese. Many of the ethnic Chinese living in Saigon and in South Vietnam were targeted because they were seen as the bourgeoisie, the ownership class. So an ideological obsession with class became focused on many of the Vietnamese of Chinese ethnic origin.

For all of these reasons, there began a huge wave of emigration. Of course, like in most communist regimes, borders were tightly controlled, and people could not freely leave of their own volition. Hard for us, I think, in our free society to imagine that, Mr. Speaker, to imagine being unable to get on a plane or a boat and just freely leave of your own volition. Exit from the country was tightly controlled, meaning that for people to leave that Indochinese peninsula required that in most instances they hire human smugglers or leave underground by darkness of night, you know, putting together their life savings to buy passage on often massively overcrowded vessels, large and small.

The momentum picked up, and by 1978, 1979 hundreds of thousands were leaving Vietnam. On the high seas in Southeast Asia they encountered terrible tragedy yet again – they'd been victims of violence in the war and then persecution following it and now on the high seas – as many of these vessels were massively overpopulated and sank and capsized in heavy seas. As I've said, it is estimated that some 250,000 people, Vietnamese refugees, lost their lives during the great emigration. Many also fell victim to pirates in Southeast Asia who threatened these refugees. Either they were to hand over everything they owned or had with them or they would be drowned in the sea. Mr. Speaker, those who survived found their way to beaches and shores from Malaysia to

Philippines, from Cambodia to Thailand and even as far away as Hong Kong.

Because of this humanitarian disaster the United Nations, particularly the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, worked with partner nations, including Canada, to begin to develop a resettlement program. At first, the boat people were placed into camps, and these were by no means ideal places. They were often very rough living, but at least it was dry land, and at least there was, in most instances, food and water and basic medical care although many more tragedies did occur in some of the informal camps where people were living illegally in countries in Southeast Asia. But the UN over time brought a framework of humanitarian care. UNICEF and the United Nations food program also provided important support.

Then began a large program of resettlement. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the government of then Prime Minister Trudeau was approached by the UN in 1978 about becoming a major recipient of the Indochinese boat people, and the then government refused to do so, sadly echoing the none-is-too-many policy of Canada's approach towards European Jewish refugees before and during the Second World War.

But then there was an election, a change of government. The Progressive Conservative government of the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark took office, in which served a truly great and recently deceased Canadian, the Hon. Ron Atkey, who was appointed minister of citizenship and immigration in the Clark government. Ron Atkey realized that this was a moral test for Canada as to whether or not we would respond to the pleas for help from the Indochinese boat people and did so in a spectacular way. The public servants of citizenship and immigration Canada of that era, some of whom I know, deserve great credit for the way in which they sprang into action to set up a resettlement program that was really unprecedented in Canadian history. This also marked the birth of the privately sponsored refugee program where local community groups, typically faith communities, churches for example, across Canada came together and started raising funds to sponsor Vietnamese refugee families. For every individual who was sponsored by a private community organization, Minister Atkey agreed to match them with a government-assisted refugee. Over the course of about 18 months in 1979 and 1980 Canada welcomed to our country as permanent residents the initial 60,000 Vietnamese boat people.

There are communities all through Alberta who participated in this program, and I know that many who join us in the gallery today were the beneficiaries of that remarkable generosity. Not just our great cities of Edmonton and Calgary, Mr. Speaker, but little towns gathered together and held potluck suppers and quilting bees and 50-50 draws to raise a few thousand dollars to welcome a Vietnamese family to their small towns, small towns that might have had one hundred per cent Caucasian populations, that were eager to do everything they could at that time to welcome these people, many of whom did not speak English, were completely unfamiliar with this new country and particularly, I imagine, its cold winters at the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, it was the beginning of a love affair where these 60,000 Vietnamese boat people, later joined by another 100,000 over the years that followed before the end of the UN program in 1984, demonstrated their deep gratitude and love for this country, for the new beginning that it offered. I always say that Alberta is the land of fresh starts and new beginnings, and it was exactly that for several thousand of the 60,000 Indochinese boat people of that period.

Let us, with the passage of this motion, express gratitude to those communities, those families and individuals in Alberta who

welcomed thousands of Vietnamese boat people and in so doing provided hope to the hopeless and comfort and security to those who had been so gravely afflicted by that political persecution. The Journey to Freedom Act, adopted by the federal Parliament and replicated in part through today's motion, is really about that whole story. It's about that journey of people who struggled through great adversity and persecution, who would not give up, many of whom lost members of their families and lost everything, lost all of their property, their homes, their farms, their businesses, and in many cases their loved ones, yet they kept fighting to survive. That is the journey to freedom. It represents Canada as this beacon of freedom.

As I remarked in my maiden speech in this place some weeks ago, over the doors of this Chamber are inscribed the three words of Alberta's motto, *Fortis et Liber*. Strong and free. Well, Mr. Speaker, for the Vietnamese boat people freedom is not an empty word. Freedom is a dream that we can never take for granted. The Vietnamese refugees have shown through their remarkable contribution to Canada that we can never take for granted our freedom or our democracy and that freedom is never free and that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

3:20

While Canada was generous to those boat people, they in turn have repaid that generosity over and over again. One of the most beautiful ways in which I saw that generosity expressed was in working with the community as minister of citizenship and immigration between 2008 and 2013 to open the doors of Canada to several hundred of these stranded boat people, who had for one reason or another never gotten into the UN program. They were in the Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, in small pockets. The UN shut down the program in 1984, and they were basically living in those Southeast Asian countries as illegal aliens, as unregistered, undocumented migrants. They didn't have access to citizenship or legal employment or any social support, and the Vietnamese community here did not forget about those left behind. They continued to raise their voices, asking Canada once again to open the doors to those left behind.

Unfortunately, the previous government when approached in 2005 refused to do so, but I was very honoured, when I heard about their plight in 2007 and '08, to create a special program at citizenship and immigration Canada. And we now have here in Alberta Vietnamese boat people from Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines. In fact, I visited some who were living underground in Thailand a few years ago. Mr. Speaker, the resettlement of those Southeast Asian Vietnamese refugees during my tenure did not cost Canadian taxpayers one cent. The community raised every dollar to welcome these people to Canada, paying it on. We thank the community for its sacrifice and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we do not forget – we do not forget – as the members of the community and I wear, and many of us do, this emblem called the heritage freedom flag. The design and the colours go all the way back deep into Vietnamese history, back hundreds of years. This was the flag of the South Vietnam republic. As minister for multiculturalism in Canada I was proud to formally recognize this as the flag of the Vietnamese-Canadian community because it symbolizes their values and their belief in freedom, democracy, and human rights.

Let me close, Mr. Speaker, in remembering, as I proudly wear this emblem, as we do, that those are rights which are not enjoyed and cannot be taken for granted by the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam today. Let me quote from the Vietnam country summary of the human rights situation in Vietnam published by Amnesty International.

Arbitrary restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly continued. A crackdown on dissent intensified, causing scores of activists to flee the country. Human rights defenders, peaceful political activists and religious followers were subjected to a range of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, prosecution on national security and other vaguely worded charges in unfair trials, and long-term imprisonment. Prominent activists faced restrictions on movement and were subject to surveillance, harassment and violent assaults. Prisoners of conscience were tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Suspicious deaths in police custody were reported, and the death penalty was retained.

Let me now quote from the Human Rights Watch country summary on Vietnam.

Vietnam's human rights record remains dire in all areas. The Communist Party maintains a monopoly on political power and allows no challenge to its leadership. Basic rights, including freedom of speech, opinion, press, association, and religion, are restricted. Rights activists and bloggers face harassment, intimidation, physical assault, and imprisonment. Farmers continue to lose land to development projects without... compensation, and workers are not allowed to form independent unions. The police use torture and beatings to extract confessions. The criminal justice system lacks independence. State-run drug rehabilitation centres exploit detainees as laborers making goods for local markets and export. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of bloggers and activists have called publicly for democracy and greater freedoms.

In adopting this Journey to Freedom Day motion today, in remembering those who lives were lost between 1975 and 1982, in thanking Albertans and Canadians for opening our doors of hospitality and protection, as we do all of those things, let us not forget the estimated 160 political prisoners in Vietnam like Father Nguyen Van Ly, the Catholic priest who's been in jail for seven years for the crime of preaching independently and not succumbing to the abusive authority of the state. For all of them, Mr. Speaker, we speak for them today in calling for their freedom and celebrating the freedom of those who have joined us in Canada.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we begin, if you would like to have some refreshments in the House while this discussion is going on, feel free to get that.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's really my pleasure to rise today and be able to speak to this motion because this is a motion that really speaks to my family and my story as well because, like many in the gallery today, both of my parents were refugees from Vietnam.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

My father's family sold everything that they owned so that their two oldest sons could board a boat to Malaysia. They went in a convoy like many of the other families. Very fortunately, their boat wasn't attacked by pirates, but the other boat in the convoy was. That's a story that is very common among those who made it to the refugee camps in Malaysia and elsewhere, who made it eventually here to Canada.

Madam Speaker, I remember my father telling me that he thought he would drown as the storms raged on during his trip in the boats. He was under the decks and the water was rising and they had to tell everybody, "Bail; you have to help bail" because this was the reality for the refugees leaving Vietnam. They lost many of their friends and family as they made the trips.

My mother's family sent their eldest daughter in the same manner to come to Canada as a refugee so that she could work hard and make enough money to bring the rest of the family over. Now, I remember that aunt telling me that she was in Saigon as the tanks rolled through the gates. She went and watched it. She told my mother, her little sister: "Stay at home. It's too dangerous. You can't go out." My father later told me that bullet holes, as the Americans were retreating, appeared above his door in his bedroom, and he could see them when he woke up in the morning.

Madam Speaker, this is the story of so many refugees. These are the stories of people in the gallery. I want to say that my story happens to be a success story. It's the one that I'm able to tell and I'm able to remember and speak on. I look up in the gallery and see so many who took the same path. I look up and see so many other success stories of successful Vietnamese Canadians, successful refugees, who add to the success of our province. They're people who came to enrich their lives. They contribute greatly to our culture and our economy. They're our friends and our neighbours. They're our business owners.

Some of my family's lifelong friends continue to be Vietnamese Canadians, who care deeply about our country and are so proud of our heritage. So I'm proud to say that our family made it here to Canada. I'm proud to say that Vietnamese refugees contribute greatly to this province and to this country, and I'm proud to see that we were welcomed here and welcomed into this great nation with such open arms. Madam Speaker, it's very clear that Vietnamese refugees came with hopes and dreams for a better life. They came with hopes and dreams that Canada could offer them everything that they couldn't have, the freedoms here that we have every single day of our lives.

It's really my pleasure to be able to speak and encourage every single member of this House to vote in favour of this motion today. It's something that I think is important for Vietnamese refugees around Canada and around Alberta especially to be able to see and recognize that they are success stories. They are the ones who made it. We have rights and freedoms here that are amazing opportunities for us to be able to live and succeed in.

Once again, I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favour of this. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very happy to be able to stand and support this motion. This was certainly an event that happened many years before I was born, but I've had the opportunity to hear stories of many of my constituents who fled Vietnam in 1975 and in the years after. These are truly incredible stories and demonstrate the strength, courage, and determination of people who were forced to leave their homes against their will. As the MLA for Calgary-East I see the positive impacts of Vietnamese Canadians and the impacts that they have in our community every day.

3:30

Before I moved to Calgary, I had never had pho, but now I rarely go a week without it. My favourite restaurant for lunch is Mekong, which is close to my house and my office. It's affordable, friendly, and always delicious, and in east Calgary you're never far from a bowl of hot pho. There are at least 10 Vietnamese restaurants on International Avenue alone. My go-to tailor is Vietnamese. Hong reliably fixes my zippers, hems my pants, and patches elbows on my husband's favourite shirts. When my daughter needs a dress for a wedding or a party, we go to Jeannie's Boutique, where she can get something pink and sparkly and where they always recommend

a fantastic pair of matching shoes. These are just a few businesses that I go to frequently in east Calgary, and there are many more businesses like this all over Alberta, run by families of hard-working people, many of whom came here as refugees after the fall of Saigon or who were children of people who did.

When International Avenue started commissioning murals to represent the area's diverse cultures, a Vietnamese mural was one of the first ones. It was painted to show a scene of a Vietnamese flower market and celebrates the Vietnamese community in Calgary. The avenue is truly a hub for the Vietnamese community in Calgary, and I would encourage all of you to come visit.

I'm fortunate to have spent time with the Calgary Vietnamese Women's Association, who promote volunteerism and active participation of women in the community. Recently they worked to bring an art installation by a Vietnamese artist that she was unable to display in Vietnam. The installation was entitled *Pink Rules*, and it reflected on the way that gender rules can be oppressive to everyone in a society. This organization also puts on successful community events, including holiday parties and their upcoming Mother's Day lunch, which they are partnering with the Korean Women's Association for.

This is a community that left their home country with nothing, who fled under unimaginable circumstances that are just unimaginable to many of us who were born here in Canada. Many left family members behind, not knowing what would become of them, and through these incredibly difficult circumstances they built businesses, put down roots, and became an invaluable part of our community here in Canada. This is a community that can count among its members MLAs, MPs, Senators, artists, actors, scientists, and businesspeople, and they should be incredibly proud of their achievements. One of the great strengths of Canada is that we have consistently accepted people fleeing violence and persecution abroad, people who come seeking safety and freedom, and we are a greater country because of it.

I am very happy to support this motion to recognize April 30 as Journey to Freedom Day and to thank the Vietnamese community sincerely for the incredible contributions that they've made to Alberta and continue to make to Alberta every day.

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

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my privilege to rise and speak in favour of this motion. I, too, have a very personal connection with this actually on two fronts.

I was just a kid at the time, but my uncle actually was one of the very first folks to sponsor a full Vietnamese family into his home. The older parents were there, and then they had a number of young children that came with them. He sponsored them and provided for them, gave them jobs, built a relationship that lasted and in which the children actually stayed in his home for about 10 years. He paid for their education, their university, got them established, set up, and today I know that one of them is an accountant doing very well. I would just say that the contribution that all of these Vietnamese people have made to Canada has been nothing but positive in my experience. I've seen them contribute in so many ways, in so many good ways. For me, it was an incredible lesson in what it means to be Canadian and what it means to care for other people, to look beyond our own personal, immediate concerns and to think about the desperate plight of others as well, and a great lesson for me also just growing up to see how they did that.

My second direct encounter was about 10 years ago. In one of the churches that I served here in central Alberta, they had a 30-year reunion. Prior to my time that church had actually sponsored three families, I believe it was. Almost all of them now live in Calgary.

It was such an important experience for them, the support and the friendship and the sponsorship, that 30 years later they wrote and asked if they could have a reunion back in that rural community church to meet those people, to share with them. We had a fantastic day. The Vietnamese folk that had come over as boat people were concerned and sharing that their children who had been born here and for whom it was, in a way, but a story – they wanted some of that history for them to be able to grasp that and understand that, so their reunion was important for them to meet the people that had sponsored them and provided for them and helped them get established. I just consider it a real privilege, the Vietnamese people that I know, and I'm very proud of the fact that Canadians have done what they have done to make this a reality.

I definitely stand in favour of the motion. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the motion?

Are you ready for the question?

[Motion carried]

The Deputy Speaker: On Standing Order 42 the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Carbon Levy Increase Postponement

Mr. Nixon:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government not to proceed with any further increases to the carbon tax until Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion project has completed construction and commenced commercial operations.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll be very brief. I move that simply – we already have once before, and it's been voted against by the government, but I move it now. As you know, in question period earlier today the Premier indicated yet again that the carbon tax will not be increasing if we can't get Kinder Morgan built. This gives the NDP an opportunity to prove to Albertans that that, in fact, is true. Yet again I will give them that opportunity to show that to this House.

[Unanimous consent denied]

Orders of the Day

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 203

Long Term Care Information Act

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

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I am very proud to stand and speak to second reading of my private member's Bill 203, the Long Term Care Information Act.

Madam Speaker, there are more than 170 institutions in Alberta that offer long-term care. These facilities exist in nearly 100 communities across our great province. They serve close to 15,000 Alberta seniors. As Alberta's population ages, we know that we can expect these numbers to grow as well. It's expected that the number of seniors in this province will grow by 20 per cent by the year 2020. Meanwhile, the prevalence of dementia has increased by 21 per cent since 2010. We will all live with a growing population that needs long-term care, and of course there is a good chance that each of us or a loved one will need long-term care at some point in our

lives. It is our responsibility as legislators in this Chamber and as Albertans to help those in need. This bill will take an important step toward helping seniors and their families find the best long-term care solutions for them.

Madam Speaker, for many years I worked as a health care professional in long-term care facilities. I know how much the families of those living in the facilities cared about their loved ones. I witnessed it every day. I know how much effort they put into finding the best place for their loved ones to live. I also know that the decision about which facilities would best meet the needs of their loved ones is an important one and can often be a difficult one, especially considering these families are already going through a very difficult and stressful transition. I know how much effort these families put into finding the best place for their loved ones to live.

I also know that there were many times that we would have people walk through the door of our facility looking for more information. Sometimes they would be looking for very basic information like: how many beds are there in the facility? What would it cost for their loved ones to live there? Does the facility have room for their loved one? What kinds of services did the facility offer? How many health care professionals were there on site? It was heartbreaking to see families already dealing with the stress of supporting a loved one through a difficult transition into care also have to deal with the stress of making a special trip to our facility to find out basic information that could have been provided to them much more easily.

3:40

All the information these families were looking for should have been available to them elsewhere, Madam Speaker, but it was not. It was not possible for people to easily find out even the most basic information about long-term care in Alberta. I think that's a shame. It's a shame that we were not able to provide that information to the people who in many cases have dedicated their entire lives to living and working in Alberta, building this province into what it is today for us.

When I started to think about this bill, I thought about all those people who came looking for information, and I started to do some of my own research and learned very interesting things about the kind of information out there about long-term care facilities in Alberta. I found that there were some facilities that had been closed for years but that were still listed as open online. I found that there was no online directory to provide all the basic information people needed to begin making their decisions.

I talked to my health care colleagues. I talked to the people in my community, friends, neighbours, and even my own family about what kind of information they wanted and needed to make up their minds about where their loved ones should live. Many of their experiences reflected what I had heard in the course of my own work as a health care professional.

We must keep in mind that while these facilities provide crucial medical care to residents based on needs determined by medical professionals, these facilities are not just hospitals and are not just there to provide medical care. These facilities are home to almost 15,000 Alberta seniors. Everyone deserves to feel comfortable and happy in their own home.

Just like those of us living in our own homes have chosen specifically where we want to live based on a wide variety of factors, so too do long-term care residents have a wide variety of factors influencing what makes them comfortable living in care. Some will feel happier and more comfortable in larger facilities that offer a wider variety of activities and services while some will feel happier and more comfortable in a smaller facility. For others, knowing whether there are specialized services like foot care or salon care available on-site will make all the difference for them.

To each their own. Some will feel happier paying additional fees for higher levels of services while others may not be in a position to afford additional services.

What I heard from my health care colleagues confirmed what I knew from my own experience and, really, what common sense tells us. Decisions about long-term care are made not just with medical care in mind but with a person's unique personality and needs in mind. We should make these decisions as easy as possible for Albertans.

With this information in hand I held consultations with a range of stakeholders. Madam Speaker, in particular I want to mention that I was able to talk with a great number of resident and family councils, and they were so grateful for the work that our government had already done to empower them as advocates for their loved ones and were incredibly supportive of this bill, considering the challenges they had very recently had to endure to get their loved ones into the facilities that they were now calling home. I'll be happy to discuss those consultations more in my closing statements and in Committee of the Whole.

I look forward to debating this bill with my colleagues. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise to speak about the Long Term Care Information Act and the long-term care system in Alberta. I am optimistic to watch this system evolve into one where each individual has the ability to make their own fully informed decision on their own terms, where the government believes that a person is smart enough and self-preserving enough to be able to make the decision that is right for themselves.

That is why I believe that the concept of this bill is quite beneficial and a great direction in which to move the health care system. I commend the hon. member from across the way for suggesting such a bill. It demonstrates knowledge on her part from her previous life working in these facilities, and it identifies something key that perhaps might be missing or, at the very least, could be enhanced. To that effect, although I think there is great benefit in being able to make these fully informed decisions, I was struck with curiosity as to how many people are actually getting by right now.

Madam Speaker, I found two such sites on Alberta government websites that provide some such information. The first one is a document entitled List of Publicly Funded Designated Supportive Living Accommodations and Long-term Care Facilities on the open.alberta.ca website. Increasing access to information is vital for a properly functioning government. Again, I appreciate the intent of this bill, but again I wonder about the current sites in existence. The second site that we came across is on the Alberta Health website, and it was a searchable page with information on supportive and long-term care accommodations in Alberta, which is even broader than the mandate of this bill. So, with that, I wonder why this government doesn't simply redefine some of these websites that it has, clarify them, add some more information to them, enhance these sites, perhaps even whittle it down to one.

In a province with numerous outstanding recommendations by the Auditor General, where users of the long-term care system sit on wait-lists and those in facility living see a number of abuses, from being overcharged to exceeding their allotment of care, I was confused to see that the side of the issues that is being tackled by this bill has, in essence, supposedly been addressed by Alberta Health itself. Every improvement that helps Alberta families to

determine what is right for their loved ones is so imperative. As such, I also have such a hard time understanding why, if this was such a gap in our current system, the Ministry of Health didn't simply go ahead and do these things. With a more than \$20 billion budget it is unlikely that they didn't have the capacity to get this done without this bill mandating it. Was Alberta Health not willing to create the registry without legislation demanding it? It makes me wonder.

I want to focus on the issues that the private member's bill could have addressed in the area of long-term care. One of my constituents told me with a heavy heart of the terrible way her husband was treated in one of these facilities. When she came to visit the man that she had spent the majority of her life with, he was in a state of disarray. He was soiled, he was uncomfortable, and when she went to ask the staff attendants why they hadn't cleaned him up, she was told that her husband had exceeded his allotment of care. To me, that is shameful, Madam Speaker, that some of these facilities would limit the amount of time that they have to address certain patients, recognizing that they are wards of these facilities and need to be treated in the most noble fashion we can. These are seniors. These are the people that built our province, built our country, and here we have someone who has exceeded his allotment of care, and therefore they were not going to clean him up, the feces and the urine that were in his bed, that he was covered in, that slipped through his adult diaper.

3:50

I can honestly say that I have experienced such things when I was picking up patients from certain places to transport them from a facility far outside of town to Edmonton or Calgary or even to Red Deer, in particular when I was working in central Alberta. I had to go across all sorts of communities to pick up patients, and there was one, I remember, where they were in a similar state, and we had to clean them. We just cleaned them on the way to the hospital, but I remember thinking to myself, "Hey, I shouldn't have had to do that," but I did, obviously. I say that I shouldn't have had to do that because it should have been done already. This patient should have been cleaned up. This was 20 years ago, yet I remember quite vividly in my head when I was told of this particular incident. It's not uncommon.

Last year the Auditor General released a report stating that there are many outstanding recommendations in the long-term care system that have yet to be addressed. Two in particular that have still not been considered since they were pointed out by the Auditor General in October of 2014 were:

- develop a system to periodically verify that facilities provide residents with an adequate number and level of staff, every day of their operation [and]
- develop a system to periodically verify that facilities deliver the right care every day by implementing individual resident care plans and meeting basic needs of residents.

Basic needs of residents. Why does the Auditor General still mark these as unimplemented?

Why did a private member's bill not go to improving the quality of life of seniors in continuing care? Yes, access to information is important, and, yes, everyone should have their options laid out in front of them. That's why I was so relieved to see that the information was readily available on an Alberta Health website. If there is any missing information that should be included, I have a hard time seeing why it was not simply added and updated. What push-back could a private member have run into in order to decide that this needed to be legislated and that it could not have been completed in any other way?

The concept of allowing someone to make their own informed decision is one that I believe is in the best interest of all Albertans. It's the epitome of the freedoms that we have in this nation, this country. If an individual needs more personalized assistance in choosing a long-term care facility, an individual may call 811 and be redirected to a continuing care placement co-ordinator, but if they want their decision to be their own, I'm happy that they already have the ability to look online for facilities that suit their needs.

However, in terms of access to information a new online registry created under this bill will be equally as accessible as the current websites are. For someone who has trouble finding the current publicly available resources online, this bill does not go to addressing that issue. How would they find the new one? I guess the fear is, Madam Speaker, that the system could become too convoluted, which might be typical of government, recognizing that we have two very similar sites currently, government websites that provide this information, and that through this private member's bill possibly we'll have three such sites. Or I would certainly accept it if the people who work behind the scenes, who actually have to do these jobs, decided to do some cleaning up and streamlining and enhancing of these current sites and made sure that they have a lot of this data available.

And if I might address the fact that if a person is looking for accommodation of their own, for a hotel – and I am actually looking for a hotel in the good member's constituency right now, in the community of Red Deer. When I go online, there are a dozen sites, and on each site I can look at the facility. I can see an address. There is a map attached to that. I can see images of the facility. I can see the amenities that they have. I can see the type of food that they serve. I can see everything that the site has to offer. You know, the one site offers business services and an in-house restaurant. They explain the hours of all these amenities that they have. They even show, in some of these cases, some of the areas around these hotels and other accommodations that might be beneficial to choosing that particular hotel.

You can't help but wonder why government sites can't provide a lot of that same information. When I think of this bill and of the good Member for Red Deer-North's intent, of what she's trying to accomplish, it makes me wonder why they don't have that already. [Mr. Yao's speaking time expired] That's it? Ten?

The Deputy Speaker: You're out of time, hon. member.

Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to stand and speak in support of this private member's bill, Bill 203, the long-term care transparency – it's actually the Long Term Care Information Act. I'm somewhat chagrined in making that mistake today since in discussing this in anticipation of today, we actually made that suggestion, that we change the name. I do want to express my appreciation to the Member for Red Deer-North for involving many of us with experience in health care as well as in social services in developing this bill. I think she's done a phenomenal job of creating something that is really going to be to the advantage of Albertans.

As we like to say and as our Premier likes to say, we're making life better for Albertans; in this case, Albertans that require long-term care. There are a lot of us, including probably me in the very near future. We need to make the information about long-term care accessible, transparent – I think that word applies there – and easy to access. I guess I'm being a bit redundant there. But we need to have a system that isn't out of date. I think the Member for Red Deer-North mentioned this in her opening speech, that much of the

information that is on the current government websites is out of date.

One of the strengths of this bill, in my opinion, is that it mandates that this information be updated at least every six months, hopefully more often, so that the information is current and people actually don't have to waste a lot of time at a very stressful period of their lives searching through a whole variety of things and maybe even, you know, affecting climate change by driving all over the province doing inspections on these sites.

I think the idea about having a one-stop shop for getting this information that can be relied on – and I think this is really key, that the information is reliable. The MLA for Red Deer-North did make this point in her comments, that the information needs to be verifiable – I guess that's the best way to put it – and it has to include information that is really useful to the families as well as perhaps to the individuals who are looking for long-term care about the costs, about what the sort of optional costs are, about the resident and family councils, how they work.

I think this was one of the things that was perhaps missed by the member opposite, that the Resident and Family Councils Act, which I'm really proud that this government brought forward last year, is designed to give residents and families the ability to be able to deal with issues such as were mentioned, about a person exceeding care. I think that's something that could be brought forward through the resident and family councils if they're functioning right. Those resident and family councils are going to be in public institutions; they're going to be in private institutions. I think this is something that's really important, that we need to have a common set of rules and information sharing involving not only Alberta Health Services or other governmentally related institutions but the many, the multitude of private institutions that provide this kind of service. You know, it is a pleasure to be part of this government, and that Resident and Family Councils Act was a signal achievement by this government. It was passed through Seniors and Housing. Sorry. That was passed through Health.

4:00

The Minister of Seniors and Housing also had an act – again, this was two years ago – called the Seniors' Home Adaptation and Repair Act. This act is very complementary to private member's Bill 203, in my opinion. For an individual or a family that's trying to deal with an individual who's thinking about long-term care, they need to have all the options available to them. The seniors' housing adaptation and repair program gives these families a lot of leeway in terms of deciding whether or not it's more appropriate to stay in the home that they may have had for decades. Or should they move into an intermediate, transitional type of housing, or is it more appropriate to go into a supportive living or long-term care facility?

By having this option through the seniors' home adaptation and repair program to make modifications to the home to make it more livable, to make it safer, I think the family members feel more comfortable that the individual or the individuals involved can be safely left at home and cared for there, and the community often benefits from that sort of thing. I think this is really a nice, complementary thing.

Going back to this particular private member's bill, it is critical that we give people in this situation all the tools they need to make these decisions. These are very difficult decisions. Probably everybody in this Chamber is aware of and maybe even in their personal lives has been affected by this sort of decision: when do we move grandma into long-term care? Or sometimes it's a child, actually, or a person with a developmental disability that needs this sort of thing. Having through Health Link, which is what is being

suggested in this bill, an accessible, reliable, and verifiable source of information is very key.

Another current bill that I want to bring up that's going to add to this is the bill that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has proposed, in which families can get energy upgrades in their homes. Those could be used to keep individuals in their own homes for longer periods of time. I think that's another piece of this thing that's going very well.

You know, in summary, I think that this private member's bill is vitally important to increasing the quality of life for a lot of Albertans, and I'm very pleased to be providing support for it.

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

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It really is an honour to rise today and speak to Bill 203, the Long Term Care Information Act. Our province was built on the backs of our seniors. Their hard work is the foundation of our great province, and we owe it to them to make any transition to long-term care as easy as possible.

Finding somewhere for an elderly or ailing relative to stay for long-term care can be really, really stressful. In the spring and summer of 2016 my own dad was very, very ill and in the hospital. He was not able to return home again. We weren't able to provide him with the kind of care that he needed at home. We were told by the social workers at the hospital that we would have to make a decision about what long-term care facility we would like to see him go to. We were given a pamphlet, and that was all the information that we got. It was really difficult to try and make a decision based on a booklet from the hospital.

For those reasons, I think the bill is a really, really great idea. I think it'll be very helpful during what can sometimes be a really stressful situation. Now, it's not always very stressful when somebody has to go into long-term care – you may have a lot of notice about it – but when that event happens, if it is something that you have to address under stressful circumstances, I can see having a navigator, a web navigator, like what's being proposed, as being very, very helpful in those circumstances.

I do have a few concerns about how the bill is written and about some of the information that's being included, and I'd like to make some suggestions about regulation that could include more information that would make it easier for decision-making during a stressful time. One of the things that I think could be really helpful to include is listing languages that staff are able to speak. For an elderly relative – I'll just use elderly as an example – going into care, if they don't speak English or they don't speak English fluently, it would make a huge difference to know that they're going to a long-term care facility where staff are on hand that speak the language that they understand. For any programs that are offered, what languages are those programs offered in? Again, for the same reasons, just for familiarity and being able to participate in any programming that's available.

Culturally or religiously appropriate meal choices: do they offer kosher or halal or vegetarian meals? This can mean a lot to somebody, especially when they're ill. There's a lot of stress in having to make food choices or dietary choices that aren't in alignment with what their beliefs are, and it can make a stressful situation even worse.

Do facilities have the space for cultural or religious ceremonies, pastoral care, and what faiths are able to be accommodated?

Something else that could be helpful is listing the average time from the application to a space being made available. I know that when my dad was in the hospital, we were told by the social worker to make our top three choices. Often what will happen is that the

first choice doesn't have any space available, so you have to go to your second choice. Understanding that gives a lot more context to the decision-making process, and I think it would be really very helpful in those circumstances to have that information.

Also, what community services are available close by? Are there recreation facilities? Is there a park close by so the family can get out and have a picnic with their relative? What churches are close by? That kind of information can really be helpful in the decision-making process.

I think a comprehensive assessment of the information that's going to be useful when people are making those decisions is imperative to the success of this kind of a site. I know from my own professional experience that in going live with any kind of information site, it is really imperative to understand exactly what the needs are. I think the member has done an excellent job of identifying a lot of the needs, but doing a more full evaluation I think would be really useful.

I believe this was alluded to earlier: advertising it, making sure that people understand that this sort of information is available and that it's easily accessible and that they can use it whenever they want to to help make a decision. I think that would go a long way to making the site a lot more successful.

Finally, I just want to acknowledge the member for her compassion and her knowledge. Her professional knowledge of this situation informed her choice to create this private member's bill. As private members we don't get a lot of opportunity to have much direct influence over legislation like this. I just want to let her know that I think she's done a really great job and that it's obvious she cares a great deal about the people that she worked with prior to becoming an MLA.

I'm happy to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to speak in support of this bill. You know, what I appreciate the most about being in this Assembly at the moment is that we all come from very different backgrounds, and we bring our backgrounds to our work in the Assembly. We bring the care and passion that we've had but also the experience and expertise. I think that this bill is just so perfect for my colleague from Red Deer-North because she has spent so much of her working life in this area. Her bill reflects not only her experience and expertise but her overwhelming compassion for seniors in long-term care.

4:10

The preamble of this bill says: "Whereas providing support to individuals who need long-term care is a priority for all Albertans." I really appreciate it when we talk about priority for all Albertans. The decision around long-term care doesn't involve only the seniors who may be going into long-term care, but it really also involves the family, the friends. So this bill is not only going to benefit seniors but also whole communities because a decision is, I think, all the time a family affair, and friends are involved.

The preamble continues: "Whereas providing information about options for long-term care in an easily understandable and accessible format is an essential component of supporting Albertans who need long-term care." You know, as MLAs I'm sure we all speak to our staff about the issues that are brought daily into our constituency offices. I know that in my own riding of Sherwood Park people phone my office all the time to try to get information about long-term care because they find the existing information confusing and not all in one place. This bill is also really going to help MLAs because our offices will have a place that is easily

accessible to all Albertans who have questions, and I really appreciate that. My office will be able to give out where the information is, and then they may be able to help the constituents with some of the other issues, knowing that they have accurate information on long-term care accessible and in one place.

The preamble continues: "Whereas enhancing transparency and accountability in the long-term care system will benefit all Albertans." Our government has been bringing in a number of bills around transparency and accountability. I see this as a continuing of the government's work to make sure that Albertans see what government is funding, always being transparent and accountable. I want to really thank first of all the MLA for Red Deer-North for understanding how important this was to the government, to make sure that the information is accurate.

One of the issues that I have dealt with a lot as a constituent is the fact that once you get into long-term care facilities, you never know what the cost of services will be. A couple of years ago I was helping an elderly gentleman whose wife was in a facility and who told me that he had to pay \$1,500 a month so that his wife would be able to have somebody bring her to the dining room and help her eat the food. I'm sure that when his wife went into this facility, he had no idea that this cost was going to be something that he was going to have to pay. So I really appreciate that this information will be accessible.

I also think that what the MLA has suggested about the operator's name and the description of an operator – is it private, public, or not-for-profit, is this just one facility, is it linked to other facilities, how many residents live there, and what are the kinds of services and all the details of services? – is something which is going to be very important.

Then I was thinking about, you know, as someone who comes from a francophone community, how one of the things that the francophone community often asks me is: which long-term care facilities can they go to where staff speak French? So I really appreciate that this may be something which will be part of the details in this registry.

Then I think of dietary constraints. Will the long-term care be able to meet the needs of somebody who has a kosher diet or halal, as was talked about previously? Or they may have a preference in what they might like to eat.

Then I thought about what is happening as we're seeing that we have many in our communities who've been in long-term same-sex relationships. How will that be accepted in a long-term care facility? I'm really hoping that those are the kinds of details which may be forthcoming in this online registry so that every single senior and their family members can see the information that they need to make the best decision for their loved one.

I'm actually facing this issue at the moment. I have a mother-in-law who's 92, and it's something that I'm going to be looking at in the near future. Because I know her so well, I know the kind of facility that I will want to put her in. I'm going to want to have a facility where there's a lot of card playing. But I also know that she loves to cook, so I'm going to look for a facility where the residents, if they're able, may have access to a kitchen so that she can continue cooking muffins and cookies because it's something that gives her a lot of joy. It's something that makes her feel that even though she's frail and has limited ability, it's something she can do to give back. I would hate for her to be in a facility where there is not any access to a kitchen so that she can continue while her health is still very good.

I think, again, these are the things which I'm hoping, that this registry will allow every single family member and friends to work with the senior to be able to make the decision. I think about how our government has really helped seniors. I mean, we've done a

number of programs to help seniors stay at home such as the SHARP program. We have the seniors' benefit. We're also increasing the number of long-term care beds that are available in the province. This bill will be part of the way that our government is helping seniors in our province make sure that as they age, they're in the right place for them, that helps them keep their dignity and their ability to think, that they can continue their lifestyle, that they can have their loved ones near by.

One of the things that I particularly like about the bill is that it's going to allow families who live far away to access information. Because as we know, in this day and age very few family members actually live next to where their seniors are. Like, they may be living in Ontario or they may be living on the other side of the world, but by having an online directory, it'll make it easy for all family members to participate and to be able to be part of the decision-making for their loved one.

I would like to close by hoping that every single member of this House will support this bill, that they will see this as a valuable tool for seniors and family members to make the right choice about the institution that they will be in, and they will know that this bill comes from someone who has long-term experience in long-term care. I just know that this bill is the kind of bill that would help families and seniors.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Sorry. Which?

The Deputy Speaker: Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: My apologies to the Member for Calgary-Greenway, but I eagerly await his words.

I want to thank the Member for Red Deer-North for bringing this bill forward. My former assistant Cole Kander, who is running against her, won't be too happy to hear that I'm supporting a bill from her, but I would chance to say that it's probably a bill that you two would probably agree on, and I want to commend the member for bringing this forward. I know she's got extensive experience in this field. We all come with different backgrounds to this place, and I think it's a valuable addition to the different voices we have on this topic.

Also, I want to thank the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park. It's a constituency name which is often mixed up by multiple speakers in the House with Strathmore-Sherwood Park. I may disagree with how they redrew the boundaries, but that would be one particularly large constituency. But I really appreciate her remarks in particular. She worked in Bassano for some time. We often chat about her time in Bassano. Bassano is the centre of a major seniors' care initiative that I'll speak to in a few minutes.

4:20

You know, this bill is like most private members' bills. They are required by the standing orders to be limited in their scope, so they're very rarely revolutionary. And I don't think this bill is revolutionary, but it is a small step in the right direction. It is going to provide valuable information to seniors and to the families of seniors seeking care for their elders. In particular I want to draw members' attention to section 2(1)(j) and (k). They'll provide the description of the accreditation status of the operator's facility under the Nursing Homes Act or the Hospitals Act as the case may be. Subsection (k): "results of any inspections conducted under section 12 of the Nursing Homes Act or any investigations

conducted under section 27 of the Hospitals Act.” That is very important information for folks to have.

Our seniors’ care varies pretty widely across Alberta, even in my own constituency for seniors’ care facilities run by the very same company. In Brooks we have two AgeCare facilities, Sunrise Gardens and Orchard Manor. You know, there are great folks working there, but I hear no end of complaints about a lot of the care there, the quality of the food, or leaving seniors in their filth without being taken care of, falling out of bed and not being taken care of in a timely manner. I hear these complaints all the time. I visit both of these seniors’ care facilities. I try to do it at least twice a year, so four visits, two visits to each of the two facilities at Christmas and generally once in the summer, and I meet with my seniors.

You know, it’s difficult to tell what is a true, substantiated complaint and what is just someone saying what I would probably do if I was a senior. But I hear their complaints, and I hear it at these two AgeCare facilities, the two in Brooks. I hear a lot of complaints from constituents about the families, often the adult children of seniors in that care, and from the seniors themselves. In Strathmore the AgeCare facility there is Sagewood. It’s the exact same company, and I’ve rarely ever heard a complaint about it. It’s fantastic. I’m sure if I look hard enough, I will find complaints. Much of the business of our constituency assistants is listening to issues people have, and they certainly reach out to me.

You know, we’ve also got Meadowlark in Strathmore, which is more of an assisted living. You have your own home, and it’s more independent. There are a lot of different models here, and it’s important that we provide the information necessary to seniors and to the children of seniors looking after their parents so that they can make the most informed, best decision possible.

I referred to the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park earlier and her time in Bassano, and I wanted to just take a moment to reflect on what’s going on with seniors’ care in Bassano for what’s approaching a decade but at least a solid five years of fundraising and organization. Folks at the Newell Foundation have been trying to raise money and put in place the infrastructure necessary to upgrade the Bassano hospital, to integrate it with an assisted living seniors’ project. It’s a not-for-profit. It would offer a wide range of different assisted living standards depending on how independent or not some seniors are.

The project was approved, and I commend the government for providing the funding for it, but there was a refusal on the government’s part to integrate it with the Bassano hospital, and it is a critical part of this project that it be integrated with the hospital. They could share services like meals and laundry. They would have ready access to care on the site, and it was a potentially really great and innovative not-for-profit model for seniors’ care in Alberta that may have provided an example for others to follow if it was successful. So I’d ask members opposite to reconsider the declined approval for integrating the Bassano seniors’ project with the Bassano hospital because that project simply is not going to move forward unless that integration is allowed to happen. It’s a nonideological issue. I can’t really see a left/right dichotomy here. It’s simply allowing a not-for-profit to be integrated with a hospital.

Nonetheless, this bill is still a positive step forward. It won’t directly address anything like the Bassano project, but it’s going to provide valuable information for Albertans and, as I said, seniors and their children to look for the best care possible. I do believe that a nongovernment centralized model that has for-profit and not-for-profit seniors’ care in Alberta is the best way to go, but if you’re going to have competition, for the market to function properly, you have to have information so that you can compare different products, compare different services. In some very small

communities there might not be a lot of options, but even in places the size of Strathmore, the size of Brooks, there’s at least more than one facility in most cases. So if people have this information, they can make a better, more informed decision in the marketplace of choices for seniors’ care.

I don’t need to add much more that members on both sides haven’t added already. Again I want to thank the Member for Red Deer-North for bringing this forward and encourage all members of the House to support this bill.

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

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s about time that you noticed me. Thank you. I appreciate it. You know, it’s an honour to rise to speak to Bill 203, introduced by the Member for Red Deer-North. Caring for Alberta’s aging population is a sacred trust of the government, and I think that we should be working in good faith to care for our seniors. Bill 203 addresses long-term care, which falls under the Health ministry. The critic in the Official Opposition, the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, already spoke on it, and I’m also pleased to rise and address this bill in my position as the Official Opposition’s critic for Seniors and Housing as Alberta’s continuing care system is a continuum that straddles the Health and Seniors ministries.

Madam Speaker, let’s focus on the concept of this bill, which in reality is an idea that could easily occur with a simple direction from the Minister of Health. In other words, there is no need to create legislation that creates the database proposed in this bill. It is especially important to note that the information is already online. This bill would compile it in one online registry. Clearly, we’re not talking about reinventing the wheel, which is great, but we are talking about a direction to collect and compile it. If the intention of Bill 203 is to create an easily accessible and searchable database, I think it makes sense and that everybody would agree on it.

When families are at the point of seeking long-term care options for their loved ones, it can be a very stressful process. They are already in care. Alberta Health Services needs to be seeking to place them in care outside a hospital setting, so I think it could be a stressful process. Speakers before me have already spoken at length about that and their personal experiences. Why is that important, Madam Speaker? Because seniors who have been admitted to hospitals and are going to need a higher level of care in the future do not need it in an acute-care setting. I don’t think it’s good for them personally, and it’s using acute-care resources that could be going to Albertans who need to be admitted to hospitals for acute medical needs. For families, it’s particularly hard to see their loved one, who may have recovered from the medical situation that sent them to hospital – they often do not fully recover until they’re receiving long-term holistic care that they can receive in a more homelike setting.

4:30

Creating a one-site portal that provides this information I think is a worthy exercise, but it does sound like something the minister can do without the legislation. I think we know that the answer to that is yes, so I don’t know why Bill 203 is coming before this House. It is because, in my humble opinion, this is just not a priority for government, it seems like, taking care of long-term care for seniors.

How many department resources would it take? Perhaps the Member for Red Deer-North would be able to answer that question. It doesn’t seem like it would involve that much work if we’re going to address the issue with long-term care. As the seniors critic for the UCP I would welcome an opportunity to talk about this

government's admitted plan to move to an expensive public system. How expensive is the new strategy? We have been looking at fully public projects that are coming in at 10 times the cost of previous private-public partnerships just because the government wants to move ahead with their own ideology, not serve and respect the taxpayers' dollars. Madam Speaker, that is an incredible difference, 10 times. We can't just ignore that.

This NDP government's decision to abandon a cost-effective and efficient system for building seniors' facilities means that far fewer long-term care units will be built. With the amount of money that's gone into the two announcements, we could have built 10 times more facilities, and we still have to get those answers from the government, their rationale on why those facilities are costing 10 times more than the previous model, just for the sake of NDP ideology, in which only the government should build and operate and maintain infrastructure and provide services. The money will not stretch as far as it has in the past. Madam Speaker, the seniors need us to do that for them and their families, provide them, you know, with care and to respect the taxpayers' dollars.

Alberta's population of seniors is set to increase by 70 per cent in the next 13 years. If we really need to support seniors, Madam Speaker, and their families, maybe the government should also be thinking about going back to the partnership program and giving the explanation of why these new announcements are costing 10 times. A bill like this one deflects from that priority because, as I've said many times, the government just wants to move ahead with their own ideology, and that's basically what it is. But then it's easier to accomplish, and they deflect from the more urgent needs of long-term care.

Madam Speaker, once again we're seeing that this NDP government focuses on the smaller pieces while hoping that Albertans do not notice what they are doing. I mean, we were just looking at the video yesterday or maybe today on social media when the now Premier was speaking against Energy East, and now the whole government side thinks, like, that they're the biggest champion of pipelines. I mean, the hypocrisy is amazing here, right? If this government wants to ask Albertans their priorities with long-term care, they're likely to find them saying: please provide spaces to ensure that my parents have the care when they need it. They would just presume that the government was doing it in the most practical way possible, but the two announcements that we had from this government show otherwise. On one hand, we had a public investment that doubled the number of seniors' spaces, and now the NDP government is reducing those spaces to almost 10 times less. From a pragmatic point of view, it doesn't make any sense.

To wrap up, Madam Speaker, I don't think that Bill 203 is a piece of legislation that needs to come before this House. The Minister of Health can make that change without introducing this bill. The initiative is fine and can prove of value to Albertans acting as advocates for loved ones who need to find placement. But it's deflecting from a very real issue that the NDP is hoping will go under the radar, and that is, like, moving everything ahead in this province with the NDP ideology and the world view. The members on that side of the House think that that's gone under the radar, but, no, it hasn't. Albertans are seeing through it. I mean, CBC had the latest poll a couple of days ago.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak about Bill 203, the long-term care

transparency act. I want to thank the MLA for Red Deer-North for bringing this forward in this Legislature.

As a fellow former health care aide it's something that is really close to my heart. I had the privilege of working at Good Samaritan in long-term care for three years. It's challenging work. I was talking to some people in our community the other day about, you know, what it means to be called to certain careers and certain work. Growing up in an area that had a lot of seniors, especially senior women, pursuing a health care job and working trying to give back to those people in a way that was meaningful for me was something that I really wanted to do. It's been a challenge to see wages for that come up over the last 10 years. I'm 35 now, but when I was working, it was from the time I was 19 to 22. I know that wages have come up over the years. At the time, after three years of work, I was making, I think, roughly \$12.50 an hour.

As I've shared before, it's tough work. It's back-breaking work. Unfortunately, there are a lot of WCB claims that come out of that line of work because you are working with a lot of people that need a high level of care, and a lot of that is with people that have lost their mobility over time. Part of that time was working with patients with physical frailty, and then the other part of that time was with patients that had dementia issues, you know, no less challenging. That work encompassed a great number of things: medication, meal assistance, bathing, toileting, getting ready in the morning, and getting ready for bed at night. We had other, of course, complements of staff that helped us do our job: the people that cooked in the kitchen, the people that served, our housekeeping crews, nurses, physio, recreation therapists. It's a lot of people that come together to give care for people that need it in our assisted living facilities, our lodges, our long-term care facilities.

It was actually really disheartening when we heard people from the Conservative Party here say that that wasn't a real job, that looked across the way and said that none of the people over here – you know, health care aides, nurses, social workers, teachers – had ever had a real job. I can say for certain that it certainly felt like I had a real job at the time when I was doing that heavy labour.

4:40

It's really important to know what these different facilities have to offer. I just went through the experience of finding my mother housing that is assisted living. She has mental health issues that, unfortunately, because of their nature have turned with age into a lot of physical mobility issues, you know, not knowing how to take her medication on time for many years. The home care that we added money to in our budget was incredibly useful. That was something that really created a big change in my mother's life: light housekeeping, helping her get into the shower, things that were very difficult for me and my siblings to come in from a dispersed area and come together to help her with. It's really good to invest in those things at home.

There's been a huge neglect of housing that hasn't been built in this province for years, a huge neglect of maintenance. I know from working at Good Samaritan that we had to be very careful when we would run water for baths because they were old pipes, so you didn't always get hot water. That facility doesn't even exist now. It's been torn down because it was not maintained over the life of the facility. In Lamont just recently we saw the building of a new lodge. Same thing: we needed an entire new lodge because the facility previous to it had had no substantial investment for decades. When you have to build from the ground up, putting that level of capital into it is huge. That's why it can be, you know, a good measure in the meantime to put a lot of money into home care so that people, while they're at home, can actually have a better quality of life.

You know, when the opposition calls for billions of dollars to be cut out of our budget and is asking us to balance the budget on the backs of these people, it's just incredulous. You can't say that we need to balance the budget but then, of course, ask for facilities to be built in these constituencies, facilities like Willow Square up in Wood Buffalo. It's going to be 144 spaces for people that need housing. You know what? I can't wait to see the information about all of these facilities up online so that families can actually see what is available. When someone doesn't even know if something is in their community or if they're going to have to send their family hours away to find appropriate housing, that's a really stressful time.

You know, just from my own experience, my mom didn't want to move into assisted living. It meant that she was going to lose a substantial amount of autonomy, being able to cook for herself when she could, picking up her own groceries, doing her own laundry, trying to do those things that gave her a feeling of empowerment and confidence. It was really hard to try and show her that there were really great things that could actually give her a greater quality of life in assisted living. She actually fell into this really awkward phase in her life. Because she was 63, she couldn't move somewhere that was for 65 or older. It was only because she has very complex mental health needs that she was able to qualify to go to Sprucewood Manor, and it was very difficult to get that information. It was very difficult on a family that has been doing our best to take care of her for more than 20 years. Just to find a place that could allow her to live on one level and not have to be isolated in her apartment half the time because her legs were too sore and her knees were too sore to be able to go up and down stairs – she was in a basement apartment at the time.

You know, it's small things like this that actually have massive, huge impacts, small policy changes that can actually have ripple effects into helping families take that piece of the burden off themselves. Now when I go to visit my mom, I don't have to spend hours cleaning her apartment and changing her bed and cleaning the rugs. I can actually go and focus on my time with her and spend time with her just talking about the activities that she's been doing, telling her about what's going on in my life. It's actually real quality time that doesn't have to have that extra level of stress.

You know, the cuts that this opposition wants would just have a massive, direct impact on building housing in this province and those front-line services. When I was working – it would have been between roughly the time of 2001 and 2004, so we would have been coming off about five to 10 years of massive, deep cuts. It's those things that are leading to some of those issues that we are trying to address: staffing levels, having buildings that are kept up, where do we have housing, and what's the quality of it? The fact that we can . . . [Mrs. Littlewood's speaking time expired]

Thank you very much.

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

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Along with the many other speakers here I rise to speak in support of Bill 203. It's been a long time coming, something like this, and I'm just so glad to have it here. A lot of us have parents who either are in or will soon be in long-term care facilities, and we know the challenges not just of finding an appropriate place where the support will be good and the care will be right for the person but finding it while we manage to keep our own lives afloat and we keep our jobs going.

I was a full-time teacher supporting my family, and my mother needed quite urgently to go from her assisted living placement, which was very suitable for her when she was younger, into something at a higher level of care. All of a sudden I was told, "Find

it now," but I didn't have the information. They were basically holding her in the hospital until we could find a place, and that was an extremely stressful situation. We found a place that I think was probably as good as we could get, but we didn't know many of the amenities that would be available and services that would be available. We had to figure those out as we went along. Luckily, the staff were very caring and were very amenable to talking with us and assuring us what they could do. It worked out fine, but to know all that ahead of time would have made the world of difference. The level of care that people need and the kind of care at different stages in their life varies so much that that information is wonderful.

My father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and all of a sudden I had to look at walking that tightrope that you do in wanting a facility where he would be able to have some independence and be able to do the things he enjoyed doing yet have the safety and security so that he wouldn't be off wandering through town and being lost, which did happen one time. We were just lucky it wasn't more often. Even a really good facility can occasionally let people slip through the cracks.

But you need the information. You need to know what is available, and you need to know what it costs. I've read horror stories of people going into a long-term care facility and then finding out that it's an extra couple of dollars a day to get walked to the dining room. I know about places like that, where the cost to have somebody oversee medication is another extra cost, where to have someone help a person put on the stockings, you know, for fluid retention is another cost, and so on and so on and so on. For a lot of people on a very fixed – very fixed – income, that makes it just about impossible. But what are they going to do? They do need the care.

4:50

As much as I really like the job that home care does, sometimes it is really hard to arrange to have consistent staff come in to do home care and to make sure that they're there at the right time. The right people at the right time on a regular basis can be difficult, and I think that's something we need to work on next. So when you've got this bill out of the way, we can work on getting the bugs out of that.

But for right now I think that this is a very good tool for seniors and for their families to be able to help make the transition into long-term care as smooth as possible. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 203, the Long Term Care Information Act. At first glance such a small bill should not cost a lot to carry out; in fact, it could probably be absorbed by our current in-year spending. I believe at this moment that the bill looks like it would have positive impacts, but we wait to hear back from some stakeholders. I've not had a whole lot of stakeholders rushing to call me, and I hear from other MLAs that they have not had a whole lot of feedback at this point yet with regard to Bill 203, but that might seem to indicate kind of a take-it-or-leave-it attitude in the sector about this bill.

One thing needs to be recognized: there already exists a list of long-term care facilities in Alberta. I believe that it can be improved, absolutely. It is unclear if the bill plans to use the same template as the existing list but with possibly more criteria. If so, what is the purpose of creating an entirely new registry as some of the information is readily available in a list format online at this point? The goal that this bill is trying to serve has already largely been completed, with this information already on the Alberta Health website. In short, it looks like Bill 203 may appear to be somewhat

redundant, but the web pages could be updated and, if needed, have some extra columns added for more information.

Alberta Health is capable of creating this website without legislation, I would suggest, and it is unlikely that within the massive Health budget there is no capacity to get this done without there being a bill mandating it. I'm sure that IT consultants, that are prevalent across government, would like another contract. Bill 203 has no clear plan for the functions of this website, whether it will be information only or a one-stop shop for registering with facilities, whether it will have any substantive differences between the existing websites, and what the purpose of creating a new one is over improving an existing one.

The UCP supports efforts to improve the long-term health care system and improve access to information. However, this bill does not represent a substantial solution to fundamental issues in the system. There could have been more useful initiatives in Bill 203 that would address some other issues, issues like wait times for tests and surgeries and placement in care. Instead, Bill 203 tinkers around the fringes but might show some promise. Issues like divorce by nursing home might be better able to be resolved with information like this out there. You know, no one wants mom in one home and dad in another home, possibly a hundred kilometres away, or grandpa or grandma, whichever the case may be. That's not a good situation, and it's not common sense.

Having information available to the person in need of this type of care is beneficial for the person to be able to make an informed decision about a facility rather than a facility being imposed by a continuing care placement co-ordinator. No one wants to be told where they will be forced to live. People like to be able to make the decision themselves along with their family. Even then senior citizens will balk and stammer at their children that, no, they will not go to a nursing home. They refuse to leave the home that they have lived in all these years and raised their family in, being surrounded by all their memories. It is a difficult stage in life for a lot, and it's important that families are able to work through it in a way that is going to create the least amount of anxiety and difficulty as they manoeuvre through that decision-making process.

Admission to a long-term care facility is based on need, and residents can begin the application process to long-term care by calling Health Link, a centralized government authority. One thing we can be sure about is that the population pyramid for Alberta shows that we are going to need a lot more continuing care and long-term care facilities in Alberta. As the baby boomers retire – and they are – long-term care is going to be a growth sector for some time to come, and all efforts to help the sector grow will be welcome.

Thank you for that, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much to the Member for Red Deer-North for bringing forward this legislation today that we know will make life better for Albertans, make life better for Albertans who are themselves looking for placement in long-term care but also for family members in times that are often confusing and stressful, thinking about aging loved ones and their needs changing, whether it is that they're aging indeed or whether it's that they have a new chronic condition. It's trying to make life a little bit easier, a little bit clearer, and giving folks the right information to support themselves in making the right decision around their care.

I think there is nothing more important than supporting folks during difficult times of transition. I do sincerely want to express my appreciation to the Member for Red Deer-North for bringing up this initiative. It came from her own lived experience, helping people to

navigate these systems, and then saying: you know, it would be so much easier if the government had a really clear place on the website where all this information was available and accessible. I appreciate the expertise that she brings from her lived experience.

I also have to say that I am not shocked but that I am disappointed that the Member for Calgary-Greenway continues to lobby for private health care, saying that we're making bad decisions around having public builds in communities like Fort McMurray, where I am so proud that we're building the Willow Square long-term care facility. This facility has been needed there for decades. I've visited the folks who live in the current long-term care space that we have in the hospital, on the top floor. The staff there do an amazing job, but I can tell you that it makes a big difference to have access to outdoor space in your home. It makes a very big difference to have outdoor space. For the Member for Calgary-Greenway to say that this important public build – we are honouring the community's wishes and the wishes of his own Health critic when he said to us: we need to build at Willow Square. This is something where I think that if I were a member of that caucus, hearing attacks on this important public build, I would feel really disrespected. So I have to say to the people of Fort McMurray: we respect you.

To the member from Fort McMurray, who's been advocating for this project in spite of his own caucus colleagues who keep pushing back, saying that they should be building more private care facilities and not moving forward with these important public builds: we stand with the people of Fort McMurray. We're going to move forward on this project. We know it's the right thing to do even when the members opposite keep ragging on us to move forward with shutting down these important public investments. Ensuring that people have a clear record of what options are available to them and where in the province is a value that this side of the House shares with our caucus. We are very grateful that the MLA for Red Deer-North brought this bill forward to enable ease of access to information to support Albertans during this difficult time of transition.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving us the opportunity to debate this in a thoughtful way and to be able to move on this important initiative. Thank you again to the Member for Red Deer-North and to everyone who's ever worked in long-term care. We know that this is difficult work. We know that it is work that is valued, and we are proud to be a government that values and respects this. We're going to continue to work in ways that support Alberta families.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member, but the time allotted for this part of business has now concluded.

5:00 Motions Other than Government Motions

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Members' Salaries

502. Mr. Fildebrandt moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services to reduce by 5 per cent the salaries payable to members of the Executive Council under section 1 of the Executive Council salaries order and the indemnity allowance and other allowances payable to Members of the Legislative Assembly under sections 1(a), 3(2), and 4 of the members' allowances order and to not approve any increases to these reduced salaries and allowances until such time as the Minister of Finance tables a balanced budget for that fiscal year in the Assembly.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my honour today to put forward Motion 502. Motion 502 calls for members of this House to ask the Standing Committee on Members' Services to reduce all MLA pay and indemnities by 5 per cent until the budget is balanced. We have been running deficits for more than a decade now, since 2008. In that time, our net financial assets have gone from healthy savings in the bank to a debt that is going to soon come to nearly a hundred billion dollars. Our net financial assets have declined by \$128 billion from the time that the former government went into deficit in 2008 until the current government proposes, theoretically, to balance the budget sometime in the next decade.

This motion here is to try and focus the mind. As legislators we all come at things from a different point of view in many cases. I'm sure members across have a pretty radically different idea of how we should balance the budget, but I do believe that most of them at least theoretically believe that the budget should be balanced at least once or twice every decade. And I will say that they didn't create the deficit – they inherited one – but they are responsible for it now. They are the government today, and it's time to move forward. Regardless of who the blame lies with, we have to do something about this. Continued deficits will put critical public services in jeopardy for future generations.

The purpose of this motion, cutting MLA pay by 5 per cent, is not designed to reduce MLA pay. It is designed to focus the mind, to get us focused on a particular task. It doesn't prescribe how they should balance the budget. I have my own idea, and I hope they have an idea. They have no idea. It doesn't prescribe how we should balance the budget – I think we would have different prescriptions about how to do it – but it is trying to get us to collectively take some ownership over the idea that our most fundamental role as legislators, not just as cabinet but as legislators, is to oversee public spending and finance responsibly.

Now, I've brought this forward in the spirit of nonpartisanship. I've not prescribed how we should balance the budget. It's not supposed to be a Conservative motion, a Liberal motion, a socialist motion. It is just trying to get us focused on the general task at hand. I'm not saying that MLAs are paid too much or too little, but I am saying that it is reasonable for us to have performance measures. Now, we do this in the public service already. In this government many of their own senior bureaucrats have pay at risk, which is essentially a kind of reverse bonus. You have your salary, that you're entitled to every year, but if they don't meet certain performance measures, then at least some of that salary is clawed back. A private member with no extra pay in this House currently receives a salary of \$127,296 a year. A 5 per cent rollback would bring that to \$120,931. The Premier has a salary of \$270,504. This would bring it down to \$256,978.

This would be a temporary rollback. I don't want to get into the business of how much an MLA should make. Should it be more? Should it be less? I believe that that is a decision that should be set by an independent body free of all of us, who obviously have an interest in that decision. It should be an independent body that makes the recommendation. That was attempted once, but then it became political again. It needs to be independent and arm's length from all parties. I don't believe it should be the Members' Services Committee setting what our pay is and everything else. It needs to be arm's length, but because it's not, I think it's reasonable for us to include pay at risk, performance measures for MLAs.

If we are seeing our net financial assets plummet by \$128 billion in just a little over a decade, that means we have to fix something. I don't want this to be simply tokenism, that we're just going to cut MLA pay and that's it and not do anything. I want this to be pay at risk, performance pay, designed to get us thinking about the critical task of balancing the budget.

Now, the NDP have put forward a plan. I don't mean to be too mean here – I would like their support – but their balanced budget plan has given no details about how they will get to a balanced budget by whatever date they're going by now. It might be 2024; I have a hard time keeping track. But if they are confident in their balanced budget plan, if they are confident that they will balance the budget by the date that they have set, then surely they should have no problem voting for a motion that would see MLA pay cut by 5 per cent temporarily. If they're confident in their balanced budget plan, they'll get that 5 per cent back relatively quickly.

Deficits cost regular people. They cost regular people by the need to cut government spending and social services as interest begins to crowd out real program spending. They hurt real people when we have to raise taxes on them to pay for the interest on the debt, let alone to pay back the principal of it. Deficits do hurt real people, so we need to take some ownership over that. To all parties, all members, regardless of what side you sit on, I believe that this is a reasonable proposition.

Now, the party whip notwithstanding, I do know that there are members on this side of the House, who I've spoken to privately in times past, who have supported this idea that MLAs should take a temporary pay cut until the budget is balanced. I know that among my former Wildrose colleagues, there were certainly a number who supported doing just that. I'm not sure what the party whip has ordered, but I do know that in their hearts some members do support that.

I shouldn't engage in speculation and conjecture, but I'll go ahead and do that anyway. I've been told that the House leaders of the three recognized parties in this House got together a long time ago and tried to just – they want this issue to go away: as few speakers as possible, that all the parties get together and just vote it down so it doesn't become an issue. I hope that that is not the case; I truly do. Please prove me wrong, that this is mere speculation and conjecture, that this is merely the grapevine around the Legislature or the living wall, that I think is costing us a fortune. I hope that this is not the case because I think this is an opportunity for members in all parties, like we did on the previous bill, from the Member for Red Deer-North, to set partisanship aside, to set ideology aside, and to try to do something for the greater good of Albertans, that we can show that we are in this together.

You know, people in the oil patch during the height of the downturn would have been grateful for a 5 per cent pay cut. So many of them just got a 100 per cent pay cut. Many of them had 30 per cent and 50 per cent pay cuts, and their salaries and wages in many cases have not recovered. So many Albertans would have been grateful for a 5 per cent pay cut after the unemployment and economic downturn that we have had.

We are going to be paying the bill for these deficits for decades to come. This is a chance for all of us to show that we are in it together, that this is not merely cutting MLA pay for the sake of it but that it is doing it with a measurable, targeted goal with a timeline. If members in all parties, with the various dates they're proposing to balance the budget by, are confident in their plans that they can follow through on it, then they should surely have the confidence to vote for this right now.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

5:10

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the motion?

Seeing none, the hon. member to close debate.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Well, speculation and conjecture are not always wrong. This is exactly what I was told would be the case, that,

unfortunately, too many people don't want this to be known. They don't want this to be an issue. I know that if I voted against cutting MLA pay by 5 per cent until the budget is balanced, I would have a hard time looking my constituents in the face.

I have been proud to vote largely as an independent long before I was an independent. I've defied the party whip many times. I'm very proud to be the MLA who has voted against the NDP more than any member of this House. It's a distinction I carry with pride in Strathmore-Brooks. But I am disappointed. I've never seen a private member's motion or a private member's bill with literally zero speakers other than the member proposing the motion.

Now, clearly, the House leaders must have been talking to each other. You know, we like to see parties working together across the aisle. We want to see bipartisanship, multipartisanship. There's a saying in Washington that when both parties agree on something, it means that both parties are screwing you.

I know there are members here who in their hearts support it, and I'm sure that some of the members not here very specifically support this. It is sad to see the whip of partisan politics stifling the ability of people to represent their constituents and their own conscience in the House. We know what happens in all parties, but it is sad seeing that it's outright collusion between the major parties in this House. I hope that their silence is just a sign that they agree with me and that we'll have unanimous consent, clearly, but I fear that that is simply not the case.

But I want to thank members for listening. I guess you get out to go to dinner early. Perhaps it's just that everybody is hungry, and that's why no one is standing to speak to this. I would ask, members, that if you're not willing to speak, you at least agree to a standing recorded vote and have your name recorded so that constituents, your constituents, know if you agree with this decision. Then you should be proud of this decision. You should be willing to stand by it when you ask them to re-elect you.

Madam Speaker, I'll close debate by thanking you and the members for their time. I hope that the silence is just a sign of the unanimous consent of the House to pass a motion calling on MLAs to take a 5 per cent temporary pay cut until the budget is balanced.

Thank you.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 502 lost]

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

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just noting that we have accomplished a great deal of work today and noting the time, I would like to ask for adjournment of the House until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:14 p.m.]

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