



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, October 31, 2018

Day 43

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (NDP), Speaker

Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (NDP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees

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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP),

Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition

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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)

Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (NDP)

Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)

Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)

Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP),

Alberta Party Opposition House Leader

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Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)

Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)

Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),

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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)

Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)

Dreeshen, Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)

Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)

Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)

Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (NDP)

Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)

Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP),

Deputy Government House Leader

Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (FCP)

Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)

Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (AP)

Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (NDP),

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Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (Ind)

Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)

Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Conklin (UCP)

Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)

Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)

Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)

Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (NDP)

Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)

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Deputy Government Whip

Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)

Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)

Party standings:

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Freedom Conservative: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the House 32 members of the television and radio arts program from NAIT, here in the city of Edmonton. They're accompanied by their instructor, Lamya Asiff. I'm sure they're going to learn lots of hot tips on how to cover politicians here this afternoon. If they could all please rise. Join me in giving them a warm traditional welcome.

The Speaker: I'm not sure if that's good news or bad news.
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to introduce to you and through you the students from a school in my riding of Edmonton-Mill Creek, A. Blair McPherson school. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Ms Holly Paranich and Mr. Benjamin Maklowich. If the students and teachers would stand, please, I'd ask them to receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups today?
Seeing and hearing none, the Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several introductions today. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature – please stand when I say your names – Kim Walker, who has worked in the oil and gas sector for 20 years and is a business marketing consultant. As an artist Kim was inspired to create the longest mural in Canada project to revitalize her community and start a new conversation on how public art can be designed. Laura Hack, a resident of Coventry Hills, studied education at the University of Alberta, then taught high school math, science in Regina, Edmonton, and Calgary, and now volunteers as a director with the NHCA and played an important role organizing this project. Lindsay Lantela, a born-and-raised Calgarian who is a homemaker and self-taught freelance artist in Coventry Hills, volunteers her time on the board of the NHCA and other nonprofit organizations in the Calgary area. Finally, Yana Soldatenko, a Kazakh citizen and recent graduate from the University of Calgary's urban studies program. Passionate about Calgary's communities and their development, she is currently working as a community engagement co-ordinator in the NHCA. All the guests were volunteers for the longest mural project in Canada and the subject of today's members' statements. I'd ask them all to rise now and please receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this

Assembly a constituent from Edmonton-Ellerslie, Misty Ring. Misty will graduate with distinction from the U of A's visual arts certificate program in 2019, where she earned three scholarships. Earlier this year she curated a show at the Art Gallery of Alberta for 13 emerging Edmonton and area artists. She also volunteered as a lead artist in the longest mural in Canada project, which, of course, my colleague from Calgary-Northern Hills will speak of more later today. I ask Misty to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A great pleasure to stand and introduce to you and through you to the House a long-standing member of the staff here in the Legislative Assembly Office and the library, Ms Ingrid Dandanell. No stranger to the building, not only did she work in the Legislature but 20 years as a librarian, serving the folks before my time. Retired in 2001, she has a keen interest in seniors' policy and is, I'm proud to say, a committed Liberal. She serves on the Senior Liberals' Commission in Alberta. Seated in the public gallery, I'll ask Ingrid to stand so we can give her the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a fantastic local artist, Mr. Mark Vazquez-Mackay. Mark received his BFA from the Alberta College of Art and Design and has been an instructor at ACAD since 2004. He is currently the artist in residence at Willow Park middle school. His work as a muralist, mentor, and volunteer has made him a great choice as the artist to design a mural in Northern Hills. His other works have been exhibited and collected across the continent. I'd like to invite Mark to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Children's Services and Status of Women.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you guests from the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, joining us today to bear witness to legislation I plan on introducing later this afternoon. Patti Brady is deputy executive director. Senior managers Lloyd Yellowbird and Keleigh Larson, manager Candace Cleveland, Arlysse – and I've not had to pronounce the last name before, so sorry if this is bad – Wuttunee in communications, Lynda Gladue, Crystal Arcand, Christie Pace, and Megan Morin all support the work of connecting families to their culture and traditional teachings. It's my honour to introduce these guests and join you in offering the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Bent Arrow's front-line staff empower young people, including children receiving intervention services, with traditional teachings and cultural connections. Yesterday I joined them in a smudge and a song and listened to how connections to culture make a tangible difference. They truly help indigenous children walk in two worlds. I'm so thankful for the work they do, and I ask that these individuals receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health and Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to do two introductions today. First is a group of members from CancerControl Alberta and Cancer Strategic Clinical Network here in Alberta. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, as I imagine my colleagues are aware, and breast cancer is the most common female cancer in Alberta. More women are surviving cancer than ever before because of innovative treatment options, increased prevention, and, of course, treatment efforts as well as diagnostics. Thank you to these guests for their tireless work to help patients, support survivors, and find a cure. I ask that all of my guests please rise and receive the warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ms Hoffman: And if I could, Mr. Speaker, I have a second. Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to introduce Rosella Mandau and her partner, Robin Allison, who are constituents from Edmonton-Glenora. I'm very proud of that. Rosella is a proud owner of one of my favourite shops along 124th Street, Studio Bloom. It's also added recently a café, Wildflower Cafe. I love their beautiful fresh flowers, their jewellery, their coffee, and their giftware. I ask that Rosella and Robin please rise and receive the warm welcome of our Assembly. To our MLAs who aren't from Edmonton, please feel free to stop by Studio Bloom and spend some money in Edmonton-Glenora.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Ann Marie LePan, chief executive officer for the Robin Hood Association in my constituency of Sherwood Park and board member of ACDS. Mme LePan has worked tirelessly to ensure that Robin Hood is able to continue to provide excellent programs and services and tend to strong community relationships with private and public partners alike. Thank you, Ann Marie, for your creativity and compassion and for your commitment to working collaboratively to find solutions. Ann Marie, I ask you to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you two exceptional leaders from the disability service community, Ms Andrea Hesse, CEO of Alberta Council of Disability Services, and Dr. Nilima Sonpal-Valias, director of strategic initiatives and stakeholder engagement. The Alberta Council of Disability Services is a network of community disability sector organizations and a critical partner in our work to make life better for Albertans with disabilities. I also want to take this moment to congratulate them on their 45th anniversary, and I look forward to the continued partnership and advocacy. I ask both my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Why, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and introduce two constituents of the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. I understand he had a very eventful morning this morning. They are a couple of Conservatives who have done an incredible job right there in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar. Chris Rooyakkers is a political science student and a volunteer.

Of course, seated with him is the former Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, a man of great esteem and respect and respect for the traditions of this House, an all-round great parliamentarian, Mr. David Dorward. I invite you to welcome them.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks the final day of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer continues to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths amongst Canadian women.

I rise today to remember my mother, Janice Goodridge, who we lost to breast cancer over eight years ago, at age 49. I remember the day I found out my mom was diagnosed with cancer. I remember it like it was yesterday. My life completely changed that day. My mom was my hero, my confidante, a small-business owner, an active community member, a feisty fashionista, and, ultimately, a strong fighter. Unfortunately, my mother was diagnosed with HER2-positive breast cancer, which is one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer.

Had we found her cancer earlier, she might very well be here today. Sadly, the screening that could have saved her life was not easily nor readily available to people in Alberta, including my mother. In fact, in order for her to get a mammogram nine years ago, she had to drive down highway 63 and come to Edmonton. It was too late for us to find a successful treatment plan although I'm very proud to say that she was part of a drug trial that is now the gold standard treatment for women with this form of breast cancer, and she continues to save the lives of Alberta women.

Please take action. Remind every woman you know to talk to their doctor and get themselves checked. Consider making a donation to help fund critical cancer research. But more than anything, I urge all Albertans to personally support their friends and family with cancer with their time and unconditional love. It goes a long way, and you don't know how long you're going to have them around.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

United Conservative Party Membership

Connolly: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising on something that just a few years ago I never thought I'd have to do. I'm speaking to condemn the rise of racism, hatred, and actual Nazis in Alberta Conservative politics. Anti-Semitism and white supremacy have no place in this province, but disturbingly it seems the Leader of the Opposition ignores the extremists in his party.

It's come to light recently that the Leader of the Opposition hired a man to run his leadership campaign's phone bank, a man that has spewed racist, anti-Semitic views, a man whose social media history reveals that he uses anti-Semitic language and accused human rights commissions as, quote, antiwhite institutions. He wrote online: the leftists tend to be fat white women or degenerates, which I always find funny. After all that, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition gave this man a leadership role on his campaign, letting him manage 15 people for months. At the same time he also managed an online store that sells white supremacist paraphernalia, sickening materials, including T-shirts with slogans about shooting black people.

The UCP could have taken action before to stand up to extremism, but repeatedly we've seen the UCP allowing the rebirth of extremism in Alberta politics. The Leader of the Opposition has approved controversial candidates who've shared homophobic, Islamophobic, and racist views online. One compared Muslims to bank robbers. One tried to fund a Nazi meme scheme on Instagram. One shared a video calling homosexuality intrinsically disordered. One said that Islam should be banned, and a candidate in Edmonton posed and smiled for the camera with the hate group Soldiers of Odin.

I don't think that the Leader of the Opposition is racist, but his failure to act and his complacency are sending the message that these beliefs are welcome in his party. When someone shows you who they are, you should believe them, and the UCP continues to show that when it comes to extremists, they've got lots of room to spare in their party.

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

Peace Area Riding for the Disabled Society

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Peace Area Riding for the Disabled Society, otherwise known as PARDS, is a magical place in Grande Prairie. It is here that children and adults forge bonds with horses which can lead to amazing breakthroughs, and it's here where this magic comes in. These breakthroughs take place when the clients are simply enjoying themselves. Let me give you an example. Jennifer Douglas, executive director of PARDS, says that they have clients with autism who have never spoken, yet they've had a number of clients who start to vocalize at the centre. Their first word is usually "horse."

PARDS assists more than 600 clients a year through custom-tailored therapy programs that involve riding, grooming, and handling. Thankfully, this has strong community support because it doesn't fall under any category that allows them to obtain government funding. PARDS operates a \$4 million centre, and operations are covered by donations, fundraising, and revenues earned through public boarding and riding services.

As I've outlined, the human-horse connection is the heart of PARDS. Also, its staff are equally important. Let me give you one more example. A father was concerned about his little girl because her mother had left and his work in the oil field kept him away for stretches of time. He enrolled her in PARDS, and on the first day one of PARDS' miniature ponies adopted her. Soon they were bonded, and the little girl started telling the story of her pony. Her pony, she told staff, was unlovable, and his dad chose not to be with him. Staff immediately understood that this story was the little girl's. They shared the story with her father, and they had suggestions to help her further. Three years later this little girl is thriving. You can see now why PARDS has trotted into so many hearts in my community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Women's History in Alberta

Ms Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Make an impact. Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards won through their persistence a great victory for women. On October 18, 1929, women were finally declared persons under Canadian law. On that very day Violet Pauline King was born in Calgary. Called to the Alberta bar on June 2, 1954, Ms King became the first black female lawyer to practise in Canada. More recently there is Beverley McLachlin, the 17th

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, the first woman to hold that position and the longest serving Chief Justice in Canada. The late Hon. Senator Dr. Thelma J. Chalifoux was the first indigenous woman appointed to the Canadian Senate. A tireless social activist, she led the way for indigenous women in politics. This month two more fantastic Alberta women were sworn into the Canadian Senate, the Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson and the Hon. Paula Simons.

Many other women impacted the history of our province: union workers like my friend the late Judy Shannon; Jan Fox, the former district director of the Edmonton parole office; Jan Reimer, the first female mayor of Edmonton; Lieutenant Governors Helen Hunley, Lois Hole, and currently Lois Mitchell; the current Chief Justice of Alberta, Catherine Anne Fraser.

1:50

Today Alberta has a gender-balanced cabinet, and we are led by our fearless female Premier, the second woman to achieve this pinnacle. We are enacting legislation which is always approached through a feminist, diverse lens. I am privileged to be the second woman to represent the constituents of Lethbridge-East. We must hear women's voices in this Legislature to have legislation . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Oral Question Period

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

Provincial Budget Revenue Forecasts

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In April 2018 the Finance minister said: we built pipeline revenues into our path to balance projections; we're confident all the pipelines will be built, so we're just going to keep going down this road. Now, fast-forward to yesterday in question period. The Premier says that, in fact, pipelines are "not factored into the assumptions that underline our budget." Who is telling the truth: the Premier or the Finance minister?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be clear. Our path to balance is intact. It does not rely solely on TMX. The Finance minister will make it clear that we're on track in the next quarterly update, and we've already reduced the deficit by \$3 billion. What is clear is that the member opposite has a plan, too, and it's to cut \$700 million in revenue by giving tax breaks to the super wealthy. That doesn't help Alberta reach its path to balance; standing up for ordinary folks does.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I see that the Deputy Premier continues to audition for opposition. I'm sure Albertans will give her her wish shortly, but here are the facts. In the budget that was presented to this House, it was clear that the Trans Mountain expansion, the budget numbers, had to be operational by 2021, so something has changed. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition continued to ask – this government could not answer, so I will now ask again – how you are replacing the lost revenue from Trans Mountain not being built in your budget.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, the Premier answered it yesterday, I answered it in my first answer, and I'll continue to answer it as we move forward. The path to balance doesn't solely rely on the completion of TMX. We have three pipelines. Two are already in

process, and the third is on track. Our Premier, in fact, is advocating today at this very time in British Columbia to make sure that we get this path to tidewater completed. It's not only good for Alberta, and it's not only good for B.C., but it's good for all Canadians. I am proud to have a Premier who's fighting for Alberta instead of spending all of his time thinking about what might happen in 2019.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I never said that the whole budget depends on Trans Mountain. I never said that at all. The Deputy Premier just acknowledged that their projections that they provided to this House when the budget was passed relied on Trans Mountain being done by 2021. What we have simply been asking, the Premier refused to answer. The question now is: what are they hiding? Why won't they answer it? What are you replacing those revenue projections with?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, nobody is hiding. We answered the question yesterday, we'll answer it today, and we'll probably be asked yet again tomorrow. Our path to balance is intact. The Finance minister will give that update to all Albertans with the next quarterly update. In fact, our deficit is \$3 billion reduced. That's good news. In terms of hiding, the Official Opposition is hiding the fact that their plan is for 4,000 teachers and 4,000 nurses to be cut. That would certainly move us backwards, not forward. I get why they're not being open and honest about that, but fortunately the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills was recently, when he said that if there's a UCP government, it's going to hurt.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Health Care Wait Times

Mr. Nixon: Well, let's try something else, Mr. Speaker, because the Deputy Premier continues to hide, obviously. In 2015 the NDP committed to implementing a wait time measurement and wait-list management policy to address long wait times in the health care system. We now know that underneath this minister's watch for almost four years wait times have increased underneath the NDP's watch. So maybe the minister could take some time today to explain her terrible performance on this file.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I have to say how refreshing it is to have a leader's question on health care. It's nice to know that they care about that for a change. All Albertans deserve timely access to high-quality public health care when they need it, and we're fighting to improve health care across this province. More than 280,000 surgeries were performed last year in Alberta across 55 surgical sites, and as our population continues to grow and age, so does the demand for these services. That's why we need to invest in the front lines instead of fighting for a \$700 million giveaway to the richest Albertans and making the front-line workers pay for it.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Underneath this minister's watch open-heart surgery wait times have increased by nearly 50 per cent, cataract surgery wait times have increased by nearly 30 per cent, hip replacement wait times have increased by another nearly 30 per cent, and knee replacement surgeries have increased by 23 per cent. That is under this minister's watch. The minister wants to continue to audition to be the Leader of the Opposition. We would appreciate it if she would stand up and be the Minister of Health and explain her failure on this file.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We're continuing to increase capacity, and while anyone waiting for surgery doesn't want to wait – we don't want them to wait either

– cutting resources from front lines would only make it worse. Demand is up. Supply is up, but so, too, is demand. That's why this year in Budget 2018 – I wish the members opposite would have voted for it; fortunately, we're in government, and we were able to pass it – we invested an additional \$40 million in wait time reductions for things like surgery: cataract surgeries, cancer surgeries, hip and knee, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. We believe that it's important to invest in the people of Alberta, not privatize and outsource to the United States.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the question is about outcomes, not about spending. In fact, the NDP have increased spending by 14 per cent on health care since they came to office, and their wait times have gone up while spending more. That is a fact. Under this minister wait times have gone up. Albertans are waiting in pain longer on wait-lists while this minister continues to get up and just do partisan attacks. She needs to explain what has gone wrong with her ministry and why she has not come through with her commitment to address wait times. Why are you failing on this file?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, there are a number of wait times that have reduced. But for anyone who's waiting, we don't want to see them wait a day longer than necessary. That's why we're continuing to increase capacity. While members opposite call for deep cuts, we're increasing in a sustainable way. They used to have 6 per cent increases; we've gone to 3 per cent. But we've increased those resources on the front lines, expanding access because we know how important it is, improving access for mental health, improving access to EMS, and investing in things like home care, all things that the members opposite would cut. I care about front-line workers, and I care about everyday Albertans. I wish you spent more time focused on those than on the richest 1 per cent and giving them a \$700 million tax break.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Federal Bill C-69

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier wants to talk about everyday Albertans. Well, let's talk about everyday Albertans. They are being punished because of our energy industry not being able to get our product to tidewater. Justin Trudeau brought forward Bill C-69 in the House of Commons, which will essentially kill all the pipelines built. While this side of the House continued to raise it with that side of the House, they sat on their hands and did nothing for 229 days while that bill passed in the House. Why?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. I'm so proud to be part of a government that has made more progress on pipelines than for 20 years when we had the Official Opposition then in Ottawa and also Conservatives here in Alberta, and they failed to hit tidewater by any stretch of means. Our Premier won't back down. That's why she's in British Columbia fighting for this pipeline. That's why she spends time in Alberta and right across this country, fighting for this pipeline, because it's in the national interest. Instead of the members opposite continuing to cheer that the pipeline fail, I wish they'd get onside and work to make sure that it succeeds because it's a project in the national interest, and it's certainly good for all . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm cheering for Albertans and this pipeline getting built and for this government to stop taking credit for something that has not been done. February 8 this bill was tabled in the House of Commons. March 19 it passed second reading in the House. March 29 the Leader of the Official Opposition sent a letter to the Premier; no response from the Premier. March 22 the committee held 14 meetings in Ottawa; no response from this government. The list goes on and on. All the while our energy critic was talking to Ottawa, they sat on their hands for 229 days. The question is simple: why?

Ms Hoffman: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have been fighting for Alberta every step of the way. Alberta is, of course, the constitutional owner and regulator over the natural resource development in our province, and that's why we need meaningful opportunities to engage on regulation and policies that are still to be developed in C-69. The Minister of Environment and Parks led a group of key stakeholders to Ottawa last week that met with a number of Senators who will be debating C-69. Our message is clear. It's not appropriate in its current form. We will continue to fight for Alberta each and every day.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, that is the point. They sent ministers after the bill had already passed in the House of Commons. Too little, too late. In fact, this minister said on May 16, 2018, in this Assembly, "How is it standing up for Alberta to hop on an airplane and jaunt off to Ottawa every time you get a chance?" How does that stand up for Albertans, she said. So, in other words, she was willing to prop up her close ally, Justin Trudeau, sit on her hands until the bill passed, and then, once the bill passed, finally go down to Ottawa and say that you have a concern with it. It's too little, too late, which is the history of this government. Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, why did it take you 229 days?

Ms Hoffman: If you want to talk about friends with Justin Trudeau, there seem to be no closer allies than the members opposite. What we have an opportunity to do is to move forward on an Alberta plan and an appropriate price on carbon, Mr. Speaker, that ensures that Alberta's interests are taken. Instead, the Leader of the Official Opposition has said: "You know what? We'll challenge it. Yeah, we probably won't be successful. Yeah, it'll probably mean that the feds have to implement their plan." That's not the Alberta way. We're here to fight for one another and to make sure that we get the right plan for the people of Alberta. I'm so proud that our Premier is doing that today and each and every day, and I wish the members opposite would get onboard and start cheering for Alberta.

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

2:00 Support for Postsecondary Students

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Parliamentary Budget Officer recently reported that the federal government provides \$12 billion of the over \$35 billion in total funding for postsecondary institutions across Canada. The PBO is concerned that "there is no process to track the CST once it enters provincial accounts." To the Minister of Advanced Ed: what exactly are you doing with the Canada social transfer funds to support postsecondary students?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question. Certainly, we had an important announcement to help support advanced education here in the last 24 hours, which was to

freeze tuition rates and to have that indexed to inflation. I think that's a big step forward that's going to help Alberta students right across in each of our 26 postsecondary institutions.

In regard to working with the federal government, certainly, we work closely with them to ensure that we get the very top-quality education for our postsecondary students, and we'd be happy to pursue that now and in the future.

Ms McPherson: Thank you for the segue.

The PBO projected federal funding for student financing needs to increase by 31 per cent and funding for student employment needs to increase by 58 per cent if we hope to develop the talent that we need to grow our economy over the next five years. This government says that capping tuition at CPI is intended to cover wage increases; however, universities' other costs can increase by far more than local inflation. Again to the Minister of Advanced Ed: you've limited schools' self-generating funding options, so how exactly do you expect Albertans to pay for postsecondary education?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say that our government will make no apologies for making postsecondary education more affordable for students. There's no better way to ensure that a student, regardless of their economic circumstance or where they live in this province, gets access if it is an affordable possibility. So many students choose not to go to postsecondary because they just simply don't have the money or their family doesn't have the money. We are opening the doors to make sure we have an equitable and just postsecondary education system in this province.

Ms McPherson: Reducing financial barriers to education is intended to increase the number of students attending, but those students need seats at schools. Full-time enrolment at the U of C increased by 3.2 per cent last year, double Alberta's population growth, and students in their 40s were the fastest growing group of students. How are you going to increase access to postsecondary education for under- and unemployed Albertans like the 8.2 per cent of Calgarians who are out of work right now?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, the best way to provide access for students regardless of their age is to make sure that it's an affordable proposition. I'm so proud of the progress that we've made in this regard. You know what? We have funded for education through this recession, during the economic downturn, for elementary students. They're going to move to junior high. They'll move to high school. We are making sure that we get that business done. You can't do that by making \$700 million cuts, cutting teachers, and otherwise compromising the quality of education that all Albertans deserve.

The Speaker: Hon. members, if I could just draw your attention and remind you yet again that we're now moving to question 5 on the list. Be conscious of the fact that this House appreciates members not using preambles in their supplementals and, secondly, ensure that the supplementals are related to the main question.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

2018 Harvest Support for Agriculture

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard first-hand in my region that this has been an incredibly challenging year for our

producers. Dry conditions in the south, a wet fall in the central and northern regions, and snow through some of the most important growing periods of the summer were just a few of the challenges faced by Alberta's farmers. To the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: what were some of the challenges and the outcomes of this year's harvest so far?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Many of my colleagues on both sides were at an important event last night with farmers. I talked to farmers directly. This year's harvest was indeed a challenge. We had some growing conditions, some hot conditions, dry conditions, and we had early snowfall. But with our farmers' hard work and perseverance I'm very happy to say that 95 per cent of the crops are now in the bin, and I want all of us to thank Alberta farmers for their hard work.

The Speaker: The first supplemental.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After years of drought and adverse growing conditions early snow the last few years has had a devastating effect on Alberta's crops, which has led to challenges with AFSC payments. To the same minister: how has your department and AFSC adjusted practices and procedures to deal with this issue going forward?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, the staff and board of the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation have the same hard-working spirit as farmers and ranchers. In fact, many of the staff and board of AFSC are farmers and ranchers themselves, and they remember past difficult harvests. Last year I asked them to find a way to streamline inspections to help clear the backlog. This year after the September snow we had several good weeks of weather. We stood ready to streamline inspections once again, but because of the good weather, we didn't have to.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The challenges faced by Alberta's producers will only become greater as the realities of climate change become clearer, a fact our friends across the aisle refuse to acknowledge. To the same minister: how does the government support producers when Mother Nature makes life more difficult for them?

Mr. Carlier: Climate change is a reality that our farmers and ranchers see first-hand as the years and generations pass, Mr. Speaker. First frost days are later. Last frost days are sooner. The province is wetter in some areas and drier in others. Along with this change we're seeing new pests and crop diseases on the landscape. We're helping farmers adapt. My department works on ways to guard against new pests and diseases through research at Alberta's postsecondary institutions and through our crop diversification centres. Unlike other governments, we're investing in agriculture through our climate leadership plan, which helps farmers and ranchers invest in energy efficiency. This helps cut emissions and save money.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Government Services Communication with MLA Offices

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, one of the most important jobs of an MLA is to assist constituents with issues they are having accessing government services. A strong working relationship between MLA

offices and local government service providers is essential, and that's what we have enjoyed in Vermilion-Lloydminster for many years. So it's baffling that the staff at Alberta Works offices have recently been ordered to not communicate with staff at local MLA offices. To the minister of social services: why have you hampered our ability to serve Albertans?

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. It's my understanding that Alberta Works offices are available to all Albertans by walking in, by calling, by way of the web. We also have an MLA contact in our offices who helps MLAs with their issues relating to their constituents.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that many constituent concerns can be resolved quickly thanks to open lines of communication between our staff and local Alberta social services staff and given that the local workers for Alberta seniors were similarly ordered to have no contact with staff in MLA offices and that all communications now have to flow through the minister's office and given that this edict requiring centralized command and control for all communications hampers services to Alberta seniors, to the minister of seniors: why have you ordered local Alberta seniors officials to not have any contact with MLA offices?

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

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, seniors built this province, and they deserve to retire in dignity, and we as a government absolutely want to liaise with constituency offices and make that process as accessible as possible. I'm happy to follow up with the member to find out the specifics of this concern. Certainly, our government wants to work to make sure that everybody is collaborating well.

Thank you so much.

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, given that all MLAs and their constituency office staff work hard to give the best possible service in assisting Albertans and given that many issues can be resolved quickly and efficiently through good communication with local service providers who are familiar with the cases and the individuals involved and given that the recent change has resulted in a significant deterioration of service to Albertans, to either minister: will you reverse the directive preventing staff in regional offices from communicating with our constituency offices, and if not, why not?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Yeah, Mr. Speaker, I'd be really happy to follow up with the hon. member. I am not aware of any directive. In fact, we've tried to create even more opportunities for engagement. That's why each and every minister has created an MLA contact in their office, to try to help liaise in a more effective way for those who would like to work with our offices. It's not our intent to not have local experts work with local community members or the MLA offices, so we'd be happy to really follow up and clarify whatever miscommunication may have been provided on that because that's certainly not our intent. We're working to make life easier and more effective and more available for the folks who are reaching out for supports.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

2:10 Federal Carbon Pricing

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a simple question. Is it this government's position that the federal government has jurisdiction to force a carbon tax on the people of Alberta? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. I'll take the first one, and then I'll be very happy to share with my colleague the Minister of Energy for supplementals.

Mr. Speaker, even the leader of the Official Opposition has admitted that that's the case. He said that if they go to court and they fail and they have to implement the Justin Trudeau carbon tax, he will certainly have to comply with that. I find it really interesting they're asking that question because their own leader has admitted that that is likely the very outcome, that the federal price on carbon will be implemented if Alberta doesn't act and do one on our own. We're being leaders, and we're moving forward in a responsible way.

Mrs. Aheer: That's interesting because given that last year the government's environment minister said, quote, our carbon price increases will track with the federal legislation that will be in place at that time; we've been clear about that from day one, end quote, and given that the NDP government now claims that this is no longer to be their position, why, then, won't they join with the other provinces in the court challenge that they are leading?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we've worked from day one through our climate leadership plan to develop a made-in-Alberta solution, one that was developed in collaboration with industry, with stakeholders, with Albertans, all people who are involved, and we stand with that climate leadership plan. We stand with the solutions we've come up with, and we will continue to work with our made-in-Alberta plan.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Albertans deserve a government that is going to fight for them. Given that the government has just said today that their path to balance is not solely based on TMX and given that this government's budget plan is based on further raises to the carbon tax, perhaps that is the reason that they will not join in the court challenge. Otherwise, how are they going to raise the funds?

Ms Hoffman: Sorry. I said that I would give her the rest, and then I changed my mind.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify that we have a path to balance that has a lot of careful contingencies built in, and that's why we are more than \$3 billion ahead of where we thought we would be in terms of our path to balance. We are committed to moving forward on getting TMX, to making sure that we remove the price differential, and to making sure that all Canadians have the opportunity to prosper from this important plan. The members opposite are focused on firing 4,000 nurses, 4,000 teachers, and bringing in a \$700 million tax giveaway to the wealthiest Albertans. I think our priorities are aligned with the values of everyday Albertans.

The Speaker: Calgary-West.

Drug-impaired Driving

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government of Alberta has had years to prepare for the legalization of marijuana. One of its most important tasks was to ensure that police are trained and equipped to deal with the potential spike in drug-impaired drivers. The RCMP have indicated plans to purchase just four of the roadside saliva tests to cover the whole province, and Edmonton and Calgary police are considering – I repeat, only considering – using them. To the Justice minister: how many roadside saliva devices are in use in Alberta today now that marijuana is legal?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Well, of course, it has always been the case that it was the plan to move forward with several different methods of testing for impairment, one of which the member should be familiar with, which is just to say roadside decision. That's police observing impaired behaviour and pulling the individuals over. In addition, we have increased training of drug recognition experts. One of the methods available to police, should they choose to use it, is a roadside saliva testing device. There are presently two more in testing, as I understand it, with the federal government right now, and police services will make those decisions based on their individual needs.

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

Mr. Ellis: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta has long known that it would need many more police officers trained as drug recognition experts when marijuana became legal and given that RCMP are reporting that only 42 officers have this training, which means that only 37 per cent of Alberta's 113 RCMP detachments will have one of these experts, Minister, this is deeply concerning. Are you not worried that this lack of experts puts public safety at risk?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and again for the very important question. We all know that one of the main concerns that came from Albertans with respect to the legalization of cannabis, which, again, was a federal decision, is ultimately that there will be an increase in impaired drivers on the roads. We've been working very closely with the services to ensure that they're able to get access to those trainings and to be able to get funding for the access. In addition to the drug recognition experts, there is other training in terms of observations going forward for officers. But certainly we'll continue to work with those services to make sure that we're putting through as many drug recognition experts as possible.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, what the minister is referring to is field sobriety tests, and that's not even close to what is needed right now.

Mr. Speaker, given that a critical component to ensuring that Alberta can prosecute drug-impaired drivers requires more capability to test blood than in the past and given that only specially trained technicians can perform this task, Minister, are all police detachments able to complete on-site blood tests, or are police forced to take their suspects to Alberta's overburdened hospitals and wait in the hallways along with the paramedics and their patients to collect crucial evidence for marijuana files?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I've indicated, we've worked very closely with police services to make sure that they have everything that they need. Certainly, legalization happened very recently. The province of Alberta, fortunately, was out in front relative to other provinces. In fact, other provinces were looking to us with the fantastic model that we had built. Certainly, as this moves forward, we will continue to work with those services to ensure that they have everything they need in every incident case.

Grain Drying and the Carbon Levy

Mr. Loewen: On Monday Alberta's Official Opposition asked multiple questions regarding the carbon tax and how it affects farmers drying their grain in an exceptionally wet fall. Grain drying is not optional and, in fact, is essential in order to not have grain literally rot in the bins. Unfortunately, the minister's answers were far from clear, choosing instead to talk about the weather and other things that were irrelevant to the questions. Can the minister today clearly explain to Alberta farmers how they will be reimbursed for the cost of the carbon tax on their grain drying?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're absolutely committed to supporting farmers in their quest to reduce emissions, reduce emissions but also reduce their overall energy costs, which will make them, of course, more efficient. Through the climate leadership plan we've devoted \$81 million over four years for farm efficiencies such as on-farm solar. We've also introduced a 50 per cent rebate on retrofitting and upgrading their grain dryers. That will go a long way in making sure that farmers are doing what they want to do best: grow their great products and reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Loewen: Given that on Monday the minister attempted to claim that grain drying costs can be recovered through AFSC and given that AFSC compensation received for grain drying did not change with the introduction of the carbon tax and given that farmers that I talked to have told me that such provisions simply do not make up for the high cost of the carbon tax, will the minister admit that the carbon tax places an unacceptable burden on hard-working Alberta farmers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The member's own colleague last night was saying that if the price of natural gas were higher, then the carbon levy by a percentage wouldn't be as much. Yes, true. Natural gas is a really high cost right now. The carbon levy, you know, is part of our energy efficiency plans, part of our climate leadership plan, which the farmers are embracing. Farmers, when I talk to them, want to do their part. They ask me: what can we do to lower our greenhouse gas emissions, do our part, and as well find those efficiencies to make our operations more efficient?

Mr. Loewen: Given that the minister refuses to answer the question on how the carbon tax benefits farmers and given that farmers accept the fact that some years they have to dry their grain and given that the carbon tax adds huge additional costs to doing business that reduce their global competitiveness, when will this government remove the carbon tax so that the fine farmers of Alberta will not be burdened by these excessive and unnecessary expenses?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? I'll apologize to you if this sounds repetitive because it is. With the climate leadership plan we're devoting \$81 million over four years for farm efficiencies and on-farm solar. This is a program that has been well received by farmers for energy efficiencies in irrigation, in solar, in dairy barns, in chicken barns, et cetera. As well, a 50 per cent rebate on retrofitting, upgrading grain dryers is well received by the farmers. That's what they're looking for from this government, and they're getting that.

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

2:20 Social Supports in Edmonton

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last year the city of Edmonton initiative the recover project worked to explore how we can best balance urban renewal downtown with supporting individuals living with homelessness, personal trauma, substance use, and mental health challenges. The recommendations came out and were adopted by the city in August. They included prioritizing service delivery, which embraces harm reduction and increased collaboration amongst providers to improve outcomes for those they serve. To the Minister of Community and Social Services, will you take these factors into consideration when deciding future funding for service providers in Edmonton?

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for your question and for your advocacy. All Albertans deserve a safe place to call home and receive the support they need to address the challenges they are facing. We recognize that issues facing Albertans are complex, and that's why our government has taken steps and invested in prevention efforts through our FCSS increase of \$25 million, our antipoverty work, and our work with respect to combatting homelessness, investing \$191 million. Our ongoing commitment to affordable housing is a key way that our government . . .

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Edmonton city council has clearly stated that their priority in addressing chronic homelessness is to move past traditional models in favour of focused investment in supportive housing and given that the city is in fact currently looking to purchase four apartment buildings to convert to supportive units, to the same minister: what commitments have you made to help fund wraparound supports, and will you work with the city of Edmonton to expand these further?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. We have maintained stable and predictable funding for all partners, and also Budget 2018 continues the government of Alberta's historic \$1.2 billion commitment to maintain and improve safe, secure, and affordable housing. We are continuing to work with our municipal and community partners, including Edmonton, to find solutions facing Albertans in Edmonton, and we know that this means having their backs by investing in supports and services they rely on and not making reckless . . .

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that a report to Edmonton's council this year estimated an overall need for an additional 916 units of supportive housing and given that city staff are now working to identify sites across Edmonton where these units could be built, to the same minister: what steps have you taken to help provide access to the funding needed, and how will you support this construction going forward?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. All Albertans deserve a place to call home, and that is why we have invested \$7 million for over 60 affordable housing units in Edmonton alone, and we have invested in over 300 more supportive housing units in communities, including Edmonton. We know that providing access to additional health and treatment support helps end the cycle of chronic homelessness. That is why we have made strong and predictable investments instead of making cuts that we all know will hurt, as was described by the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Grain Marketing, Storage, and Handling

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend the NDP and their supporters came together and passed some policy resolutions. One dealt with grain and the resolution to, and I quote: formally examine the impact to Canada's international reputation that has resulted from the changes to Canada's grain marketing, storage, and handling system. End quote. Minister, in all your travels I have never heard you publicly say that Canada's reputation and, by extension, Alberta's grain growers have somehow been diminished by any recent changes in that federal policy. Have you?

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order.

The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Over the years we've seen increased production from our hard-working Alberta farmers, which is fantastic, but which means more product on the rail lines. We're working with the federal government in their deliberations on changing the Canada Transportation Act, which helps a lot. We know from both CN and CP, the main characters, that they're increasing production. But that concern is still there, that we're able to have the capacity on our whole transportation system, making sure that we can get our products to market, and to continue working with the federal government and the railway systems to ensure that happens.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, given that that resolution goes on to recommend, and I quote, "to put into place any additional government oversight needed to ensure that Canada's grain marketing, storage, and handling system works efficiently to the mutual benefit of all," Minister, to this third generation son of a rich farmer it sure sounds like your party is advocating that Alberta's farmers and our friends across Canada will once again be forced into a 1943-based monopoly, formerly called the Canadian Wheat Board. Is that your government's intention?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat confused by the question. I'm pretty sure the member wasn't at the convention. He might have been. You know, it was a very large convention, the largest

convention the NDP has ever seen in this province. Perhaps he was there. I didn't see him.

No, Mr. Speaker. You know, there are some challenges without a doubt in the transportation. We've seen some great success in both CN and CP ordering a thousand new hopper cars each, new double tracking, new terminals being built across the province. I think we're setting up to be in good shape for the future.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that several farmers, including myself, were thrown into jail for daring to take our own property, our commodity, wheat and barley grown by us, into the U.S.A. and giving it to a 4-H club, Minister, is this how your government would like to rebuild the tattered relationships with rural Alberta farmers and ranchers going forward into 2019?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of this government's work on supporting our agriculture across the province. Last year we saw record export profits of \$11.2 billion. I think that speaks volumes. That's over 12 per cent more than the year before that. Agriculture year after year is breaking records. This government is very proud of our record with the agriculture community. I'm very proud of myself as I continue working with the agriculture producers, processors across this province. They continue the good work that they're doing growing and making and selling good products across the country and around the world.

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

Victims of Crime Fund

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice recently announced an "increase in available funding" and "new funding" for victims of crime. But it is not new. The surplus in the victims of crime fund has been growing for years. Victims of crime organizations have been prevented from accessing their own money. The money was mandated to benefit victims of crime funds all along. Why has this money been withheld all these years and why is it now announced as new money only months before an election?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the slightly misguided question. We have in fact made additional monies available to the victims of crime organizations. Several of those organizations were standing with me as we announced that. It is the case that over the course of more than a decade now there has been a surplus accumulating. Unfortunately, governments previous to ours had done no work around what the needs of victims were, how to meet those needs, how to measure whether we were meeting those needs, so the Auditor General asked us to do lots of that work before we were able to increase the funding to those organizations. We've now done that work, and we're happy to announce the increase.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Orr: Given that rural communities are in an epidemic of crime that has been escalating for years, rural victims deserve support, yet the access to victims' funds is for five urban municipalities only and no rural regions. This is patently inequitable and unjust. Further,

given that the Rural Municipalities resolution this spring called upon the government of Alberta to use the money from the victims of crime to adequately fund provincial victims' services units, why have rural regions been excluded?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There were multiple things that were announced in the announcement recently. Some of them were funding for the most strapped victims' services. We worked with the organization that represents all of the victims' services organizations, and they said where the greatest need was, and therefore we flowed additional funding to those particular instances. In addition to that, there was an increase in funding for certain victims of crime areas that deal with certain indigenous areas as well, so we've increased the supports to those units that are supporting those indigenous areas, which include rural units.

Mr. Orr: Mr. Speaker, given that the Auditor General, in fact, has called upon the government to "develop a plan that . . . identifies what the actual current needs of the victims of crime population are and . . . identifies gaps in service" and that much of that victim population is, in fact, rural and given that the crime-ridden rural regions have reduced access to victims' services and depend on heroic volunteers, who are now excluded from this plan, why does this government think it's acceptable to exclude the many repeatedly traumatized rural victims?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot in there, but I'd like to just say that I'm incredibly proud of the work we've been doing with the victims of crime organizations. As the member has correctly identified, the Auditor General made recommendations arising from the fact that our predecessors had failed to do any of that work to identify the needs of victims. We have now identified that. In addition, I think it's important to note that we are extremely concerned about rural crime. That's why we're funding a plan that's already working. Meanwhile the opposition voted against that plan.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Municipal Sustainability Initiative Funding

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month at the AUMA convention a very critical issue was raised once again that resulted in a resolution being passed regarding long-term, sustainable, and predictable funding through the municipal sustainability initiative, also known as MSI. To the minister. Your government has had three and a half years to follow through with the 2015 election promise to address this issue and now eight months to consult on and roll out this new program mentioned in the 2018 budget. Minister, given all that time why have you not yet provided clear details to municipalities on this funding?

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you to the member for the question. I think our budget was pretty clear, that we extended it to 2022, the MSI funding, and we funded through the downturn to our municipalities so they could build the infrastructure that they needed to support the people in our communities, which we knew was important. We had crumbling infrastructure left for way too long: schools, hospitals, bridges, roads. To help our farmers, help our oil and gas industries out there, we made sure the funding was

there. We are continuing to work with municipalities to make sure that they have a long-term, sustainable funding deal, and we'll make sure that that gets done.

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, obviously, that wasn't good enough for the AUMA.

Given that with the passing of the former Bill 20, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2015, there are requirements for municipalities, as he's well aware, to do three-year and five-year financial plans and given that, once again, this continued delay in releasing details of this new program is unsatisfactory to the AUMA and municipalities, who are required to do their budget processes in the fall, to the minister: how can they even attempt to start these mandatory plans without being informed of this government's new, precise intentions for MSI funding before their fall deadlines are missed once again?

Mr. S. Anderson: Well, thank you to the member for the question. I don't know what \$700 million tax cuts to the rich would do for our municipalities. Nothing very good. But, as I've said, we've made sure the funding is there through to 2022. We've been working with the AUMA, the RMA, and the two big cities on city charters to come to long-term, sustainable deals. We will continue to do that. In fact, I have another meeting coming up with the RMA and the AUMA pretty quick here. It's something that we don't do on Twitter or on Facebook. We work face to face with these representatives from these associations. I've got great relationships with them, and it is a word that I call "consultation," Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the precise details are hard to get today.

Given that after a very thorough consultation with their members the AUMA passed a special, extraordinary resolution at their convention regarding this annual funding infrastructure requirement and given that in my area the mayors and Reeves of southern Alberta have sent numerous letters to the minister in the past demanding that MSI funding intended for the next two years be fully disclosed, Minister, will you commit today in this House to respond to the AUMA's request and commit to communicating this vital, clear information immediately to the municipalities before once again it's too late for fall budgets?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for letting me clarify again that it is in our budget. They know exactly what they have until 2022. We have lots of time to work with them. I do want to get it sooner because I promised them that I would sit down with them, which I'm doing next week. I would like to know what saying the words "it'll hurt" will mean, like the member from Lac La Biche. Will that hurt our municipalities? Will that hurt our infrastructure in our municipalities? I think it probably would. But on this side we consult with the associations. They represent 342 municipalities and eight Métis settlements across this province. I have the best interests of Albertans all across this province.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Cannabis Legalization and Smaller Municipalities

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Communities in my constituency are concerned about the impact of drug-impaired driving and of other spillover effects from the legalization of cannabis. Municipal governments are already stretched in many of the small communities in my constituency, but for some reason they've been left out of this government's plans to deal with legal cannabis. To the minister: why did you consult with some communities but not others?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually proud to say that our cannabis consultation took in the most Albertans of any consultation ever performed by the government of Alberta. We had two waves of online consultation. We had multiple round-tables. We had consultation with various different groups. That allowed us to create an Alberta-specific plan. We didn't have the choice over whether or not to legalize cannabis, but we did have the choice to put forward a plan that reflected the views and values of Albertans, and that's exactly what we did.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that smaller communities in my constituency have indicated to me that they could struggle to deal with the new issues that legal cannabis will bring and given that they will need to add these new obligations to their existing responsibilities and given that they will too often be faced with the choice between allocating resources to cannabis issues and maintaining their current priorities, how are smaller communities supposed to address this reality?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First, I'll maybe touch on the big picture and go down to the smaller one. You know, we're providing \$11.2 million over two years for municipalities to help with the enforcement costs in those municipalities. That's similar to the levels that Ontario and Quebec are providing their municipalities. That means that 52 municipalities across the province will be eligible for this funding, and for those that are smaller than 5,000 people, the province of Alberta is paying for those policing costs.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many of the problems identified could have been addressed with appropriate consultation between the government and the smaller municipalities, communities in my constituency have asked if the minister will rescind the program and invite the AUMA back to the table for meaningful consultation to discuss the distribution of excise funding to all municipalities. Is this something the government is willing to do?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. The federal government and the provinces and territories in Canada have agreed to a two-year program of funding and the splitting of excise taxes. This province stood up for Alberta and all the rest of the provinces and said: the 50-50 share in excise tax was not enough; we need more to address the safety concerns, to address keeping it out of the hands of youth. We have a two-year program.

We're going to follow through with that two-year program, and the AUMA and other groups know that.

Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

Ms McKittrick: M. le Président, yesterday the Minister of Community and Social Services announced Alberta's first-ever Advocate for Persons with Disabilities. The advocate position was established through Bill 205, and the community is supportive of this new role. Tony Flores, a para-athlete and long-time advocate for persons with disabilities, has been appointed and starts immediately. To the minister: This important appointment requires further elaboration. What are the key responsibilities of the new advocate's office?

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Once again I want to congratulate Mr. Tony Flores on his appointment. We believe that as with all issues facing Albertans with disabilities, we've worked with them, and we consulted with them on this particular office. More than 1,300 Albertans weighed in on the role and responsibilities and priorities for the advocate. What we heard from the community is that the advocate should be listening to the community, providing individual navigation and issue resolution, and promoting inclusion of Albertans with disabilities.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Merci, M. le Président. Self-advocacy efforts of groups like Disability Action Hall, Voice of Albertans with Disabilities, and Self-Advocacy Federation have been very important to my work. To the same minister: how will the advocate ensure self-advocacy efforts are supported and not diminished with this new role?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. The advocate has said that he believes in Nothing about Us without Us, and we agree and believe self-advocacy should be supported, promoted, and not replaced. The advocate will work closely in partnership with Albertans with disabilities and advocacy groups to listen, build bridges, and strengthen self-advocacy across Alberta.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know Albertans are very keen to start connecting with the advocate's office. To the same minister: when will the advocate's office officially be opened, and how will Albertans be able to access the support?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. I'm pleased to share that the advocate's office will be open to the public this November, and any Albertan with a disability, a family member, or an advocate will be able to connect with this office. We are excited to get to work with the advocate to build on our government's work to make life better for Albertans with disabilities.

Thank you.

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

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Premier Peter Lougheed's Vision for Alberta

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it bothers me that members of every party in this House feel free to praise Peter Lougheed as if he was one of their own. They act as if the Lougheed vision evolved from their political heritage. The NDP even had the gall to do this at their socialist convention on the weekend. I have taken the time to speak to key advisers of the Lougheed era as well as other people who were close to this great Albertan. What is very clear to me is that Premier Lougheed was never one to get caught up in a brand. In fact, you may be surprised that what he most valued was good governance, and performing good governance means listening to the people of Alberta.

Because of the general misunderstanding, I'm confident that the vision of this government and other opposition members is likely inaccurate. Peter Lougheed and Ralph Klein were two of the greatest Premiers our province has seen. They both insisted that members of their cabinet and caucus get out from under the dome and listen to the people that they represent and that we represent.

Furthermore, Premier Lougheed had a crystal-clear economic strategy. First, build an entrepreneurial and self-reliant culture which allows for small, smart, stable government and provide the lowest possible tax environment, which attracts massive foreign investment and stimulates greater entrepreneurial growth. We are not even close to that vision today in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we are hurting so much. I believe Premier Lougheed would be disheartened, to say the least, if he knew the state of Alberta and Albertans today. Therefore, if other parties want to claim allegiance to him, they need to rejuvenate his vision for Alberta, not commandeer it in name only.

Thank you.

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

Longest Mural in Canada

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer over the August long weekend the communities of Calgary-Northern Hills painted the longest mural in Canada. How did that happen? Calgary artist Kim Walker noticed that a fence line along a major roadway in Coventry Hills was deteriorating. Instead of a problem, she saw an opportunity. She envisioned bringing her community together to repair the fence while also creating an 850-metre-long mural that would be naturally lit up by the evening sunset.

Kim got to work. She designed a mural project capable of leaving a legacy and providing meaningful work to strengthen artists' professional portfolios, educational mentorships for aspiring young artists, and opportunities to build community spirit through neighbourhood beautification.

In addition, Kim wanted the mural project to contribute to Calgary's conversation about public art by showcasing the value of art created through community participation. Residents were invited to participate at every step of the process, from concept to creation. Mr. Speaker, amazingly, the fence was scraped, cleaned, repaired, primed, and painted in four weeks.

The mural is now a reality thanks to artist Mark Vazquez-Mackay's expertise and beautiful mural design of the history of Calgary that was guided by public consultation.

Lindsay Lantela, Makenna Millot, Misty Ring, and 23 other volunteers lent their artistic talents; Yana Soldatenko and Laura Hack of the NHCA helped organize the mural project; 35 community partners, who believed in the project's vision, donated resources; and, finally, more than 700 Calgarians came out to help.

Together as a community we achieved something incredible, the longest mural in Canada, that's approximately 6.5 football fields in length. Through this project we have created a proud legacy, and the mural is a focal point of the Calgary-Northern Hills communities, showing us what we are capable of when we work together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

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

Loyola: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table five copies of the report of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship, which provides a summary of the presentations received by the committee at its public meeting on September 25, 2018. Copies of the report will be provided to the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Environment and Parks. Additional copies of the report are available through the committee office and online.

Thank you very much.

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Nixon: 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 of Canada to immediately move to withdraw the proposed Bill C-69, which is a threat to Alberta jobs and pipeline construction.

I have the appropriate number of copies.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 22 An Act for Strong Families Building Stronger Communities

Ms Larivee: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to request leave to introduce Bill 22, An Act for Strong Families Building Stronger Communities.

This bill will create a fairer, stronger, and more transparent child intervention system for the more than 10,000 children and youth who are in care across Alberta. It will increase fairness for indigenous peoples and improve supports for children in and out of care. Introducing this legislation is a key component of our public action plan, A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow, and a decisive step forward for our province. I look forward to discussion and deliberation with my colleagues on this very important legislation.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a first time]

Tablings to the Clerk

The Acting Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of

the hon. Ms Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks and minister responsible for the climate change office, pursuant to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act the environmental protection security fund annual report, April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018.

2:50

The Speaker: Hon. members, I believe we are at points of order. To confirm, there were two points of order, both withdrawn, by the opposition. I believe there was a point of order raised by the Government House Leader.

Justice minister, yes.

Point of Order

Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise with respect to rules surrounding question period. I'm citing here page 509 from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. It references specifically that questions should not "refer to public statements by Ministers" not directly related to their department or "address a Minister's former portfolio or . . . presumed functions, such as party or regional political responsibilities."

My suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that questions with respect to matters having to do with the party are out of order with respect to the government responsibilities of the minister.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it is extremely rich of the government to now suggest that they don't want to talk about party policy ever in the Assembly given that all this government can do is talk about the opposition's party policies. I could pull out reams of *Hansard* during question period of cabinet ministers referring to UCP policies. Further to that, even today we watched the Deputy Premier and other ministers over and over and over allege policies that, in fact, don't even exist. This is ridiculous.

Let's be very clear. The NDP had a resolution that has to do with bringing back the Wheat Board and causing significant problems for the farmers who have fought against that in our province for a long time. The member is the agriculture critic for the opposition. He's asking questions about government policy and whether or not the minister, who is the minister in charge of agriculture, would support something along those lines. He has every right to ask that and he should ask that, especially considering that today we watched another minister of the Crown get up and insult farmers and say about the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake that his father was just a rich farmer. I know his father well. He's a dear friend. He's not a rich farmer. He's a schoolteacher – this is important – who they insulted and still have not apologized for . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, we'll deal with that . . .

Mr. Nixon: . . . and now they want . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm speaking.

Mr. Nixon: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear you.

The Speaker: That's because you were speaking. Try and stay away from the other issue and deal with this point right now.

Mr. Nixon: Well, the issue is that this is a ridiculous point of order designed by a government who can't run on their own record and is running scared and trying to stop this member from doing his job.

The Speaker: Government House Leader, you have additional contributions to make?

Mr. Mason: I do, Mr. Speaker. The point is that the rules are quite clear with respect to putting up oral questions in question period to ministers. They don't apply to debate in the House as a whole. It's quite permissible to talk about party politics and all kinds of politics in this House. That's part of what we do here. The rule is specifically to prevent people in question period from trying to get a minister to answer questions outside his or her responsibilities.

Mr. Strankman: Mr. Speaker, if you'd permit me to reread my question.

The Speaker: Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Strankman: "Minister, in all your travels I have never heard you publicly say that Canada's reputation and, by extension, Alberta's grain growers have somehow been diminished by any recent changes in that federal policy." It was as simple as that. I was asking the minister if he felt that by change of a policy, Canada's grain reputation had been diminished. I think it's a fair question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What the member just read was what I have in the Blues. Let me just first of all ask a question to the Justice minister.

The Government House Leader just referred to a rule. Was he intending to speak to the standing orders of this Legislature? Or was it a reference to *Beauchesne* or the House?

Ms Ganley: It was a reference to the same section I was referring to in 509. I had apparently not made clear, according to the opposition's argument, that it was rules not around debate in the House in its entirety but specifically around what questions could be put to ministers and, that is to say, specifically questions within that minister's portfolio and not outside of it.

The Speaker: Well, what I have is actually on page 510, not 509. There are a number of issues related to questions in the House. The particular one that I think we are talking about is this reference: "Make a charge by way of a preamble to a question." That may be the other one. I think there's another one in here.

I haven't done this for a while. This one is a question that I'd like to make myself a little more familiar with. Let me defer the matter until I can check. I thought I had my source here, but I did not, so if the House would grant me that opportunity.

Motions under Standing Order 42

The Speaker: I believe we have a motion by the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Federal Bill C-69

Mr. Nixon:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Canada to immediately move to withdraw the proposed Bill C-69, which is a threat to Alberta jobs and pipeline construction.

Mr. Nixon: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My motion is very, very simple. It appears to me that everybody should agree that Bill C-69 is bad, an extreme danger to the province of Alberta. Despite the fact that it has taken the government 229 days to act, it does not mean that they should not take action now. This motion would send a clear message from this House to the House of Commons and to the Prime Minister of Canada and the federal Liberals that this is not acceptable and that we expect them to take action. I call on all members to join me in sending that clear message to Ottawa.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[Unanimous consent denied]

Orders of the Day
Government Bills and Orders
Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 20
Securities Amendment Act, 2018

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to speak to Bill 20, Securities Amendment Act, 2018. It seems we get a securities amendment act every year. While we may get lulled into complacency about such pieces of legislation, the Securities Act is fundamental for the good and orderly working of our capitalist system. Capitalism has done more to lift more people out of poverty than any other economic system, including communism. I should know, just looking at my home country. With record growth people escaped poverty.

3:00

Alberta's capital market makes up 25 per cent of Canada's capital market, not bad for only having 12.5 per cent of the country's population. The Securities Act governs the issue of investment vehicles like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate income trusts. This is how regular people like you and me pool our capital resources, assess the risk, make investments, and earn a return on that capital. We need to be able to enfranchise the many in the economic life of Alberta. Share ownership in our businesses is the power of the people according to the late Margaret Thatcher. According to the BBC Four documentary *Tory! Tory! Tory!* when Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, 7 per cent of the people in the U.K. owned shares. By 1990 it went up to 25 per cent. I would like to know what the numbers are for share ownership in Alberta.

When more people own shares, more people understand capitalism. With the salaries we make as MLAs, I'm sure there are members of the NDP backbench who can afford to try share ownership. Once you get the taste of those first dividend cheques, you will drop your ideas about socialism or running to the Ethics Commissioner because I own shares in the companies that I used to work for.

It greatly troubled me to see the pictures of not just socialist materials on sale at the NDP convention but also Marxist and communist materials. These ideologies have caused the deaths of tens of millions around the world, wherever they were tried or implemented. Later this month we will mark one of those ideologically imposed genocides, the Holodomor, the terror of famine in the Ukraine. The effects of that continue to resonate today with the war in the Donbass, where the ceasefire is broken every day.

If some of the NDP members particularly owned shares in Alberta businesses, maybe they would stop being NDP members and embrace the joys of capitalism. Once you know you need to create wealth to distribute it, that gets some fiscal discipline here, Madam Chair. The free flow of capital is essential for the workings of Alberta's and Canada's economies.

That's why I travelled to India and Hong Kong in September. I went looking for capital to come to Alberta and invest and went looking for places for Alberta businesses to invest their capital in India and Hong Kong. Conservatives went out and negotiated the comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, with the European Union. Europe is a market of 550 million people. The harmonization needed for the benchmarks will allow European banks to access capital from Canadian banks, maybe even Alberta banks like Canadian Western Bank or ATB Financial. Maybe instead of criticizing our oil sands, BNP Paribas would actually show up and set up a branch in Calgary or Edmonton.

There was an argument some time ago about making Edmonton a financial services cluster because we have ATB Financial, Canadian Western Bank, Servus Credit Union, and AIMCo. Yet the Alberta Securities Commission and investment banks like OTT Financial reside in Calgary. Edmonton seems to be missing something.

I would expect that next year we will have another securities amendment act in order to enact provisions of the comprehensive and progressive trans-Pacific partnership, TPP, to allow harmonization with other benchmarks. Can the minister name the two Canadian benchmarks that are affected by Bill 20?

In the fight against acts of market manipulation, insider trading, or trading investors' money in a cavalier way, there are provisions in Bill 20 for whistle-blower protection. Acts of insider trading and market manipulation cause investors to lose faith in the markets. No one wants a rigged game, where the house always wins, Madam Chair. No one wants to invest in Ponzi schemes, either. Can you imagine what would have happened if a whistle-blower had come forward to the Securities and Exchange Commission in the U.S.A. and helped shut down Bernie Madoff's elaborate Ponzi scheme?

Or how about over in London? When it comes to whistle-blowing, I think about the London Whale. The London Whale was the nickname for a trader who lost at least \$6.2 billion belonging to JPMorgan Chase in 2012. The Whale earned his nickname for placing gigantic trades in small indexes, where the trades would stick out and everyone would notice. Facing criminal charges for security fraud, he was never formally charged, but his boss was. JPMorgan Chase admitted to violating securities laws, and they agreed to pay fines of more than \$1 billion. The bank's CEO, Jamie Dimon, took a pay cut despite the bank still making \$21.3 billion that year, Madam Chair, and it turns out that risk limits were breached more than 300 times before the bank switched risk evaluation formulas. A calculation error in the spreadsheet was the culprit.

I wonder if the minister is familiar with any whale-type situations happening in Alberta. Now with this legislation in Bill 20 maybe a whistle-blower will come forward with any whales out there. Legitimate whistle-blowers need to be protected from persecution by their employers. We know employers will try and go after whistle-blowers. At the same time, whistle-blowing should never be used to fight personal grudges or as payback against a broker for earnings below expectations.

Madam Chair, Bill 20 is a very fair and reasonable piece of legislation. I hope the minister was listening and is able to answer my questions on the benchmarks and may be able to provide any information on regulations that will flow from this legislation. I also hope the minister will be able to answer how many Albertans are shareholders.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, amendments? Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was a lot going on in that there, but I think I did catch a little bit of a question there around some of the benchmarks that are used. I think that in Canada there are certainly two important benchmarks: the Canadian overnight repo rate average, or CORRA, and the Canadian dollar offered rate, or CDOR. I think that when we look at all these things, we do need to look at a global perspective and understand that some of these changes are making sure that we're harmonized across the country as well as with some of the changes coming internationally.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, amendments? Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to speak to Bill 20, the Securities Amendment Act, 2018. It's quite clear to all of us here that sound regulation is a necessary piece of the puzzle of regulation in the securities industry, particularly when it comes to building investor confidence in the province of Alberta, which is important to all members of the House. It's also very clear to me that we need to be working together with all of our provincial and international counterparts to ensure that compliance with regulations is both simple and straightforward and comprehensive.

Madam Chair, quite frankly, investor confidence needs all the help it can get in Alberta these days as it tries to recover from this government's job-killing carbon tax and its investment-repelling regulatory overreach in countless other sectors. These have been a major impediment to our ability to attract investors in this province, so a structural framework that ensures confidence and trust in our system may go some measure in helping us to achieve and maybe to return to that level of confidence.

3:10

The current government has undermined the economic fundamentals of this province as well, and that's created huge problems for investors considering the province, both domestic investors here in Alberta and across Canada but also international investors who have chosen not to continue to look at this as a place to invest. It's created a perceived imbalance of risks versus rewards in this province, Madam Chair, a balance which is all too important to all of us here in this province.

You know, when we look across the world at regulation and opportunities and stability and trust, we have much to learn from vibrant securities markets around the world. From New York to Hong Kong, from London to Tokyo, from Frankfurt to Shanghai we have and must be leaders in having a strong and trusted regulatory environment. In some measure I'm pleased to see that the act promises to protect whistle-blowers when they come forward but also removes incentives for false claims and that it protects Alberta Securities Commission employees from being dragged into third-party disputes. It does create an opportunity for the system to function better, for the trust and the regulatory environment to allow for clarity, and for that system to actually function in a better format in terms of our ability, again, to attract that much-needed investment.

I'm concerned, however, that it might not do enough to protect Alberta's jurisdiction over securities regulations, and I wonder whether we're harmonizing regulations with Ontario or simply accepting the province's regulatory decisions. I hope that we will maintain some independence on that side.

Madam Chair, the free flow of capital is essential for the workings of Alberta's and Canada's economies, whether that's, again, domestic investment, whether that's reinvestment within our province, or attraction of much-needed foreign capital.

I've spoken in this House and we speak across this province about the loss of at least now, to date, \$34.8 billion in foreign direct investment. That was actually in the spring of 2017, that number, and I know that we've lost some major investments since then, which concerns me. It concerns me that we are not in a position right now where we are attracting back that investment.

You know, in spite of the scholarly opinion of some of the closest economic allies of this government, I do not believe that the flight of foreign capital is ever good for Alberta or Canada. When we don't attract foreign investment, that very much becomes the canary in the coal mine for local investors. Do they keep their money here, or do they look elsewhere? In many cases we found not just foreign direct investment leaving this province, Madam Chair, but we've seen Alberta companies take their capital elsewhere, to projects outside of the jurisdiction of Alberta. We need to make certain that our regulatory system allows them the opportunity to do that here with certainty.

We've also seen significant divestiture by Canadian and international pension funds. These numbers are a little bit harder to track, Madam Chair, but I've heard anecdotally that this number could be in the hundreds of billions of dollars across the Canadian economy. Many of those impacted in the real estate and the energy sectors here are in Alberta. That also concerns me, that we are not in a position where we are attracting that investment by managing that balance between risk and reward.

My colleague from Calgary-Foothills mentioned that we welcome European capital investment and that our businesses are looking forward to investing in Europe, that exchange of trade and investment that is brought to us by Conservative initiatives – federal Conservative initiatives – to negotiate the comprehensive economic and trade agreement, or CETA, with the European Union. That is important to Canada and to Alberta. As we know, Europe is a market of 550 million people, well over 10 times the population of this country, and these are markets and access to capital which are vitally important to us.

But, Madam Chair, Asia is an even larger opportunity and in many cases represents our future. We can only hope for progress in the future on the TPP and the further facilitation of enhanced trade and investment opportunities with the growing Asian economies and the growing Asian markets for our products. Again, as importantly, the growth of the middle class in those countries which provide capital investment for us here in Alberta: we have the resources, we have the wealth here, the wealth in resources, to attract that in not just the oil and gas sector but in agriculture and forestry and tourism.

I hear that from my contacts in Asia all the time, that they are interested in investing here but they're uncertain about the investment environment here, Madam Chair, the investment environment that has been upset by this current government. So I am happy to see the regulatory environment improve, but I worry about the future and our ability to attract that investment here, where the regulatory environment will matter. You know what? It's good that we have more controls over acts of market manipulation, insider trading, or treating investors' money in a cavalier way, which may cause investors to lose faith in the market.

But, Madam Chair, let's go back to this bill and talk about some of the positive aspects of this, which, again, if we are able to attract back that investment, I think will be vitally important in ensuring investor confidence going forward. There's whistle-blower protection, which helps to restore faith and confidence that markets will function as they should and ensures that buyers and sellers are getting the right prices and the right protection. Legitimate whistle-blowers need to be protected from persecution by their employer, and that's embedded in this as well, and I'm happy to see that.

That's why we have a Public Interest Commissioner for public-sector workers, but workers for the Alberta Securities Commission also need that same protection when third-party cases outside the Securities Act emerge.

Madam Chair, every so often it is essential to update business practices, of course. As we know, new technologies emerge. We need to replace aging information systems that are no longer compatible with international standards, and I'm glad to see that that's being addressed as well.

We need to ensure that the regulatory processes facilitate, without undermining, the free flow of capital in a province known historically for its entrepreneurial spirit, that entrepreneurial spirit which has created opportunities, which has attracted investment, which has created an environment where risk does not outweigh rewards, that sadly we're seeing too much of in the province of Alberta. Risk is a perception, but risk is a reality which must be faced by investors across the world, who are not choosing Alberta now, and we need to make sure that that is an opportunity. Madam Chair, this act in some measure achieves some of the objectives we would like to see addressed to ensure that we are a world-class investment, regulatory, and securities environment, but we have a long way to go to not just improve the regulatory environment but bring a sense of opportunity and free enterprise and respect for investors back to this great province.

Attracting investors is not a perfect science. It's actually an emotional decision in many cases. It's a financial decision in many cases. It's a perception decision in many cases. Again, back to the risk versus rewards, that balance, Madam Chair, I believe, has been upset by many of the actions of this current government. As I often say, not one job gets created until somebody puts a dollar at risk. We need to respect that risk without coveting the rewards that the risk takers have reaped. When they make those rewards, let's make sure that those are shared appropriately with those investors who've taken the risk but also with Albertans.

That, Madam Chair, is how to build a strong, resilient, and robust economy, one that attracts investors, that protects them in a regulatory environment that I am happy to see we are moving forward with here, where we don't just try and tax our way back to prosperity, as is often the case when government policy is not driven by the attraction of investment and the creation of jobs but is driven by a certain world view, a myopic world view that is driven by partisanship and ideology.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 20 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's carried.

3:20

Bill 19

An Act to Improve the Affordability and Accessibility of Post-secondary Education

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

Ms Renaud: Thank you. It's my pleasure to stand up and speak to Bill 19. It was great actually to read this legislation, and it was great to hear about the consultation that took place over a number of

years. Tying tuition to the consumer price index to ensure that tuition costs remain affordable and don't spike for domestic students and apprentices is welcome news. I know that myself along with most of my colleagues have probably had opportunities to meet with representatives from the various postsecondary institutions in Alberta. I think their messaging and their advocacy was clear and strong about what they wanted, and it was fantastic to see some of those changes reflected in the legislation.

I'm the mom of two adults that technically are both in university still. One has been in university probably for, like, 15 years now, which is, you know, a little stressful. [interjection] Yeah. I know. He's a fellow at the University of Alberta and technically still a student, I think, a postdoc student or maybe a post-postdoc student. I'm not entirely sure. No offence, honey. But he loves what he does, like many students. They do what they do and they work hard to get to where they want to be because they love what they do and they love what they study. My son studies really old dead stuff. He's a paleontologist, and he studies teeth, actually. But for him, it was a matter of going to school and spending the money and doing the work to be somebody and to be what he wanted to be and to wake up happy every day.

What I do know about students across the country, across Alberta is that most students don't have the ability to look to their family for support. At the time that my son was ready to go to university, I had certainly invested in a registered education savings plan since he was an infant. I saved and saved so that he could go, so he had that to use for his first degree. Little did I know that 15 years later he'd still be a student.

But I also know that he had to work. He had to work during the school year, and he had to work very hard during the summer to save up the money he needed to sustain himself through the year. For the most part he could live at home and commute to school, but there came a point where he had to move away, like most students. He had to go to Toronto to finish his PhD, and that was a struggle. As you can imagine, tuition is high, housing costs are high, everything is high in Toronto. So he needed to work, but he also needed to study. You can imagine that the work in his field is not lucrative work at the point where he's still a student, so he had to work very hard.

I think that if at the time when he was struggling and working, our minimum wage would have even come close to reflecting the need of these people working at those jobs – it would have been a game changer for him to have been able to earn \$15 an hour. He was one of those people that had a minimum wage job, but he was trying to educate himself and to better himself and to create a life for himself. So I think it's really important to remember this group of people when we talk about minimum wage and why it's essential to pay a fair wage.

You know, the other really great thing about universities and postsecondaries – not just universities; colleges, technical schools – is that they produce people that change our lives. They create thinkers that change our lives. They create technology and innovation that drive our province, our country, our world, essentially. They're the ones that create the foundation for our future. They're the ones that create Nobel prize winners. They're the ones that create the science that tells us what we need to do and the direction that we need to go. This is our future.

I'm incredibly thankful that this legislation is looking at what's important and is respecting those young people. In some cases they're older people that are going back to school, but we're respecting them enough to give them important roles on things like boards of governors, where they are making important decisions, they're looking at increased costs for some of the other things associated with education.

I was doing a quick little Google search just to get an idea if I could get some more recent information about what things are like for students now. I mean, it's a little different for my kids. Sadly, the youngest child of mine has decided she's going to take that meandering path through postsecondary life that her brother did, and I think she's in year 6. Hey, I'm really impressed with the tuition freeze. No. I'm actually very happy on many levels.

There's a national charitable organization called Meal Exchange, and what they did I think it was in 2016: they said that they surveyed about 4,500 students across five Canadian campuses for over 16 months. They issued a report called Hungry for Knowledge, and what that report said was that 39 per cent of students are going without nutritious food while they are postsecondary students. Now, I imagine it's a little different for students that are at home, but a lot of students are not. Add to that a family that is just unable to help, unable to send groceries, unable to send \$100 here and there to help out when things are tight, and you've got a really difficult situation. In many cases you've got young people, students making decisions between: do I take that extra shift so that I can eat, or do I study for my exam or finish this paper? You're pushing people into really stressful situations.

Added to the food insecurity are all of the other things that we associate with poverty. Maybe we don't think enough about our postsecondary students when we talk about poverty, but it is a reality. I think about the struggles around mental health. When we think about our postsecondary students and the real struggles around mental health – sadly, every once in a while we're given that wake-up call when we hear about another university or college student who has died by suicide. These are in many instances entirely preventable. We know that poverty impacts our health, our mental health, everything.

You know, I think about how happy and desk-thumpy we are when we talk about the value of school lunches in our elementary schools or junior highs, because we recognize the value of nutritious food and food security for students. They can't learn if they're hungry, and they can't learn if they're worried about where the next meal is going to come from. I think about postsecondary students. Add all of the other stresses that go along with being a postsecondary student, and you can understand why mental health is impacted.

I believe that any kind of legislation that we can introduce that really respects the fact that our postsecondary students are in positions that are really difficult and they are faced with really tough choices – so let's put them at those tables, at those decision-making tables. Let's put them in a place where they can listen to the arguments that are being made on both sides and add their voices and add their opinion, because they are essential. They're the ones that are impacted.

Again I wanted to thank the minister for his consultation. I was listening intently-ish this morning to the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. I think he was speaking to the motion, and he was talking about the speed of this legislation and why we need to stop, we need to slow down, and we need to send this to committee, because it's going too fast. Well, I think if you think about one postsecondary student that is struggling and if you think about those students in the future, this isn't too fast. This has been a long time coming, and I think the minister spent a very long time listening and talking to people and getting this information so that we get it right.

3:30

I'd also like to add that his leader seems to be pretty proud of the fact that if things change and he is the Premier of the province, which he appears to feel entitled to, he is going to go quickly. There is no need to consult because the election essentially is a

consultation, and he is going to speed it up and go through. So I find it a little bit strange that the member would stand up specifically on Bill 19 and say that it's gone too quickly.

I don't think it's gone too quickly at all. I think it's been a long time coming. The fact is that this minister has recognized the need to have student voices at decision-making tables, the need to have realistic caps, the need to look at other fees that are assigned to students, that are really tough burdens to bear sometimes.

So I appreciate the work. I'm happy to support it, and I look forward to hearing more of the debate.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 19, An Act to Improve the Affordability and Accessibility of Post-secondary Education. Education is dear to my heart, and elementary, secondary, and postsecondary all rank right up there. I was thinking a lot about it in terms of affordability. As the member previous mentioned, that is really important. It's getting to the point where so many students are impacted by the cost that it is impeding their ability to get a postsecondary education.

I noticed when I was teaching junior high school a number of students who were very capable and quite talented and quite bright students, but they were daunted by the thought of the debt that they would have to incur. The families didn't have a lot of wealth, a lot of extra money, and the thought of having to live in Edmonton or Calgary and the expenses involved caused a number of them to just say, "Well, I'd better not," or "I'd better wait until I can save up the money." For some, that works. For some, they get out, get working, and they don't go back to a formal education, which I think is a loss for our society. We lose people who could really be contributing – I'm not saying that they weren't contributing – in a bigger way if it were more accessible. So, in addition to the affordability, I think accessibility is a major factor. Limiting tuition and the other costs will be a factor, will have an influence.

The other thing is that I was thinking about myself growing up in a pretty blue-collar community, where nobody had much extra money and postsecondary education was not the usual trend. But because postsecondary education back in my day was very affordable, people who were able, who had the marks and the inclination to go and the interest were able to access education, and the world really opened up. A lot of opportunities arose that would not have been possible if the costs were as high as they are now. It's hard to imagine in a world where the simple idea of getting a student loan was overwhelming. Every relative I had was practically apoplectic at the thought of it, but being able to go to university and not have to have the family mortgage whatever was really wonderful, and it really opened up.

I was thinking about the fact that it really added to our society. We talk about level playing fields. Well, this is a big factor in creating a society that has equal opportunity and ability for people to move into all sorts of professions without having to have a rich family or a very, you know, affluent family behind them. A person whose parent, whose primary breadwinner in the family works for a railroad can be right beside someone whose primary breadwinner in the family is, say, a city councillor, for instance, and do equally well and go on to the same academic achievements and accomplishments. A more equitable society, giving people more opportunity, just being able to tell someone who is in junior high or high school that it is manageable, they can do it, and what their dreams are can be achieved in many cases. I'm not going to tell everybody that they can do everything all the time because that's

not realistic, but people can accomplish what they want to with some help.

That's what I see in this. This is a help for our students. It's a help for our future. We all need supports. We want good roads and we want good doctors and we want all sorts of good service providers when we are unable to provide them for our own selves. We want people who are qualified and able and want to be doing it. I really like the idea of having city planners who are well-trained people, who have innovative ideas. That's the main thing I was thinking about as I was considering this bill.

The other one was the international students. I think I've mentioned before that I spoke with various international students and saw a documentary film that a group of them had made, which was really moving. It wasn't in English, but it didn't need to be. The students made it really for their own community in my riding, for people to understand what the challenges faced by international students were, with the primary concern being that the costs weren't predictable and they weren't stable. They would enrol in a program, and they would have the finances worked out, but the cost changed. They were left very powerless to deal with the instability and the unpredictability of that. So they would take part-time jobs. Sometimes that worked out. But they would have to be adapting and switching their goals as they went along.

A lot of times it made a difference, as we were talking about before, in how much food they were able to purchase, if they were able to keep themselves nourished. And with their jobs, if the job had to take up more of their time than they could actually afford, it could cut into their performance in their postsecondary institution. That sometimes would make it difficult for them to continue pursuing the program that they began in. So postsecondary students really need that predictability and stability in their funding.

Madam Chair, I just really support this bill very strongly and hope that we all do in this House. Thank you.

The Chair: Further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 19. You know, I have a number of different thoughts, and I'll try as best I can to organize them. I will, I guess, start by saying that I'm in favour of the bill, that I will be voting to support it.

I do have some concerns, and in order to sort of get a better perspective on the bill, I sought some input from a number of different quarters. I spoke with representatives of Alberta students. A number of them I got to know quite well during the course of a recent political campaign I was involved in, and I was proud to have them as part of my campaign team. They certainly are enthusiastically in favour of Bill 19. They've indicated that many of the things in Bill 19 were things that they've been advocating for for some time, especially with regard to the certainties surrounding tuition fees and linking maximum tuition fee increases to the consumer price index. So that part is good.

I also spoke with officials at some of the universities that I know. Specifically, I spoke to people at Lakeland College, which is located, of course, in Vermilion-Lloydminster, with a campus in each of those two centres. There are also concerns expressed there, but the concerns, I would say, are sort of phrased in this way. The officials at those institutions, not just Lakeland College but others, are saying that they appreciate the need for some degree of certainty and stability in terms of costs for students and that Bill 19 provides this.

3:40

But concomitant with that is the requirement for the postsecondary institutions to have some degree of certainty with regard to their

funding, which clearly is not solely provided by tuition fees, only a percentage, and it's a varying percentage, depending on the institution and depending on the time frame we're looking at. But only a small percentage of the actual instructional costs of a university are covered by tuition fees. Because of that, there is a reliance on behalf of universities to find other sources of revenue. Certainly, the government grant each year is a significant source of that revenue, but there are other sources of revenue that universities have worked very hard to enhance.

I'll use the example of alumni support or extension. You know, one of the things that is a difference between what we have in our culture in Canada and the United States – while for the most part I would take Canadian culture over American culture any day of the week, if there's one area where I wish we could be more like the Americans, that is in alumni support of our postsecondary institutions. They do a much better job of this than we do. And it's hard to really explain. I've talked to extension officers at a number of different universities and colleges and asked: "You know, what is it that makes us different? Why is it that somebody who attends a postsecondary institution in the United States is almost branded and knows the fight song of their college alma mater until the day they die?"

I was attending a hockey game in Anaheim a number of years ago and got involved with a fight song singing contest between supporters of USC and UCLA in the duck pond in Anaheim, where they had to explain to people what icing and offside were. But when it came to the break between periods and the USC Trojan Marching Band came out and performed, the UCLA fans would start singing the UCLA fight song. Then the USC fans would go back and forth, this sort of antiphonal effect that went on within the arena. It was remarkable.

That is something that Canadian universities and colleges struggle with, although I would point out that in recent years we have seen significant, very generous gifts being given to institutions right across Canada. Certainly, right here in Alberta there have been some very significant gifts to fund specific programs, chairs in different fields of study, and I think that's positive.

But I do express a concern with regard to the overall quality and sustainability of our postsecondary institutions. Clearly, this piece of legislation is going to put I'll call it a harness or at least a brake on tuition fee increases. It's clearly going to be a lever that is not available to postsecondary institutions in terms of increasing the revenue, and because, of course, that money comes out of students' pockets, I can understand the need for that. But it is then, I think, more important that we put emphasis on the other sources of revenue and having some stability there, and that's challenging. If you're going to guarantee an international student, for example, the exact amount of their tuition for the next four years but the postsecondary institution does not know what it's going to receive as a government grant for even the following year, it creates some potential problems.

Now, I know there are going to be some in the room that are going to point out that I was part of a government that in the 2013 budget cut the Alberta Advanced Education budget by 7 per cent. I will tell you that that was a decision that, you know, at the time seemed to be appropriate. But in talking to various postsecondary institutions since that decision was made and seeing the difficulties that it created within Lakeland College, I know that that sort of cut – when they're anticipating a 2 per cent increase and, in fact, get a 7 per cent cut, that's like a 9 per cent chasm in their funding – is very, very difficult. That required some very, very difficult decisions to be made at Lakeland College with regard to cutting programs that were very good programs, were well subscribed but,

unfortunately, were also very costly to deliver, and there was no way to increase the tuition to try to do a cost recovery on those.

You know, stable funding is something that I think is important, but I wanted to broaden the conversation about postsecondary education a little bit because I think it is important that we put it in the context of what purpose it serves in Alberta society and what our needs are. Alberta has the youngest population in Canada. We've said that the average age of Albertans – I believe the number is 36. Alberta also has the lowest participation rate in postsecondary education in the country. That seems paradoxical, but that's, in fact, the statistic. Alberta has the lowest postsecondary education participation rate.

Now, some have suggested that that's because people can go straight out of high school or even not complete high school and go straight into working in the oil patch and earning very large salaries. While that is a factor, to be sure, it is not the sole reason. The impact of having a low postsecondary participation rate, though, is something that we have to take a look at. It means that in order for us to have the various highly educated tradespeople, highly educated university graduates to be our doctors, our nurses, our veterinarians, our pharmacists, our teachers, and a number of other fields, Alberta has to bring them in from other jurisdictions, from other provinces or from other countries.

Part of the challenge with doing that is that you have to attract them to come here. We know that the oil and gas sector at times, when things are going well, pays quite large salaries, and it inflates the salaries of everyone. Now, most of the time that's a good thing – I'm not saying that that's necessarily a bad thing – but it does require that we take a look at: what is our postsecondary education capacity? Is it sufficient, and what should we be looking at in the long term, in the eight- to 10-year time frame – and that's not really that long term – in terms of: do we need to increase capacity? My answer to that is that, yes, we do, and the number that has been arrived at by Alberta's 26 postsecondary institutions is approximately 90,000 additional spaces to what we have today.

Forty-seven thousand of those is roughly just to get Alberta to the Canadian average for a postsecondary participation rate. Just to get us to the average, not even to the highest. An additional 40,000 is roughly because we have a young and very rapidly growing population, and if we just keep up with population growth, we will need 40,000 additional spaces. If you add that up, it comes to just under 90,000 additional spaces. The planning for that has to go ahead.

The second question that needs to be asked is a broader discussion on affordability and accessibility and asking ourselves the question: what impact do affordability and tuition fees have on access to postsecondary education, and what can we do to lessen that impact? It even begs the question: should postsecondary education be free? I know that's been advocated by some student organizations, including the national union of students. They've suggested that it should be free, and in some countries it is indeed free. I do have some issues with that, and to make that change, especially if it was made abruptly, I think would create some significant issues.

But I will say that Canada, unfortunately, ranks 14th out of 16 OECD countries in providing scholarships to postsecondary students. Fourteenth out of 16. If we're talking about making postsecondary education more accessible and trying to get a higher participation rate, certainly something that we could do is at least look at what we're offering in terms of scholarships, awards, bursaries, grants, and loans. You know, as far as that goes, that's something where we have to look at ourselves: what could we do to improve that?

I'm actually pleased that I contribute annually to two different scholarships at institutions, mostly at Lakeland College, but we've also given to students attending other institutions, one named in memory of my former partner, Dr. Malcolm Gray, for students entering animal health science or veterinary medicine, and a second named in honour of my former classmate Dr. Kenneth Smith, who was an instructor for many years in the animal health technology program at Lakeland College. Kenny passed away a couple of years ago, and a bunch of us that are classmates of Kenny contribute to a scholarship that was established in his memory.

That's a good thing, and I think we should all look for opportunities for doing that and fund students in whatever field of endeavour is important to you. For me it's veterinary medicine. For someone else, it might be social work. It might be education. It might be a variety of different fields. But I think that that is something that we can do, and I think that that 14th out of 16 level is nothing that Canada should be proud of.

Finally, on the support of research and innovation, while Alberta has some of the greatest innovators and researchers anywhere in the world and we do incredible work like the development, for example, of the Edmonton protocol for islet cell transplants for type 1 diabetes patients, which is world leading, absolutely world leading, we unfortunately from the Conference Board of Canada last year got a D grade in their report on research and innovation in Canada. We need to do better. We need to find out what it is that we can do to better support our researchers.

3:50

Just last month I visited researchers at the University of Alberta who are working on providing a marker for prostate cancer. That means that for someone who has a high PSA antigen on the test, whose next diagnostic test was a highly invasive biopsy, which, if it didn't actually have the luck of hitting the tumour cells, would come up as a false negative, they're actually developing a test that would just involve a blood test that has a much higher sensitivity and a higher specificity rate for determining whether or not that patient has prostate cancer and whether they have to proceed with additional, more invasive forms of treatment.

That's happening at the University of Alberta. That's technology that is being developed here that isn't being worked on anywhere else in the world. Certainly, the initial findings are very promising. If it works, it is something that the university plans to make commercially available. The cost of doing that test is roughly one-quarter the cost of doing biopsies. You know, just think of the level of invasiveness. We're talking about a blood sample, a single venipuncture in your arm compared to the current means of taking biopsies on men with prostate cancer, which I won't go into the details of here.

Dr. Swann: Thank you.

Dr. Starke: You're welcome.

Madam Chair, I will tell you that I'm proud to be a former student of one of our postsecondary institutions. I attended the University of Alberta for two years in the faculty of agriculture and forestry. I was an aggie. I hated the engineers; they hated us. It was all good. After that, I completed my veterinary studies and went to the University of Saskatchewan. But I will tell you that I'm proud of the experience I had. I'm proud of what we have in our province in terms of postsecondary institutions, our 26 institutions, but I think it's something that we have to look at always trying to make better.

I support Bill 19 because I think Bill 19 does make things better, but I don't think we can stop with Bill 19. I think there are other issues we have to address. I think we have to continue to work with

the leadership of Campus Alberta, those 26 institutions across our province, and strive to make Alberta a world leader in postsecondary education, which is, I think, one of the key things in growing and developing and diversifying our economy.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Mrs. Schreiner: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 19, An Act to Improve the Affordability and Accessibility of Post-secondary Education. Fellow members, the future of our province is contingent on building our human capital to meet the competitive needs of our labour market. The ability to achieve this supports the changes that this bill is proposing.

Madam Chair, I reside in Alberta's third-largest city, and on March 1 I had the great pleasure of the announcement that our Red Deer College had been granted the opportunity to begin the journey to becoming a degree-granting institution. This announcement meant a number of wins for Red Deer as well as for all of Alberta. It was paramount to central Albertans as it kept family units together and reduced educational costs, but it also supports retaining our talent in our region as the catalyst to meeting our labour needs. Additionally, it draws students to the Red Deer area, and this migration promotes further chances to build upon our human capital. For this we are immensely grateful.

Education is an endeavour that promotes growth and prosperity within our communities and as a province as well as a nation. This government's foresight to recognize and answer this call serves a number of agendas that empower not only our future needs but, additionally, the current and future changing dynamics of our market.

Our ability to compete globally can be markedly harnessed by the educational opportunities we promote within our communities. My community of Red Deer has championed this 25-year ask, and we are thrilled to be part of the momentum this government is initiating. Fellow members, our province is unique in the opportunities that are offered. We are rich in resource, and if we continue to invest in our information, skills, and abilities, we can strengthen our stance by way of knowledge. Madam Chair, we know that knowledge is power.

Bill 19 supports the strongest Alberta we have ever had. It opens up opportunities with all of our communities. Gauging tuition increases to an Albertan consumer price index is sound fiduciary policy. It is directly correlated to what is affordable, and it aligns with Albertan families' desire to see themselves in a better economic position. Mandating students as voices on boards enables a unique perspective to the changes that meet their needs and rejuvenate the future of education. Governance speaks to accountability, and we are accountable to Alberta students and families, whose dreams fulfill the legacy of our great province.

Madam Chair, I am thrilled to speak to these changes and what they translate to my community of Red Deer as well as to the breadth of our province's future educational needs. We are clearly moving to a resolve that empowers present and future generations of educational mastery, and it is a pleasure to stand and rise to speak to Bill 19.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, amendments? Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to say that I guess I appreciate this bill, Bill 19, because our postsecondary education in Alberta is so important. Though I didn't take the opportunity myself to pursue a postsecondary education, I do

appreciate those that have, and I benefit from those that have every day. I think that as we go through our lives, we often rely on people that have taken that opportunity for a postsecondary education, and of course we all benefit from it. I know that my son in particular – he's a high school teacher in Valleyview – has benefited from his postsecondary education, and so do the students that he teaches. I think it's great that the government is concerned about these issues as far as making sure that postsecondary education is affordable and accessible for the people of Alberta.

There's some little discussion about the speed at which this bill came forward and everything. I think the concern I have is that it hasn't given me an opportunity to consult with students, with universities, colleges, and that sort of thing myself. I've reached out, but I haven't had a chance to have any kind of meetings or discussions with them on this. I do think it's only fair that we have an opportunity to hear what these organizations, these universities and colleges, have to say about this bill. You know, our thought on this is to have this bill pass as soon as possible, too, but taking just a little bit of time and having those discussions with the people that are most affected by this I think is reasonable to ask. Of course, we can do that and still have this bill pass this session.

When I look at the affordability and everything, I wonder about the added costs that this government has burdened postsecondary institutions with. One we look at is the carbon tax, of course, and what effect it's had on postsecondary education and these schools that provide that. So I just wondered if the minister could maybe answer a question as far as: what are the costs that have been incurred by, say, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, maybe Grande Prairie College because of the carbon tax?

4:00

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments?

Mr. Loewen: Okay. I guess no answer to that question.

You know, I think something that we need to keep in mind here is that this government has kind of gone ahead and they're talking about this Bill 19 to improve accessibility and affordability and trying to give certainty to these postsecondary institutions on their costs and their income and that sort of thing, but they did add a carbon tax, that did burden these schools with additional costs. Of course, by doing that, they also burdened students with the cost of the carbon tax.

When we look at the carbon tax and how it's affected students – now, of course, some of the people in my constituency, for instance, live close enough to school that they could just take public transportation or maybe even walk to Grande Prairie College, but many in my constituency would not have that opportunity. They would have to move to the area or drive great distances. Of course, when you're moving to an area to get your education, the cost of living is a huge expense for students. The cost of living has been increased by the carbon tax. The cost for students to travel to these postsecondary institutions has increased. Those are some concerns that we've had as this government has gone forward and passed some of their legislation.

Obviously, we have problems with employment. Youth unemployment is high right now. We understand how hard students work to get a postsecondary education, and they sometimes work one or two jobs in order to make ends meet. Of course, when the job situation is as poor as it is right now, this makes it harder on these students to procure the education that they desire. It makes it more difficult for these students to cover their tuition and to be able to finance themselves as they go to school.

I think another thing that we are concerned about, too, is that the government needs to ensure that they are creating jobs so that when

students get out of university or college, there's actually something for them to do. Of course, we have some serious issues with jobs in this province. Unemployment is high right now, so we need to make sure that these students have something to do when they graduate, because that's what they want to do. That's what they're here to do. They're there to gain an education so that they can make a living and provide for their families down the road.

They talk about sustainable postsecondary education as far as making sure that in the future these colleges and universities can continue to provide that quality of education. We need to make sure not just that we deal with the tuition and everything but that we deal with the expenses that these colleges and universities have.

Again, I appreciate the bill. I appreciate the idea behind the bill and why it's, you know, so important to make sure that these things are set, that tuition fees are something that students can expect and rely on, but we also have to make sure that the colleges and universities are provided with the opportunity and certainty going forward. Now, in my discussions in the past with Grande Prairie College I know that one of the biggest concerns they have, of course, is certainty, knowing how much money they're going to be getting and what they're going to be required to pay with that money.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

These organizations can deal a lot with the different things that government can throw at them, but they need to have certainty. This government, of course, brought in the carbon tax, and that added extra costs to the universities and colleges. Now they've come up with this cap and this tuition structure. These things have changed the certainty and have changed what these colleges were expecting. I appreciate that the minister suggested that there's been a lot of consultation with these organizations. I haven't had a chance to check that out myself because I haven't had a chance to have a meeting or discussion with, for instance, Grande Prairie College, which is in my constituency. They want to have certainty going forward, and of course as we keep changing things and changing things, then that certainty is gone, that kind of ability to plan in the future. Though I think something like this could help down the road, it obviously creates a little bit of a situation up front, when it first comes in.

Again, I think we're onto something good here as far as the government wanting to add some certainty for students. I think students deserve to have some certainty, too, as far as their costs and, going forward, what they can expect to pay. I guess I just wish the government hadn't done some of the other things that have increased costs for students and made things less affordable for students and, in fact, all Albertans.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Prior to continuing with the debate, I'd like to recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Withdrawal of Comments

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is, of course, Halloween, and while most kids are going to be eating a copious amount of candy this evening, it appears that my fortune is to eat a copious amount of crow.

I wanted to make some clarifications on some statements that I made earlier today in response to some remarks by the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. Now, I understand that some members of this Assembly are interpreting my comments as an attack on farmers. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have nothing but

respect for farmers, be they rich or poor. My family, of course, farmed in Saskatchewan, were very bad at it, and ended up having to move off the farm because of that.

The point that I was trying to make was that our government is concerned about making sure that every Alberta student has the opportunity to achieve the postsecondary education of their dreams regardless of their financial circumstances. I was trying to underline the fact that I think it's incumbent upon all of us here in this House to recognize that some of us don't have as much privilege as others in this society and that some of us need more help than others to get into postsecondary education. In fact, I was trying to clarify that my own personal circumstances mean that policies like the minimum wage and those sorts of things are personally helpful to me and others like me in those financial situations.

I also wanted to clarify, Madam Chair, that I respect the ruling that you made. In fact, as a result, I withdraw my comments, as you've asked me to do.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Debate Continued

The Deputy Chair: We are now on the debate. Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Thank you very much for recognizing me so that I can speak on behalf of the families, students, and new Canadians of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. As part of my role as a rural MLA representing a number of municipalities, I have the opportunity to represent seven high school graduations every year, and with them go a slate of high school awards.

Unfortunately, on my way home from Tofield I actually had the unfortunate opportunity of colliding with a deer. While I hope that no one ever has to deal with that, that unfortunately is a reality of driving in rural Alberta. The best thing that happened was that I had a really nice, hard-working family pull over to the side of the road to see if I needed help. They live just a couple of miles over on their own farm. They had just seen me at the high school, where one of their children was accepting an award, and the father actually helped drag the deer off the road for me. That was incredibly kind and just an example of one of the many families that work very hard to be able to pay to put their kids through postsecondary.

4:10

On those nights where they are trying to achieve just small amounts of dollars from local businesses, municipalities, and legions, it all goes towards these young children being able to one day fulfill the dreams that they have. So that is who Bill 19 is for, you know, regular families that work so hard so that their kids can apply to and be successful in achieving postsecondary education.

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

I'm thankful for a lot of the work that the government has done, the Minister of Advanced Education, to ensure that there was stable funding, that there was frozen tuition since 2015, that there was mental health funding put into these postsecondary institutions. The dollars that were allocated specifically for the rurally located postsecondary institutions were dollars that were incredibly valuable and had been long advocated for by students. It took a long time, and it took this government to actually put the funding in.

When I think about the people that are in Fort Saskatchewan and surrounding communities – Vegreville, Mundare, Bruderheim – there are new Canadians that have come here to work as temporary

foreign workers, and one of those people is a friend of mine. Her name is Cheryl. She moved here under the temporary foreign worker program, and she worked at McDonald's for a number of years and met, actually, her partner in life, Anthony. They worked there, and they started to date. Actually, Anthony had to help create a false schedule with the manager so that it could look like Cheryl was off and Anthony was in fact working. Anthony was actually not working, and he surprised Cheryl at their church, Our Lady of the Angels, and proposed to her with the entire church, and it was on Skype. It was on Skype because they're from the Philippines, so they wanted to make sure that all of their families and friends were able to witness such a lovely and touching moment that they had. They worked together at McDonald's; they worked together at Tim Hortons. Cheryl and Anthony got married in that same church. Cheryl applied to go to postsecondary at NAIT. What I found out is that a person in her position as a permanent resident – oh, I missed a part.

They volunteer with a group called the Kabisig Society. This is a group that helps advocate for Philippine workers that are permanent residents or temporary foreign workers, and they help advocate on those issues. When we were at Turner park one day, she had some very, very incredible news to tell me over hot dogs. I thought that she was going to tell me that she was pregnant because she was so excited. As it turned out, she had gained her permanent residency status.

So she applied to NAIT, and she worked really hard. She worked minimum wage jobs, and Anthony did as well. She worked really hard. If you look over her Facebook feed, you see that they basically do everything. They post pictures of what they eat. They have matching shoes and matching Canadian shirts on Canada Day. When they go to *Avengers* movies, they always have matching superhero shirts. They're quite adorable. It was there that I found out that she had actually gotten pregnant. She graduated.

She and Anthony are just one example of new people that come to Alberta and want to help build our communities, build our economy, and build families. They come here to build families. For too long under previous governments they were treated like purses as opposed to people. So I'm really glad that we have a minister and a Premier that look at these people as contributors to society as opposed to just a lever. Yes, there are many levers of funding for education that need to be looked at, but to consider a person a lever for that funding is flawed. That's what can hurt the number of people that apply to postsecondary and can affect the amount of participation that we have.

It's expensive. Once upon a time it was \$800. Well, it's not \$800 anymore. It's quite a lot more expensive. It was out of my reach, you know, as the daughter of a single father, a painter of houses. To be able to put some measures to reel it in so that it's more accessible for the family in Tofield and more accessible for Cheryl and Anthony in Fort Saskatchewan is incredibly important.

I'm really happy that instead of thinking about tax cuts that would in fact gut that really incredible institution that continues to help us to look for those ways that we address the problems in society – Anthony and Cheryl are from the Philippines, a country that gets ravaged often by typhoons. We need to be looking at making sure that we have the brightest minds in our universities and our postsecondary colleges and our trades to actually build communities that can withstand the effects of climate change. These are all very important things that we need to pull together on as we move forward in Alberta and Canada and the world.

I'm very happy to see that an international student will at least know how much that year of tuition is going to be. They won't be surprised. It's still very expensive, but this is a great measure to move towards including people like Anthony and Cheryl in the

entire spectrum of society so that they are not only nannies, so that they're not only temporary foreign workers at Tim Hortons – who do incredible service, very honourable jobs – but they're also accountants and they're also lawyers and they're also child care workers. They are also people that just want a shot at doing something that they are passionate about.

So I'm really pleased that this is moving forward, and I look forward to seeing it pass through committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much. If you'd indulge me, Madam Chair, I've got a specific question regarding this, and then I'd like to carry on with a statement of mine. To the minister. On page 29 under Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities Sector it says under 102.3:

(2) An institution assigned to the Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities sector may . . .

(c) collaborate with . . . post-secondary institutions to support regional access to undergraduate degree programs.

Then the next clause says:

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2)(c), Athabasca University shall collaborate with other post-secondary institutions to support regional access to undergraduate degree programs.

Is there something specific as to why Athabasca University was kind of singled out that they shall collaborate? Was there something that came up, that happened, that caused that?

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills for the question. He's quite right. We do have a much stronger mandate in the bill for Athabasca University in particular to collaborate, particularly with the colleges in the region that he represents, the colleges in the region that you represent, Madam Chair. You know, when Athabasca University was initially founded, one of its purposes was to provide university education to rural and northern Albertans, who didn't really have easy access to university education at that time. I think it's fair to say that Athabasca University has drifted a little bit from that mandate. Our government has now reinforced that mandate, to provide access to university education in rural and northern regions in alignment with the original intent of that university, so the strength of that mandate, that requirement is reflected in the language that the member referred to in the bill.

4:20

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Minister, for that.

I'll carry on. Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 19, An Act to Improve the Affordability and Accessibility of Post-secondary Education. The only problem I really have with the bill is a little bit about the name of it, the accessibility part, because I don't see a lot of information in the bill that relates to accessibility per se. What I'm specifically referring to is, I guess, the number of seats, especially in the medical fields, that we have here in Alberta and the access.

I know personally of a couple of young men who couldn't get in in Edmonton and Calgary or anywhere else in Canada. So they were kind of forced to go overseas to take their training and then came back to find that there's no chance at all of getting a residency. We've tried to address this with the college as well. It's very, very difficult. We've got, you know, some good, well-trained doctors that are ready and willing to work out in rural Alberta that just can't

get a residency. So if we could work on the total accessibility and not just the financial, that would be awesome.

I've been a parent of two kids that have gone through post-secondary, one of them 10 years of university to get to the medical doctor stage, and watched the struggles that they had. It's quite expensive, especially being from rural Alberta, putting two kids through university here in Edmonton. We do see the struggle and the advantage that we would have if there was, you know, some control over tuitions as well. I do applaud that, having been through that and watched my kids work through it. But they were very fortunate that in the time when they were going to school, Alberta was in a boom phase, and there were lots of jobs. When you came out for your four months off in the summer, you could go and work. My son worked in the oil patch and did very, very well during the summer such that he didn't have to work through university and the eight months that he was in school. That really gave him a chance to focus on his studies, and I think that's what we're trying to address here.

You know, for a lot of the young people, when they come out of high school and get into university, it's a bit of a culture shock because they go away from the I don't want to say spoon-feeding that they get in high school, being helped along, but when you get into university it's: you sink or swim on your own. Having the ability to be able to afford to just go to school and concentrate on your studies and not have to work two or three part-time jobs just to pay your tuition and your rent and that I think would go a long way. Anything we can do to help students get to that point: I think it's incumbent on us as a government to do those things.

My worry right now with students and the young people that I do talk to is not so much that they're worried about the tuition – I don't think that's the top thing on their minds right now – but it's the fact that when they've finished their engineering degree, there are no jobs out there for them, especially down in Calgary. If you're in petrochemical or oil development, engineering, or geology, it's going to be very difficult to find a job. So, hopefully, we get some turnaround in the province here and get ourselves back to an advantage position, where we fill up those office spaces in Calgary and get people back to work.

As I said, we were very fortunate that our children went through. I had a good job in the oil field, so I could help them out a little bit. It's very expensive putting kids through school, especially from rural Alberta, in the cities.

I frequently hear about workshops and fairs that are put on for students to try to secure a job in a workforce that seems to not have enough jobs to go around, and students frequently are passed over. We want to ensure that we're doing what's best for the students. They need the peace of mind that comes with a capped tuition, and the relief of this worry will help them to focus on their education and on their future careers. As I said, you know, any time that you can put the students into a position where they're focusing on their studies instead of trying to make ends meet, it can be very helpful.

Students have been pushing for a tuition framework, so we were happy to see that the government is finally listening to them and implementing it into this legislation. In fact, reducing the unpredictability of tuition hikes would be the greatest help to students who struggle the most to make ends meet, perhaps working one, two, or even three part-time jobs while pursuing their education. It's good that the government has decided to actually listen to the students, as they have not done so with so many stakeholders in the past legislation that they've brought forward, which has ultimately ended up in making a mess of their respective files. So it is refreshing to see that there has been a lot of consultation with the students.

I'm also happy to see that students will be getting more representation on each institution's board of governors and that this will help all students have a greater say in the decisions that affect them.

Additionally, when it comes to the tuition of international students, there will be increased predictability as students will be able to know the cost of their entire degree. This could prevent unreasonable hikes that can throw a wrench into an international student's education. So many students must work to support themselves through their education, and not knowing what a student has in store for the next year can make it impossible to plan.

However, an exceptionally important way that students plan through their education is for how they will support themselves during as well as afterwards. The jobs available to students as of recently are flickering away due to the government's ideological agenda driving jobs out of the province. Like I said previously, we really need to get our focus back as a government, getting our economy on the upswing again.

As I said before, throughout my son's education he had the ability to support himself working in the oil and gas industry. Right now those jobs just aren't out there for students anymore. It was an opportunity that allowed him to be self-sufficient and debt free while providing him with a real quality-of-life experience to help him when facing future employers.

Unfortunately, what was once a means for so many is no longer a possibility for most students pursuing an education today. Those jobs are simply not there anymore, and for the ones that are, the pool of individuals applying for them tends to far outrank a postsecondary education.

I talked to one lady up in the Cold Lake area that previously used to hire 22 summer students. She used it as an opportunity to help out students and give them a bit of an education in the real world and how to work and build up the work ethic. But because of the increases in minimum wage, she now hires four students and then very quickly weeds it down to two because they've gone far more to mechanization, because they're in an industry where they could actually do that, use a lot of machinery rather than manual labour. They had to make that choice because of those increases.

It's a very prominent fear in the minds of students these days: what happens after graduation? Will I get a job? I addressed that previously with engineering students, especially in the petrochemical and oil industries. They're very, very concerned about going through a four-year program, all the expenses, coming out with a huge amount of personal student debt and no way to pay it off. I think that's going to cause some real concerns for young people in the future.

Although this legislation rightfully protects students during their education, we must give some forethought to the economic environment that they will be stepping into after their education and how to get Alberta's economy back on track. Postsecondary students need to feel secure in the availability of gainful employment as they enter the workforce, degree in hand. Again, you know, I mentioned the engineers. I worked with a lot of them, both young and old, in my experience in the oil field. It was always nice. They used to send out, especially over the summertime, students to work directly with us out in the field for their four months, so it gave them a real insight into what was actually going on in the construction industry that they could take back, then, into their fall studies.

Affordable tuition is at the forefront of a student's mind, but so is the career that they'll be stepping into for the rest of their lives. It's crucial to restore an economic environment with an abundance of available employment for a graduating student to feel secure in. Students must already sacrifice so much when getting a postsecondary education in order to pursue a career of their choice.

They often must put their lives on hold, give up an income, and spend their days, nights, and weekends studying, working to make ends meet, or attempting to live a balanced life.

The stress that a typical student life can bring on may be manageable for some but overwhelming for others. This is why it's so vital to support students in their education and ensure that any unnecessary worries are taken off their plate such as unpredictable tuition hikes. These hikes can mean that students are missing classes and studying time to work longer hours in a part-time job or a second job in order to make up the difference. Missed classes or being unprepared for an exam can have a dire consequence on the grand scheme of an education. That is why this tuition cap is important to students. This is why it's important to support students in their education and why I support this bill.

You know, we talk about the stresses of passing and being at the top of your class, at least in the top 50 per cent of your class, to ensure that you can get a job when you're finished. Anything that we can do, like I said, to ensure that students are spending their time studying rather than working two or three jobs to make ends meet – I think this bill goes a step in that right direction.

Thank you.

4:30

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to respond to a couple of the comments that the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills made in his speech. It was around the issue of accessibility. He suggested that he wasn't sure how the legislation promoted the accessibility of education. So I just wanted to talk a little bit about how what we're dealing with here promotes accessibility of higher education here in the province of Alberta. There are a couple of key things.

First of all, this bill puts Red Deer College and Grande Prairie Regional College on the path to becoming universities without requiring any future legislative changes to the Post-secondary Learning Act. We recognize that right now Red Deer College and Grande Prairie Regional College aren't ready to make that transition to university, but when they are, we won't have to come back to the legislation to do this. The mechanism is already in place to do that.

By allowing Red Deer College and Grande Prairie Regional College to make the transition to offering university degrees – and let me just be clear that they don't intend to sacrifice any of the other programs that they currently offer to the students that they serve; they intend to add on the possibility of pursuing university degrees at those locations – we will enhance the ability of Albertans in central Alberta and northwestern Alberta to get university degrees when otherwise they would have to go to Edmonton or Calgary, far away from home, to pursue university education. By putting Red Deer College and Grande Prairie Regional College – we are enhancing access for people in central Alberta and northwestern Alberta to university degrees that they otherwise would have to leave home and go quite far to get. That's one aspect of accessibility that we're enhancing through this legislation.

The second piece is related to that. It's these collaboration frameworks that the member had a question about earlier. We are requiring other colleges to collaborate with universities in the system to offer other kinds of degrees through the colleges that aren't on the path to becoming universities. Northern Lakes College, Portage College, Keyano College, Medicine Hat: those kinds of places will be able to work with existing universities in the province to come up with a way to deliver university degrees to the students that they serve and also allow students in the rest of the

province to have access to university education that they may or may not have access readily to right now. We're enhancing accessibility to university education in that way.

There's a final and not exactly straightforward point in the legislation. We heard quite clearly from students, faculty, and administration at MacEwan and Mount Royal University that their students were having problems going on to graduate studies with a MacEwan or a Mount Royal University degree in their hands because other universities who are assessing their qualifications weren't quite sure how to treat a degree from Mount Royal University or Grant MacEwan University. That's because the governance structures at those two institutions weren't exactly like the governance structures at the University of Alberta or the University of Calgary or other universities in other parts of the country.

We heard stories of students who had graduated from Mount Royal and MacEwan and had difficulty getting into graduate programs because the receiving institutions weren't sure how to assess their qualifications because they weren't quite sure what kind of institution they had graduated from. This bill addresses that issue as well, Madam Chair, by giving Mount Royal University and Grant MacEwan University a general faculties council, the ability of the board of governors to appoint chancellors, and the ability of the board of governors to grant honorary degrees. We are creating the powers and governance structures at Mount Royal University and MacEwan University that other universities have, so we hope that by doing so, we will enhance MacEwan and Mount Royal University graduates' access to graduate-level programming at other universities in Alberta as well as across the country.

So on those three points – enhancing access to university degrees by transitioning Red Deer College and Grande Prairie Regional College to universities, creating strong collaboration mandates between existing universities and the other colleges that aren't on the path to university, and changing the governance structure so that it's quite clear what kind of institutions Mount Royal and Grant MacEwan are – we're enhancing access for students all over Alberta to high-quality university education that will set them up for success regardless of where they go once they graduate. I'm quite proud of our government's movement on those three pieces of accessibility.

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

Drever: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to support Bill 19, An Act to Improve the Affordability and Accessibility of Post-secondary Education, and I would like to thank the Minister of Advanced Education for putting this bill forward. I think it's an important one, and I want to talk about why.

I want to talk about back in 2013, when I was attending Mount Royal University. I remember that there was a big rally that happened when the Premier of the time, Premier Redford, made huge cuts to postsecondary, \$147 million worth of cuts, and that was one of the reasons why I actually decided to run for office. I was extremely disappointed in that government. I saw our tuition go up because of that. Our programs were cut. Our engineering program was cut. Our midwifery program was cut. Our jazz program was cut. Students didn't know what to do at the time, so they decided to do a rally, and conveniently Premier Redford's constituency office was right across the street from our university, so we decided to march to our constituency office and present to her a petition stating that we don't want these cuts.

I remember some of the chants that some students were saying: "No ifs, no buts, no education cuts" and "education, not edu-cuts." You know, I stand by those slogans. I stand by those words because

I feel that this current minister would never do something like that, so I'm proud to be part of that government that wouldn't hurt students.

You know, we've heard a lot of rhetoric from the opposition on how there will be a lot of pain if they become government, how they want to cut a lot of our budget, and I have no doubt that postsecondary would be on top of that list. So when they stood up just yesterday stating that they don't support this bill, it actually really personally affected me. It brought me back to how I felt in 2013. I don't think that students deserve that kind of treatment, and I'm just so happy that they have a government that is looking out for them and has their backs.

Thank you, Minister, for everything that you've done. Thank you for the consultation that you've done, speaking with student unions, speaking with different schools across this province. They spoke loud and proud that this is a bill that they wanted, and you definitely listened to them, so I just wanted to thank you for that.

On top of this bill, you know, our government has done a lot of extra things to help students in postsecondary such as a tuition freeze for five years now, and that's something that I've heard a lot of positive feedback on from different students.

I still am technically a student at Mount Royal because I actually never got to finish my degree. I was a little busy campaigning, but you know what? Now I get to be the ambassador and talk about Mount Royal University and all the great work that they do, so there you go.

4:40

You know, I talk to a lot of students, and they say that they're very thankful for the tuition freeze because it gives them more predictability on their tuition and how much it's going to cost. I feel like no student should have to worry about that. Everyone should have the right to an education, and everyone should have the right to attend a postsecondary institution if they want to. I feel like tuition shouldn't be a barrier. Because of that, I'm so proud that we did this tuition freeze.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the meat of the bill, and I wanted to talk a little bit about the framework. What it says is that it caps each institution's average tuition and apprenticeship fee increases to the consumer price index. It provides increased predictability for international students, allows the minister to regulate mandatory, noninstructional fees and international student tuition – that's actually something I've heard a lot from students of what they wanted, so I'm glad that this is in the bill – and empowers students to have more say over exceptional tuition and fee increases. Also, another thing that it does – and something that I know that the Member for Red Deer-North is really proud of – is that it's going to grant Red Deer College university status, so congratulations to you. It also will grant the Alberta College of Art and Design a transition to university status. That's in Calgary, ACAD. I remember when the minister made that announcement at that institution. They were very happy about that.

You know, this bill is actually going to be impacting a lot of people's lives in a positive way across the province, and I'm very happy to stand here and support it, and I hope everyone else does, too. Thank you.

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments? The Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to rise and speak to the bill. I do speak in support of it although I would like to make some comments, both supportive and, hopefully, constructive as well. Let me begin by saying that I'm really glad to see the

clarification, maybe even the enshrinement in legislation, of the diversity of college offerings or university or independent schools – all the different kinds of education that will be offered here. I really think that that also contributes to the accessibility. One size does not fit all, and different kinds of education are definitely valuable to different students in different sectors of our economy, different parts of our province, so I think that that's extremely important, that we have these kinds of things.

Yes. Red Deer College as a polytechnic university I think was a great step on the part of the government. I give you credit for that. The focus that they have on technical and industry-informed kinds of education, job-ready education, is extremely important in central Alberta and, I think, to certain segments of our economy as well. I think that kind of education and that kind of innovative approach, if I might even call it that, to education is helpful.

Also, with regard to that multisector approach to education I see the fact that there's a significant geographical distribution. That also, as has already been said, is a very key component of accessibility, the fact that students from every corner of this province can find an opportunity for some form of education almost at their doorstep, if I can say that. I think those are very valuable elements of this, and I'm very supportive to see the opportunity there for the diversity and the choice that that creates for students and for our province.

One of the main focuses, of course, of Bill 19 is to create stability, to create a clear sense of where both revenue and expenses are going. I think these things are important. So we have a cap on tuition.

In the past we've seen, actually, some whipsawing back and forth. We've gone from unpredictable hikes in tuition to implementing tuition freezes that would seek to provide stability for students but then, on the other hand, maybe are not sustainable long term for institutions. Now we have something that I think is a little bit more sustainable and predictable and a reliable pattern both for students and for the universities, and I think that there will be value in this. We don't have the tuition freezes or the wage freezes or the kinds of extreme statements or situations that create difficulties for either the students or the universities. When we look at legislation for this, we have to take both clearly into account. We have to remember both and make it a sustainable situation for both. I think this is important. Even addressing the issue of noninstructional fees, which can be a back door to tuition and a back door to revenue, is an important part of what happens here as well.

I do note, too, that the bill also gives the opportunity for exceptional program tuitions to actually be raised in some cases by up to 10 per cent, but those are exceptional situations, and I expect they will be dealt with that way.

Yeah. We've gone through a tuition freeze the last few years, which has been a great boon for students. The students have appreciated that.

The bill also creates some regulatory authority, as I said, to increase transparency and deal with the issue of noninstructional fees.

I'd also like to point out that, I guess, one of the concerns that I might suggest here is that there's a fair bit of authority or, I could say, discretion being offered to the minister directly. Holding the minister accountable for some of those decisions that may happen administratively later I think would be an important part of this. That's just a comment that I would like to make on it.

The fact that the bill increases student representation is important, and I don't think anybody would question that one. I think it's important that students have a voice and that they be heard at the universities.

Another aspect of the bill, though, that I might point some thoughts to is with regard to international students. I do think that it's important that international students also get some stability although it's a slightly different structure. At the same time, I think that one of the struggles we've had in Canada is to balance the issue between: is our education for our own students, or do we offer education for foreign students? Quite frankly, Canadian education has a very high international reputational value. I think we need to recognize that there are many international students who would like to get into university in Canada, and I think that if we were being very proactive on this, there is an opportunity here for us to build a revenue stream and even a business model for international students in a way that's appropriate without displacing Canadian students. I think we should be building capacity for both, quite frankly.

One of the added benefits of that is that then in many, many cases international students stay. They become part of our culture. They become part of our economy. Those university students are in many cases some of the brightest students from around the world, looking for a Canadian education. They become part of our culture, and they contribute to our culture. Some of the folks at Alberta Innovates are exactly in that line: have come from foreign countries, got educated here, and now contribute in very great ways to our economy. So I think there's a real value in actually cultivating international students in a way that's both a revenue benefit to the province but also not displacing or putting out of place some of our domestic students. Yeah. I think those are extremely important issues.

We provide students stability with this bill, which I think will be good both for domestic and international students. But, again, what are the opportunities after students graduate? They need to be able to find jobs, so we also have to couple this with a strong economy.

4:50

I actually have in my riding a past student who just graduated a few years ago and has a bachelor's degree. I think it's in either biology or environmental science. I'm not sure which. But he can't find a job, and he's actually working two jobs at two different fast-food restaurants because in his field he has not been able to find work. It is extremely important that we create an economic environment where students can actually have a hope of using their career choice, of stepping into a job where they can support their families, where they don't have to worry about what's going to happen after graduation, where they don't have to worry about how they are ever going to pay back the debt because there's no job waiting for them. What kind of an economy Alberta has matters immensely. We need to open doors for students so that they can go through their education with the excitement of actually being able to move into a career and have success in that as well. I think this is extremely important.

The challenge then, I think, for the universities is that we need to make sure that we continue to fund strong universities. This is always the balance between tuition for students and universities. Every year *Maclean's* magazine, I think it is, puts out the rating of all the universities. I know that all the students spend hours poring over it. It's one of their higher sold issues each year. Everybody is looking at the ratings of all the Canadian universities, and they're not just looking at how much the tuition is at each university; they're looking at what the university is good at. They're looking at what other students are saying about the quality of that education.

I actually know students who, when they were looking at university just coming out of high school, said to me very clearly: "If I'm going to go to university and spend the money on that, I'm going to the absolute best university I can go to anywhere. I don't care what it costs." I realize that's a challenge for many people, but what I'm trying to say is that the quality of the university is what

attracts many, many, many students. There are many students who look for the best university that they can go to because they believe that they will get the best education and because they believe that they will be connected then with the best opportunity for a great career following that.

We need to make sure that we create an environment that is sustainable for our universities, that our Alberta universities are actually the best in the country and have a reputation for being the best in the country, and one that students actually, truly want to attend and will come to from other places. I think that these are important balances that we should take into account: that universities are sustainable, that the quality of education is superior, and that students will choose the highest quality and the highest reputation possible as a place at which they would like to attend university. I just wanted to make some of those comments.

I think that the bill is definitely moving in the right direction. It creates stability for both students and universities. I applaud the government on the efforts that they've made on that. Of course, there's always room for us to continue to improve things.

With that, Madam Chair, I would like to adjourn debate on Bill 19 for the moment. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Never mind.

The Chair: Any questions, comments, or amendments?
Seeing none . . .

Ms Ganley: I'm sorry. I believe the hon. member had moved to adjourn debate on this.

The Chair: Oh. I apologize. I had missed that.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 21 An Act to Protect Patients

The Chair: We'll move on to Bill 21. Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill-Mackay. Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Good enough.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to introduce an amendment to Bill 21, An Act to Protect Patients. It replaces the five-year ban from reinstatement upon finding of sexual assault by a professional with a lifetime ban. I'll wait for the amendment to circulate.

The Chair: This will be amendment A1.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Ms McPherson: I move that Bill 21, An Act to Protect Patients, be amended in section 7(b) in the proposed section 45 as follows: (a) in subsection 3 by striking out "until at least 5 years have elapsed from the date that the decision of unprofessional conduct was made by the hearing tribunal"; and (b) in subsection 4, one, by striking out "section 96.2(a)" and substituting "section 96.2(1)(a)" and, two, by striking out "until at least 5 years have elapsed from the date that the decision of unprofessional conduct was originally made by the governing body of a similar profession in that other jurisdiction"; and (c) by striking out subsection (5).

In short, this amendment modifies the proposed section 7. If passed, the amendment will eliminate the ability of a professional who has been found by their college to have sexually assaulted a patient to reapply to practise in Alberta.

I truly believe our job as elected representatives is to be the voice of people who might not be able to speak up, and survivors of sexual assault by medical professionals should be assured unequivocally that the person who offended against them will have no opportunity to assault someone else in those circumstances again. A health professional who abuses their position of trust to assault a patient has lost their privilege to practise. Being able to apply to return to practise after five years is not enough.

Sexual assault is always an act of exerting power over another person. It's an act of violence that uses sex as a weapon, and we should let survivors know in no uncertain terms that we stand with them. They should be confident in the knowledge that we will not allow anyone else to face the same awful circumstances they had to endure, that the perpetrator of the crime against them will not be empowered to offend in those circumstances again.

According to the Criminal Code of Canada voyeurism earns a five-year sentence. A person who violates their trust to commit a sex crime against a young person faces up to 14 years of prison time. A person who commits sexual assault can be sentenced up to 14 years.

Some might say that a lifetime ban on practising in Alberta is unreasonable for harming a patient for a lifetime. Now, the purposes of sanctions in the criminal justice system are punishment, deterrents, rehabilitation, protection, and denunciation. I've had some conversations with people who believe that because we value rehabilitation in our justice system, practitioners should be allowed to reapply for a licence after five years. I assert that anyone convicted of a sexual assault while holding a position of power over a patient is welcome to demonstrate their rehabilitation outside of the auspices of their prior profession. By all means, pursue a career in research, a position in a new career, and show that you are rehabilitated in other ways.

Earlier in October former Canadian Olympic sprinter Desai Williams received a lifetime ban by Athletics Canada for violating the organization's sexual harassment policy for his actions in 2010. Without trivializing the impacts of sexual harassment, the athlete received a lifetime ban for sexual harassment. The bill before us provides only a five-year ban for the far more severe action of sexual assault.

In 2014, when the Minister of Education revoked the licences of teachers who had sexual intercourse with a student or sexual conversations, the teachers' union accused the minister of playing political games because the ATA had only recommended the suspensions.

So we have a precedent for refusing those convicted of sexual assault from working in their previous field again, and we have the knowledge that – sorry. I find this difficult to talk about. We have the knowledge that survivors of sexual assault have already endured enough.

I really urge everyone to show our solidarity with survivors. Please support this compassionate amendment.

5:00

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and to the member for the proposed amendment. I'm going to take this opportunity, because it directly relates, to speak in response to one of the questions raised by the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View, and that was: under what threshold would it be determined if a professional should have the ability to practise again once their practice permit has been cancelled? I think it does directly relate to this proposed amendment.

Under the current draft of the legislation if a practice permit has been cancelled, a health professional could not apply to the regulatory college for at least five years. It is in no way a guarantee that after five years a practice permit will be reinstated. I also want to clarify that if at the five-year mark they apply and are not granted reinstatement, there's a six-month period between applications to apply again for reinstatement. So if you apply at five years, you can apply at five and a half, and six, and so forth, but there, again, would be no guarantee. Even at five, that is the minimum standard that a permit would be removed for a sexual assault. I want to just reinforce that.

Regulatory colleges would be required to assess the application for reinstatement in accordance with the criteria set out in the Health Professions Act as well as in the professional regulations, and such criteria generally includes assessing evidence of good character, considering the record of the hearing at which the applicant's registration and practice permit were cancelled, whether the member is fit to practise, and whether the individual has met the conditions imposed on the individual before the registration and practice permit were cancelled.

I do just really want to reinforce that, like the member moving the amendment, we have no tolerance for inappropriate conduct, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct, and regardless of the amendment in no way would we be consenting to that or endorsing that in any way.

I do want to say that we looked at other interjurisdictional comparisons, and as was stated in second reading, the only other jurisdiction to have a requirement is Ontario, and it is five years. So if we were to go to a permanent withdrawal, we would definitely be outliers. Even doing this, we're already being leaders in the country, by bringing in this clause and the mandatory minimum of five years, and I do want members to consider that.

I have to say that in the work that I've embarked on with the various colleges over the last six months, they have been very cooperative, and I'm glad. I think they, like all of us, know that any time that sacred trust in a health professional is breached, it is damaging to that individual long term and also to the profession and the trust that folks have in that profession. So I have to say that in working with the colleges and with working with other jurisdictions in doing the interjurisdictional comparison, I think we've landed on the right spot. And I do want to just reinforce that a mandatory minimum of five years in no way assures folks that if anyone is a risk to the public, they would get their licence back after five years, that the mandatory minimum would be five. So I just really want to reinforce that.

With that being stated, I think I am inclined to vote against the amendment for that purpose. I think that the mandatory minimum is outlined in this legislation, not proposed that it be stricken permanently, forever. Again, there is the possibility that that could happen even by having a mandatory minimum of five based on the circumstances which are being considered.

For those reasons, I'll be voting against the proposed amendment. But I also wanted to take the opportunity to respond to at least one of the questions raised by the Official Opposition earlier. I'll respond to the rest at another opportunity in committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other speakers to the amendment? Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'd like to thank the minister for her comments. I will just reiterate that it's important for us to stand unequivocally beside survivors of sexual assault. This is a very clear demonstration of our support, by saying to them:

“No. We won’t stand for what happened to you, and the person that perpetrated will not have the opportunity to be able to offend in those same circumstances again. They won’t be able to sexually assault someone that is coming to them for help.” And we can do that by passing this amendment. We can do that by saying that across the board, across the province we will not allow a medical professional regardless of their college to reapply to be a part of that profession again. I think it’s important that we do that.

I think we have waited so long to even acknowledge that survivors are there, and we have the opportunity to be really clear and to be outstanding leaders in this aspect. Society says that we don’t tolerate sexual assault. Let’s demonstrate that through the legislation.

The Chair: Any other members speaking to the amendment? I’ll first recognize Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Madam Chair. It’s a very difficult topic, obviously. Having been a practitioner for 25 years, this is close to my heart. Important positions of trust, respect, training, ethical duty: this doesn’t only apply to physicians, of course. There are some 40 different professionals, I think, involved in this. So it involves quite a large sector of the population.

I’m very sensitive to the issues that the member raises in terms of recognizing the tremendous suffering and impact on a victim of sexual harassment, assault, and various levels of misconduct. These are all degrees of injury, and where one draws the line and where one examines the circumstances around which that occurred and whether there were extenuating circumstances in that professional’s life that may or may not identify different approaches to the penalties, the consequences for whatever acts were committed, is important.

But I also recognize that we are in a society that for good reason is equally focused on rehabilitating criminals, rehabilitating people who make mistakes, rehabilitating people who got into trouble for various reasons, some of them mental health related, some of them addictions related, some of them deliberate self-aggrandizement and selfish motives. There are all these ranges of motives for doing bad things to people and bad things to property. But we, I think rightfully, have moved to a point in our society where restoration and rehabilitation rather than punishment is also valued. When I think about the thousands of dental hygienists, occupational therapists, physios, forcing them out of their profession because of an egregious violation of a patient is a step too far for me.

I think we need to recognize victim rights and perhaps compensate, provide all the supports possible to the victim for whatever duration is necessary at the expense of that college that may or may not have been involved or at the expense of that individual who perpetrated the insult. But to ban them for life is not, to me, an appropriate recognition of the fact that we are humans, that we do bad things at times or make mistakes at times because of a variety of issues that are going on in life. I feel very strongly that punishment has been too big a part of our culture as opposed to rehabilitation of people who do make mistakes.

So I share with the minister concern that this is going a step too far. Other jurisdictions in Canada, I guess, have also sustained the fact that there is a minimum penalty required, and five years is a pretty significant impact on both your level of training and your loss of income. In a permanent disqualification you’re removing somebody, in whom we’ve invested probably \$100,000 in education and training, from work that is needed in our society. And I think that if they demonstrate appropriate penance and do appropriate rehabilitation and are judged by their peers and perhaps others, maybe there should be an independent council that reviews those

individuals after a period of penalty and removal from their profession.

5:10

Certainly, there should be a very critical look at their appropriateness and then restrictions on their practice. Can they ever be practising alone without another person present? Can they ever deal with women of a certain age? Should they be restricted from dealing with children? Should they be restricted from dealing with particular medical problems like gynecological and those sorts of problems if there is reason to believe that they are not able to do those in good trust? I guess those are the kinds of judgments and I would call them appropriate limits based on evidence, based on what the individuals are demonstrating in terms of their remorse and their ability to change.

I can’t support this amendment either, reluctantly, I think. I feel passionately for the victims of these offences as well, but I also believe very strongly in restorative justice, not in lifelong punitive actions of authorities.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of more comments. I would disagree with the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. We should not be equally focused on the perpetrator and the victim of this kind of a crime. There are circumstances where we should just demonstrate complete rejection of somebody’s behaviour, and this is one of those circumstances. Restoration: what about the victim in terms of restoration? Have we spoken to survivors of sexual assault to say: hey, are you okay with that doctor going and practising again and having the opportunity to offend against someone else even though he’s been to prison and people say that, you know, he’s rehabilitated, and he’s awfully sorry for what he did to you?

I don’t agree. I don’t abide by that at all. I don’t think it’s fair to survivors of sexual assault to expect them to just swallow their pride and accept that the person that perpetrated against them is allowed to even apply for a licence to do the same sort of profession again. It’s as though we’re saying: “You know, we care what happened to you, but it isn’t as important as what is happening to this person that perpetrated against you. So we’re going to give them some more privileges, that we could take away, but we’ve decided that we’re not going to take those away, that they’ve earned them somehow.”

It just seems really backwards to me. When we have the opportunity to be able to say to victims very clearly, “We believe you, and we think what you have to say is important, and we’re doing whatever we can to make sure that it doesn’t happen to anyone else again,” we have that responsibility.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

Seeing none, are you ready for the vote?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:14 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Clark	Gotfried	McPherson
Cyr	Hanson	Orr

Fraser	Hunter	Strankman
Goodridge	Loewen	

5:30

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Fitzpatrick	Mason
Babcock	Ganley	Miranda
Bilous	Goehring	Nielsen
Carlier	Gray	Piquette
Carson	Hoffman	Renaud
Ceci	Horne	Sabir
Connolly	Jansen	Schmidt
Coolahan	Kazim	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Kleinstauber	Shepherd
Dach	Larivee	Sucha
Dang	Littlewood	Swann
Drever	Loyola	Woollard
Feehan	Malkinson	
Totals:	For – 11	Against – 38

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Chair: Back on the bill. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm going to take this opportunity to respond to questions that were raised by the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View earlier in the day and, I think, reiterated by her colleague the MLA for Airdrie. I will try to do this as succinctly as possible.

I just want to clarify that upon royal assent, new registrants would be required to have much more stringent background checks, and this additional information would enhance the registrar's ability to assess applicants' character, reputation, and assist the registrar in determining whether it's appropriate to approve a registration or not.

There was a question around the disclosure of a health professional. If the regulatory college investigated that a member didn't properly disclose, penalties would be made at a hearing tribunal for that health professional under the Health Professions Act. That would be how that aligns.

In terms of the cancellation practice for sexual abuse, I just want to reiterate that the minimum penalty for abuse would be cancellation of the permit for at least five years. Again, that doesn't mean that there would be any kind of guarantee that a member who had their permit cancelled would ever get their permit back, but it does clarify that it's at least five years. Again, that aligns with Ontario, the only other jurisdiction to allow for the same type of mandatory minimum, where there aren't mandatory minimums in any other jurisdictions.

Then in terms of sexual misconduct the length of the suspension would be determined by a hearing tribunal, and again it could go as high as cancelling a permit if that was deemed to be the appropriate response in that specific circumstance.

I also want to reinforce that if a provider lost their licence under this legislation and wasn't able to practise – there was a question raised about: what would that mean for the patients of that provider? Alberta Health would work with the health professional's office, with Alberta Health Services, and with the regulatory college to ensure that patient transfers to a new health professional are done seamlessly – this does happen today – or at least as seamlessly as possible. There are times when practice permits are revoked, and that is the practice that's undertaken in that circumstance.

Then there was another question around public disclosure on the websites. I want to reassure all Albertans and members of this House that Alberta Health will continually monitor the websites and work with the colleges to ensure that the requirements are met by at least this upcoming March 31 and that provisions within the legislation allow the minister to require that additional information be added to the website if it's deemed unacceptable.

In terms of questions regarding section 135.1(1) the Minister of Health will have to approve the standards of practice for the profession as we continue to move forward. Previously the Minister of Health could only review the standards of practice set out by the professional regulatory colleges, so this certainly does give more teeth around the standards of practice as we move forward. I want to reiterate that we didn't have that ability previously. We only had the ability in legislation to review them.

The last question that was asked was around the kind of consultation we had with the regulatory bodies. We definitely engaged with stakeholders, including the regulatory colleges, to help develop this legislation, and they are in support of it. Even yesterday we had the College of Physicians & Surgeons. We also had extensive consultation with sexual assault centres and other organizations, including folks with personal lived experience, and I want to say what a positive process it was and how I really feel it brought us to greater certainty around minimum increased transparency, minimum sanctions, and ensuring that the message is loud and clear to anyone who is a perpetrator in this way that the days of impunity are done and that, moving forward, the sanctions will be the strictest in Canada. We will ensure the greatest levels of transparency as well.

I do just want to take this opportunity to say how thrilled I am. I can't help but draw some parallels between the debate we had in the spring around Bill 9 and the debate we're having today. I think it's really important that all members of this House engage in issues that impact women's health and appreciate that while members weren't in a position where they chose to do so in the spring, they're doing so today. I think it's a really important issue, and I think all women's health issues are important and deserve the full and fair discussion by members of this Assembly. I appreciate that all parties have represented themselves through this process on this bill to date.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, amendments?

Ms Ganley: Sorry, Madam Chair. I would move now that we rise and report Bill 20 and that we rise and report progress on bills 19 and 21.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 20. The committee reports progress on the following bills: Bill 19 and Bill 21. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this day for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Having heard the report, does the Assembly agree?

Hon. Members: Agree.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Seeing the time and that it is Halloween this evening and we've made good

progress, I would move that the House adjourn and we reconvene tomorrow morning at 9.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:38 p.m.]

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