



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 21, 2018

Day 51

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

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Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (NDP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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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
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (NDP)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),
Government Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
Dreeshen, Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (NDP)
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Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (AP)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (NDP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (Ind)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Conklin (UCP)
Gottfried, 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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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)

Party standings:

New Democratic: 53 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Freedom Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Progressive Conservative: 1

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| Oneil Carlier | Minister of Agriculture and Forestry |
| Joe Ceci | President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance |
| David Eggen | Minister of Education |
| Richard Feehan | Minister of Indigenous Relations |
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| Sandra Jansen | Minister of Infrastructure |
| Danielle Larivee | Minister of Children's Services and Status of Women |
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| Shannon Phillips | Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office |
| Irfan Sabir | Minister of Community and Social Services |
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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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| Connolly | McPherson |
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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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| Ellis | Renaud |
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Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

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| Dang | Pitt |
| Drever | Westhead |
| McIver | |

Standing Committee on Private Bills

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Deputy Chair: Connolly

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| Hinkley | Sucha |
| Kleinsteuber | Taylor |
| McKitrick | |

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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| Littlewood | Turner |
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| Kazim | Schreiner |
| Kleinsteuber | |

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Ms Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to present to you and through you all of the students and teachers of l'école Parc from Fort Saskatchewan. We have apparently 22 – but it felt like the 30 that I have on my sheet – students that were very nice to visit with and were full of questions and energy. I even got an invitation to a dance recital and a hockey game. I look forward to more visits with them in the future, but if their teacher and chaperone, M. Spencer Dunn and Mme Ashley Charlton, could please stand, and if all of the rest of the students could rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members in this Legislature students from St. Catherine elementary school. They're accompanied by their teachers, Ms Savage and Mrs. Jagusinski, and their chaperone, Alpha. I had the chance to meet the students and take a photo with them earlier. They told me that they really enjoyed their tour of the Legislature, and one of them indicated to me that she would love for this to become her home, not in the sense of being elected; she'd just like to live here. Of course, this House belongs to all Albertans, so I'd ask them to rise and receive its warm welcome.

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of incredibly intelligent, sharp students from the school of Beacon Heights in my riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Now, I know they are an incredibly bright group because I had an opportunity to read to them during Read In Week and they asked some amazing questions about our Legislature and the provincial government, so I'm thrilled that they're able to join us here today. They're here with their teachers, Meryl Roberts along with Emily Robertson, and I would ask them all to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome to all three school groups.

Are there any other school groups? The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 40 students from Parkview school. They are here with Ms Amber Reid, Jillian Price, and a student teacher. Oh, I guess that is the student teacher. Parkview is an awesome school, and I would like them to rise now, please, and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

The Speaker: They may not yet be present, hon. minister.

Are there any other school groups?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning. There you are.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Colonel (Retired) Paul de Boucherville Taillon, of Quebec. Colonel Taillon served as a reserve officer in the Canadian Army for over 38 years across Canada, in Kosovo, Bosnia, the U.K., U.S., Oman, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. In civil life he has an interesting and varied career in counterespionage and counterterrorism in over three decades in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service prior to taking post as director, office of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner, where he led and conducted oversight reviews. He holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics and three master's degrees.

Colonel Taillon was the counterinsurgent and strategic adviser to the commander of the Canadian Army during the later stages of the Afghanistan campaign. He remains an acknowledged international expert on geopolitical and strategic security matters. Mr. Speaker, beyond all that, he is the direct descendant of two Premiers of Quebec. A long-time friend of our Sergeant-at-Arms, he spoke last night to the community and military leaders at the cavalry dinner of the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment. He is seated in your gallery, and I would now ask him to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome, and merci for your service to our nation.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly constituents from Edmonton-Ellerslie. I'm so pleased that they could join us today. Later I'll be speaking about Mawlid al-Nabi, the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him. I thank my guests for giving me the opportunity to celebrate and learn alongside them. I ask my guests to rise as I call their names: Sheikh Saffiullah of JRJ mosque; Sabah Saffiullah, his wife; Ihaa-Noor, his daughter, who I will say is also an amazing public speaker, and one day we hope to see her as an MLA in this House; also, Dr. Mohammad Hasan, who is a member of Al Fatima mosque; Arqum Riaz, who is a special gentleman who has memorized the Quran from cover to cover; and, of course, my wonderful constituency assistant, who I could not do my job without, Haiqa Cheema. Please give them the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three sets of introductions, and as always I will keep them brief. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you an incredible group of advocates. These individuals have long called for strong action against poverty, better supports for Albertans with disabilities, and indexing of social programs. Suzane Huppier receives AISH and is a strong voice in her community. Grant Clark also receives AISH and has been an important advocate for change, and it was a pleasure to have him at one of our round-tables as well. Sandra De Bruin is a community advocate who has worked with many Albertans to help them access AISH and get the supports they need. It's an honour to have them as guests here for the second reading of Bill 26. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

My second set of guests, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you Ms Reshma Pandit. Reshma is a world-renowned, award-winning tabla maestro from Delhi-Punjab gharana of India. At the age of five she learned to play the tabla, and she had her first performance at age 12. She continues to

perform around India and throughout the world, and I encourage all in this House who haven't seen her yet to please do so. I want to thank Reshma for visiting us here in Alberta and wish her all the best as she continues to break down gender barriers in Indian classical music and inspire audiences around the world. I ask Reshma Pandit to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to also introduce the Sarb Akal Music Society of Calgary. I'm pleased to introduce Harjeet Singh, Jasbir Chahal, Payal Patel, Asjad Bukhari. They are the executive of the Sarb Akal Music Society. They are joined by Rajbir Singh – also a classical singer – and Hardeep Singh, Harpal Singh, Sarbjeet Singh, Manjeet Singh, Ahmad Shakeel Chughtai, Jagdeep Singh from Edmonton, Ravi Parkash, Vipul Jasani, Paranjit Kaur, Sukhman Kaur, and Amandeep Kaur, who is also joined by her three kids. I have the honour of attending many Sarb Akal events in Calgary, and I'm a proud supporter of their work to promote the culture, traditions, and classical music of India. I look forward to continuing to work with them to promote diversity and cultural sharing across Alberta. I ask all of my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you the next MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs, Moe Rahall. Moe is a local entrepreneur. He runs a string of barbershops, which I have been told by other people are very, very good at what they do. No personal experience here at all, unfortunately. Moe is joined by his father-in-law, Anwar. I would ask Moe and Anwar to please rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

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

Ms Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you two amazing advocates: Vasant Chotai, vice-president of Public Interest Alberta, who has been a long-time antipoverty advocate and champion for social change; and Cheryl Whiskeyjack, co-chair of EndPoverty Edmonton and the executive director of Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. Cheryl is an outstanding community leader who has advocated for and provided strong programs and services for indigenous families and communities. Both Vasant and Cheryl have worked for decades to create a more inclusive, fair, and accessible province for all Albertans. We are pleased to have them here for the second reading of Bill 26. I ask Cheryl and Vasant to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a friend of mine from the great riding of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, Ralph Sliger, who has the privilege of calling home the crown jewel of the David Thompson highway, the area between Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg, one of the most beautiful places in the world, where he runs a helicopter tourism company. It's great to have a friend with a helicopter except for when you get elected and you can't go on private aircraft no more, but he does a great job out there. Further to that, he spends a lot of time promoting our province, particularly tourism in the great area

that we get to call home. I'd ask that he rises and receives the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

Rimbey Area Fatal Highway Crash

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what my constituents do know about the death of their son. He was killed when a driver ran a stop sign at a T-intersection, travelling at almost 100 kilometres per hour, near the town of Rimbey. His friend died in the crash, and the driver of the vehicle was seriously injured. They also know that the driver was charged with a traffic offence: careless driving. That's it. That's all they know.

This is what they do not know. They do not know why a driver who killed two vibrant young people and seriously injured another was not charged with a criminal offence. They do not know why a judge dealing with this traffic offence was not told right away from the beginning that two people were killed. They do now know that the driver only had her licence suspended for three months and was fined \$2,000 for causing two fatalities.

Perhaps that was the best the judge could do with the traffic offence. But they do not know why a plea deal was offered. They do not know if the Justice minister's triage policy, which sees lesser offences plea bargained to clear courts for more serious crimes, contributed to this situation. They do not know how many lives had to be lost that day to count as serious. They do know that their son and friend are gone. Hearts are broken in the family and friends of the victims lost, and they have lost faith in the justice system. And this is what I know, Mr. Speaker: that I will continue to fight for my constituents. It is the least that they deserve on behalf of this tragedy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mawlid al-Nabi

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mawlid al-Nabi, or the birth of the Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him – is observed in the third month of the Islamic calendar, Rabi al-Awwal. People around the world gather to celebrate and reflect on the Prophet Muhammad's – peace be upon him – life and legacy. I have had the opportunity to celebrate and learn with my constituents in Ellerslie. Prophet Muhammad's – peace be upon him – compassion and willingness to serve humanity in worship of God continues to inspire Muslims to this day.

We are blessed that Muslims have been calling Canada home for approximately 200 years, before Alberta was even recognized as a province. It was for this reason that our government decided to proclaim last October and every October in the future Islamic Heritage Month in Alberta. Muslims have been at the forefront helping fellow Albertans when they have needed it most. Whether it was the floods in 2013 or the tragic Fort McMurray wildfire in 2016, Muslims were there to provide aid and welcome Albertans into their homes and their mosques. The values of the Muslim faith are reflected in your everyday actions and generosity, and Alberta is so much better for it.

I also know, however, that the Muslim community faces Islamophobia and bigotry. I want you to know that our government stands with you, and we will continue to work with you to make sure that every Albertan is respected and safe in this province, regardless of their religion, race, or gender.

Brothers and sisters joining us in the gallery today and all those watching this statement at a later time and date, I wish you and your families an abundance of blessings for generations to come. May Allah [Remarks in Arabic] strengthen your iman and continue to inform your actions as Muslim Albertans. I thank you for your contributions. Let us continue this journey together and work towards unity and peace for all. To all Muslim Albertans and those around the world, Mawlid al-Nabi Mubarak.

Bighorn Area Land Use

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the matter of the Bighorn area is one of great concern to a number of Albertans. This issue is clouded in a void of accurate information because the government is anything but forthcoming. It came to a point when the NDP had an internal e-mail distributed calling for the creation of a new wildland park for the Bighorn area. That upset a lot of Albertans from all walks of life. The NDP then tried to walk back from it. Fast-forward a few weeks. One of the resolutions proposed at last month's NDP provincial AGM was, quote, that the Alberta NDP urge the provincial government to establish a wildland provincial park for the Bighorn. It's certainly not hard to see why people are confused about the government's intentions.

But there's more, Mr. Speaker. It recently came to my attention that the government's signs are popping up in the Bighorn stating that OH vehicle trails are closed due to noncompliance. Now, I'm not sure how to take this. Is this that the government is unable to enforce existing laws, so they are simply closing down trails and denying entry to compliant riders, seniors, and mobility-challenged users? I think that's a bit of an overreach. With that logic, one should close highway 2 between Calgary and Edmonton because of speeders. There must be hundreds of noncompliant users on it every day.

Now, just last week the minister stated, "We're looking at proposing a mix of land designations that will conserve and protect natural landscapes while accommodating a wide range of economic, recreation, and tourism opportunities in the Bighorn." I guess that recreation does not include OH vehicles, by the looks of it. The question, though, Mr. Speaker, is: who else will the NDP leave out, our forestry industry, our agriculture industry, our tourism industry, our film industry? Once again this government is picking winners and losers, and it is not about equal access.

This government continues to refuse to consult with the people who are actually using this area, with the local community, and instead sits behind closed doors, focused on their ideological agenda and appeasing foreign interest groups. This government needs to immediately start consulting and working with Albertans. They should have started a long time ago.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Cancer Treatment and Public Health Care

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Imagine for a moment that we live south of the border. The weather would be warmer, the population would be larger, and people around us would be declaring bankruptcy or dying because of lack of funds for health care. It happens every day to our neighbours in the south. In the U.S. the average cost for cancer treatment is approximately \$150,000, even more if it's a complicated case. Not only are cancer patients two and a half times as likely to declare bankruptcy as healthy people, but those patients who go bankrupt are 80 per cent more likely to die from the disease. This is the reality that our counterparts on the other side of this House threaten Albertans with.

Privatizing health care hurts everyone. No one knows when they will need to access health care. I spent a decade not accessing health care in any significant way. During a routine exam my doctor found my cancer. I went for many expensive tests, I had incredibly expensive treatment, including a hospital stay, blood transfusions, and I didn't pay a cent out of pocket.

Cancer is a disease that doesn't discriminate. It hits rich and poor alike. The last thing people need when trying to deal with the emotional backlash of a daunting prognosis, navigating an unfamiliar health system, learning about many new medications, trying to figure out how to deal with work, and explaining everything to family, friends and colleagues is to decide if they can afford treatment. Privatizing health care hurts everyone, but it exponentially hurts people in lower socioeconomic situations, people who are already vulnerable, who are already more likely to have complicated health issues and fewer safety nets in place.

I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I don't want to live in a place where the very system that should care for everyone in need hurts them. Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Northern Gateway Pipeline Project Cancellation

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. the minister of the environment. When she was a staff member of the Alberta Federation of Labour, did she attend a hearing of the National Energy Board . . .

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Mr. Kenney: . . . as part of an AFL submission opposing approval of the Northern Gateway pipeline?

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

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what the question is in relation to government policy. Perhaps the opposition wants to know more about how I fought for refining and upgrading in Alberta for years against a Conservative government that made promises but in fact delivered nothing. For 10 years in Ottawa this hon. member did in fact nothing. In fact, he did more to create this situation of Alberta's land lock than he did to fix it. I'd also like to know how the Leader of the Opposition wants to bring billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs by refining and upgrading to this province.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

I would remind the member to stick with the government policy question.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the failure to construct the Northern Gateway pipeline is in part a result of the NDP's opposition to the construction of Northern Gateway. The reason we are in a crisis today with this massive giveaway of Alberta oil is in part because that pipeline was vetoed by the Trudeau government. We have an environment minister here who won't admit it, but she sat in front of the National Energy Board to argue against Northern Gateway. Yesterday she implied that was not the case. Will she be forthcoming today and admit that she went before the NEB to argue for the vetoing of Northern Gateway?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Again, hon. member, I was searching for the question, and I suggest that you address government policy in the next supplemental. It referenced the historic matter about an individual member, and I would respectfully request that you act accordingly.

The hon. Deputy Premier.

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to admit that I am stunned that the member opposite continues to bring up his greatest failure or at least one of his greatest failures while he was in Ottawa in government for a decade. In fact, the member opposite, as our minister said, did more to cause the land lock than he ever did to fix it. He knows full well that the reason Northern Gateway was on its deathbed was due to his own government's persistent bungling of its approval. Despite that, this side of the House, our government, our NDP government will never stop fighting for Alberta jobs, and we will get the job done.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I was a member of a cabinet that approved the NEB's recommendation in favour of Northern Gateway. The Deputy Premier is a member of a party that actively campaigned against Northern Gateway, which would have been operational within a few months from now had it gone forward.

I would like to ask the government: does it have any regrets for having consistently opposed the construction of the Northern Gateway pipeline? Does it not think that was the wrong approach to take? Have they learned anything from that huge policy mistake?

Ms Hoffman: Why on earth you choose to highlight 10 years of failure is beyond me, Mr. Speaker. His 10 years in government in Ottawa left Alberta land locked, and now he wants us to trust him to fix what he couldn't fix in 10 years. We're going to keep working to fix the mess that he made, fix the differential, increase our takeaway capacity, get pipelines built, and continue to grow upgrading right here in Alberta. I'm very proud of that.

The Speaker: I believe we're at the second main question.

Oil Price Differentials

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. the Premier tried to deny that she had opposed Northern Gateway, but in April of 2015 she said to the *Calgary Herald* editorial board that Gateway is "not the right decision." The environment minister went before the NEB to argue against the construction of Northern Gateway. Does the government not understand that that decision, together with its support for the Trudeau government's killing of Energy East, is what landed us in this land lock disaster, which has us giving away our most important assets today?

Ms Hoffman: It's truth time, Mr. Speaker. The truth is that when faced with one project on its deathbed and another project full of potential, our Premier advocated for the pipeline that would actually get built. It's true that she threw herself behind the Trans Mountain pipeline, even while the member opposite said that no pipeline is a national priority. It's true that he failed to defend pipelines in Ottawa for 10 years in cabinet, and finally it's true that the last thing we need is for him to bring that record of failure here to Alberta. That's the truth.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this is sad, to see a government that belongs to a party which spent its entire history militating against our energy industry, which militancy put us in this position, not

having the humility to admit that they were wrong to lobby against the Northern Gateway pipeline, to accept their friend Justin Trudeau's killing of Energy East.

Now, yesterday I called on the government to join with us in calling for a voluntary reduction in production by Alberta energy companies. A number of companies have done so. Will the government join with us in calling on other companies to follow their lead?

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, the falsities that were mentioned in the preamble are so insulting, so insulting to the hard work and labour of people who've been the backbone of our party for decades. The differential, we know, affects every Canadian. The member opposite had 10 years in Ottawa in cabinet to fix the problem, and he failed. The differential is hitting Albertans hard, so we're going to fight to create jobs here in Alberta, and we won't let up. He had 10 years in federal government in Ottawa, and we aren't going to give him another 10 years. Now he's going to attest that he's going to fix the problem now that he's here in Alberta. How can we trust that? How can we trust that he'll fix it when he had 10 years in federal cabinet and failed?

The Speaker: Hon. minister, I would urge that you avoid using words like "falsities." It is not in respect for this House.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the government hasn't even tried to answer any of these questions, so let me try this again. A number of voices in Alberta's energy industry have called for a voluntary reduction in output by about 5 per cent to clear out the current glut in inventories and to stabilize the price. They believe that this would reduce the price differential by about 50 per cent. A number of responsible actors in our energy industry have led voluntarily, but some have refused to do so. Will the government join with us in calling on those companies to join in a voluntary reduction of output so that we can get the price . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I think that what the Premier said yesterday is important for the member opposite to heed the wisdom of. Calling for a voluntary initiative that would lead to collusion would indeed be that. Rather than asking a bunch of corporations to collude, we're fighting as hard as we can to get full value. That includes taking on the differential and doing so through legal and upfront matters, fighting for new pipelines that the member opposite failed to get built while he had 10 years in federal cabinet to break our land lock, and ensuring that our energy upgrading is being done here in Alberta. Decades of failure in successive federal governments have left Canada holding its economy hostage.

Oil Price Differentials Federal Policies on Oil Transportation

Mr. Kenney: Well, that answer demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the law and the urgency of this matter. For a company to make its own individual voluntary decision to reduce production has nothing to do with collusion, Mr. Speaker. Is she accusing the majority of Alberta oil producers that have already voluntarily reduced production of collusion? Is she saying that by taking those actions, they're breaking the law?

The Speaker: Hon. member, please direct the comments through the chair, if you would.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, our energy resources belong to us, to every single Albertan, and we're not going to sell them to folks south of the border for nothing. We're going to take action on all fronts – that's our plan – creating jobs right here in Alberta, fighting for pipelines, making sure that we have supercharged energy upgrading, making sure that Albertans are working for Albertans. His plan for the economy is to fire 4,000 nurses, 4,000 teachers, and hope for a different outcome than what he failed to achieve when he spent 10 years sitting at the federal cabinet table. We're going to work through legal channels to make sure we get the best outcomes for all Albertans.

2:00

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, none of that is true.

Now, not only is the NDP's close friend and ally Justin Trudeau bringing forward the no-more-pipelines law, Bill C-69, but his federal government is accelerating the phasing out of the jacketed CPC-1232 oil tanker railcars and in so doing will aggravate the problem of the bottlenecks of our resources. Will the government join with us in asking the federal government not to accelerate this phase-out because we do need, with the lack of pipelines, to move more oil by rail?

The Speaker: If I might, just again, hon. member, I heard "falsities," "not true." Please, hon. members, it's an honourable place. Try and stay away from those phrases which leave an implication not intended.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Ms Hoffman: I am very proud to stand in this House and tell the truth, Mr. Speaker, and the truth is . . .

The Speaker: Hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: I'm telling the truth. That's what I'm saying. The member opposite accused me of not doing so. I'm honoured to tell the truth, Mr. Speaker, and the truth is . . .

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: Two points of order.

Ms Hoffman: . . . that we have had many opportunities to break the land lock. We had a federal government that failed to make any progress on that, Mr. Speaker. The truth is that we have an opportunity now, an opportunity with a Premier who won't back down on any front. That's why she's fighting for the upgrading that's happening in the province. That's why she's fighting to make sure we break the land lock. That's why she's travelled from coast to coast to coast and brought us to a place where the nation supports this project, and it's about time the Leader of the Official Opposition did.

Speaker's Ruling Accepting a Member's Word

The Speaker: Hon. members, I just remembered why there was an upside of not being here yesterday.

Hon. members, please, let's not let the dialogue float to the bottom about accusations of what's true and what's not true. We are hon. members, and we ought to treat that accordingly. I see the Government House Leader puzzled at my comment. But when a member makes a statement, you believe, as I understand it. In this

place it's taken as the truth. It does not need to be implied to any other person as to what it might be. That's my understanding, and that's the way I've tried to rule in the past.

I think the hon. Government House Leader has a question. Is that right?

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

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

The Speaker: What are we at now, five?

Oil Price Differentials Federal Policies on Oil Transportation (continued)

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister did not even attempt to answer a very serious question raised by the energy industry. The Trudeau government is seeking to accelerate the phase-out of the jacketed tanker cars, which are the backbone of moving oil by rail. This will cause even further bottlenecks and even greater price differential. Will the government undertake to join with us in calling on the federal government not to accelerate the phase-out of those cars, which will make the price differential problem even more severe?

Ms Phillips: Well, certainly, Mr. Speaker, the differential is of pressing importance to this government, to this province, to all working people here in Alberta, and that is why we have appointed three envoys to work with industry on short- to medium-term solutions, including solutions around rail. We've already called on the federal government to take some action on rail. Those envoys will work with industry to work out solutions that will work more in that short to medium term.

In the long term, Mr. Speaker, 15,000 Albertans are being put to work on upgrading and refining. That is also a solution to add value to our resources right here at home and create value for Albertans.

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

Animal Protection Act

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots of accusations, no pipelines, finger pointing while other important legislation falls by the wayside.

This government is always happy to point out how long it's been since legislation was updated. As a service to the government I'd like to point out that the minister of agriculture hasn't updated the Animal Protection Act while he's been in office. The act hasn't been updated since 2006. To the minister of agriculture: why haven't you updated the Animal Protection Act, and do you have any plans to do so before the next election?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. You know, this government is committed to the protection of animals. I think all Albertans are committed to that. We had an incident recently on wildlife that was tortured to death. We don't want to see any of that. We value our animals, our companion animals, our livestock animals right across the province. I will continue doing so, making sure that our peace officers and others have the tools they need to be able to do just that, and that's to protect our animals.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, a lack of consultation with veterinarians, and we still rank at the bottom of the list in Canada when it comes to animal protection. There's room for improvement in the regulation, and the substantive changes that animal protection groups are asking for require the Animal Protection Act to be opened and amended. That's what other jurisdictions have been doing, and the lack of action has landed Alberta, like I said, at the bottom of animal protection in Canada. To the same minister: how do you explain your government's failure to address this important issue during your time in office?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government we'll continue to work with industry and stakeholders to do what we can to be able to protect our animals right across the province. Our government is committed to making sure that we meet the goals of the Animal Protection Act and making sure that the front-line officers, the peace officers out there as well have the tools they need to protect animals. What will not help is if there are going to be large cuts right across the public service. That would not help.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, opening the act costs no money at all.

With all due respect, Minister, we've been working with your office for over a year to get some of these very reasonable changes made. Animal protection organizations and stakeholders have been doing a lot of work and research to bring this minister up to speed surrounding animal protection. In light of another disturbing video showing animal abuse, we need to take this very seriously. To the same minister: will you commit and act now on these important changes, or will Albertans and our beloved animals have to wait?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting animals, whether they're companion animals, livestock animals, or wild animals. That's important. The video that the member is speaking of was heart-wrenching. I personally couldn't watch it all myself. It was that bad. We're absolutely committed to be able to do what we can to protect animals and are working with our industry stakeholders to see what can be improved. I agree with the member. We can always do better and are looking forward to working with industry to do just that.

The Speaker: Hon. members, as we move to question 4, I want to emphasize the preamble question that was discussed a number of times before. There are statements that allow ministers to make statements, but we are in Oral Question Period.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

Red Deer Justice Centre Construction

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. Red Deer provides services to approximately 400,000 Albertans, including those who access from surrounding communities. In March 2017 this government announced that \$97 million was to be allocated to support a justice centre. Currently our traffic court is being held in a nearby hotel. To the minister: can you comment on when the constituents of Red Deer and surrounding communities can anticipate seeing shovels hit the ground?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the incredibly important question. We know that the Red Deer justice centre is very important to folks in Red Deer and throughout

central Alberta. The centre is currently in its design phase. After the design work is completed, we will be issuing a construction tender. Budget 2018 invested \$181 million over five years, which would provide 12 courtrooms upon completion with additional shelled courtrooms available to accommodate growth performance up to 2040.

Mrs. Schreiner: To the same minister. This proposed justice centre is slated to offer a resolution wing to provide dispute resolution, civil and family mediation . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member. Preamble.

Mrs. Schreiner: These services are imperative to our Alberta families to seek peace of mind and provide all central Albertans with important resources. Can you speak to how many jobs these important services will create?

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the important question. We continue to work on determining the demand for services and the specific number of staff needed to provide those services. Once the construction tender is issued, we'll have a better understanding of how many construction jobs will be involved. However, I'd like to point out that this government is proud to invest in court services. Budget 2018 provided funding for 20 new Crown positions, four new Provincial Court judges, and up to 55 court clerks.

Thank you.

2:10

The Speaker: Cut the preamble, hon. member.

Mrs. Schreiner: To the same minister: given the justice centre's plans to support an increase of courtrooms from seven to 12 and given that this almost doubles the number of cases that can be heard, expedites processes, and gives resolution to pending circumstances that deeply impact our neighbours, family members, and friends, can you speak to how this increase will translate to time efficiency?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that the Red Deer justice centre is an important project for central Albertans. It will increase access to justice for residents of central Alberta because it will address a long-standing shortage of space in the current courthouse. This investment is another important step in our government's actions to help address pressures on Alberta's justice system. I'm proud that our government supported this, where the opposition would vote against it.

Oil Price Differentials

(continued)

Mr. Fildebrandt: Alberta oil producers face a glut crisis due to the government's inability to get any pipelines built despite massive carbon taxes and crushing regulations they impose in order to buy so-called social licence. The industry is divided on how to address this problem, with some calling for controls to limit production. Collusion to set production levels or prices constitutes a cartel, however. Is it the government's intention to establish some kind of prairie OPEC cartel?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose the short answer is no. The actual approach is to ensure that the Trans Mountain

pipeline, the new process with the NEB, stays on its timelines. We're working with the federal government, putting pressure on them, holding their feet to the fire on more rail capacity and other short- to medium-term solutions that are being worked on by our special envoys on the matter. Of course, the Premier also announced a new approach to upgrading and refining, \$2 billion of new investment, 15,000 new jobs, and partial upgrading . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, under sections 45 and 46 of the Competition Act of Canada it is illegal for business interests to collude with their competitors in setting prices or levels of production. The Competition Act is an important protection of free enterprise against crony capitalism with public risks and private rewards.

The Speaker: Where's the question?

Mr. Fildebrandt: Is it the government's view that colluding to fix oil prices and production levels is illegal under the Competition Act?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member is quite right that the law says a certain thing, and that is the thing that it says.

In addition to investing in upgrading and refining and putting working people to work in this province in the oil and gas sector and getting a better value for Albertans, a long-held vision certainly on this side of the House and in this party, we also need to make sure that the federal government fixes that broken regulatory system that we have inherited from the previous Conservative government and this, in fact, Conservative leader.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Given, Mr. Speaker, that a free-enterprise economy requires competition to survive and given that anti dog-eat-dog legislation may smooth markets from competition in the short term but rots capitalism in the long term and given that voluntary price and production fixing is illegal collusion but that government price and production fixing is supply management, will the government reject any attempts to impose supply management on our oil industry?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot there, but I think at the end of the day what we need to make sure is that we're safeguarding competitiveness for our oil and gas sector. We're doing that through, of course, continuing to work on the AER regulatory process to make sure that the feds get it right with respect to Bill C-69. We can't fix an already broken system with a broken system. We certainly don't want to do what the current Conservative leader has done, which is to do more to cause the problem than to fix it. We will continue to work on those things that we know will deliver value to Albertans and to working people in this province in the long term.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Coal Phase-out Costs

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, it seems the NDP government's coal phase-out is having an impact not only on Alberta but across

Canada and into the U.S.A. Westmoreland Coal, the American miner contracted to supply thermal coal for Alberta's power plants, has filed a NAFTA claim for \$500 million against Canada because Alberta violated NAFTA. The NDP government is paying out \$1.3 billion to coal-fired power generators as a settlement. Did the NDP forget the real cost would be close to \$2 billion just for this coal phase-out?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if I heard a question in there or not, but what I will say is that there is a dispute settlement procedure that's now in place, so I won't comment on that further. What I can tell you is that our government has stood up for Alberta's interest on this issue. We've had the backs of community coal workers and communities through a number of programs to help them transition, and we will continue to have their backs, unlike the opposition. The Leader of the Official Opposition, when he was in Ottawa, brought forward regulations to phase out 12 of 18 coal communities and did nothing for them.

The Speaker: I did hear a question in the first one, hon. minister.

Mr. Panda: Given, Mr. Speaker, you heard my question and if the government of Canada loses the case, the taxpayers across Canada will have to pay \$500 million for the NDP government's anti-trade actions and given the NDP government's coal phase-out alone will cost taxpayers close to \$2 billion on top of the \$2 billion for the PPAs, to the minister: why is it fair to stiff taxpayers in the rest of Canada with the bill to compensate an American miner, and will your best friend and ally Justin Trudeau come after Alberta for that money?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had mentioned, there are a number of programs that we've rolled out in support of coal workers to help them in coal-affected communities. We rolled out the coal community transition fund, which is supporting communities across the province to look into opportunities to diversify their local economies, to attract investment. We'll continue to work with them. There have been a number of successes, quite frankly, in this area. We know that in Parkland county Champion Petfoods, an incredible \$250 million facility, is well under way. That will bring many jobs to the area. We continue to work . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Panda: Given, Mr. Speaker, that Parkland county did its due diligence and did not accept any coal phase-out money for studies and given that Parkland county wants infrastructure investment, not studies, and given that NDP tosses away \$2 billion instead on the coal phase-out, Minister, now you're costing Canadians from coast to coast to coast for your disastrous coal phase-out. How are you ever going to compensate Parkland county for destroying their livelihoods while your Trudeau Liberal allies keep sending money south of the border to the U.S.A.?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I refute the premise of that question. In fact, in Parkland county there are an incredible number of new opportunities that are presenting

themselves. We work closely with them. What I'll clarify for the member opposite is that his leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition, was in Ottawa as a cabinet minister when his government brought in regulations to phase out 12 of the 18 coal-fired plants in Alberta. Twelve of them. I know you're dying to know what was their plan to help these communities and workers. They had no plan. In fact, the Leader of the Official Opposition turned his back and turned the lights out on those communities. Our government is committed to working with them.

Pipeline Development

Mr. Loewen: I am often amazed by some of the statements made in this House. On a regular basis we hear the NDP say things that are entirely false. We hear assertions as ridiculous as suggesting Conservatives are somehow cheering for pipeline failure. Since this seems to be the government's excuse when it comes to masking their own failures on pipelines, I have a simple question: can the government point to a single major pipeline proposal that Conservatives, federal and provincial, didn't approve and support when they had the opportunity?

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

Ms Phillips: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, no pipelines were built to tidewater while the Leader of the Opposition was in government. That is demonstrable. It is true that there was a pipeline approved by the federal government, but then it was thrown out by the Federal Court of Appeal because the Crown did not adequately consult indigenous people. Not the proponent. The proponent did their work, but the Crown refused to have those conversations with indigenous people. That is a shameful record, and it's not just shameful for indigenous people . . .

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

2:20

Mr. Loewen: Given that there isn't such an example and given that the minister just described something that happened under their watch with the pipeline today and the government might have to throw out their absurd suggestions that Conservatives can't get pipelines built now and given that this Premier has opposed Northern Gateway and Keystone XL and given that she didn't object when Justin Trudeau killed Energy East, could the government tell Albertans why they should now be comforted by the move to put the responsibility of solving the price differential crisis in the hands of an NDP insider with a history of opposing the interests of our industry and our province and therefore sending a pipeline obstructionist to do a pipeline advocate's job?

Ms Hoffman: Sorry. I can't resist the opportunity to highlight some of the excellent work that Mr. Topp did to support our government while he was here and beyond, Mr. Speaker. We inherited agreements with physicians that were so out of whack with the national standard on compensation, and the physicians acknowledged that we were in a difficult economic time when they agreed to come back to the table. What was the result of that? Hundreds of millions of dollars returned to the people of Alberta, improvements in health care, and Mr. Topp supported me with those negotiations. I will not apologize for bringing in people with a track record of proven success in negotiations because we need everyone at the table to fight for the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that despite their past record I'm willing to accept that the government has at least publicly started to support our industry and given that I would like to give the government a chance to be extremely clear with Albertans and given that despite changing their minds, the past actions of members of this government bolstered the anti-oil, antipipeline, and anti-Alberta movement, will someone, the environment minister perhaps, stand up and make clear that, on reflection, protesting pipelines and Alberta hydrocarbons was a mistake? Perhaps she could even consider writing a book to clarify the matter.

The Speaker: Folks, try and stay away from the personal comments about members.

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

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd love to compare the track record of our Premier versus the Leader of the Official Opposition any day. Our Premier has done more for market access than the Leader of the Official Opposition did in the 10 years when he was in Ottawa. How many pipelines to tidewater? None. They couldn't get it done when they had a PC government here in Alberta and a Conservative government in Ottawa. What our Premier has done is move the ball further down the field. We will get Trans Mountain built. We've committed 50,000 barrels per day to the Keystone XL pipeline to ensure that that pipeline gets built. We know that line 3 is well under way in construction. We will get all three pipelines built.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Carbon Levy and Agricultural Costs

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's greenhouse operators are very concerned that their carbon tax exemption, better known as the greenhouse rebate program, will be coming to an end on January 1, 2019. The agriculture minister recognized that plants growing in the greenhouse absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and, in order to protect the competitiveness of Alberta's greenhouse operators, gave them an 80 per cent exemption on the carbon tax. Minister, will the greenhouse rebate program be extended beyond 2018?

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

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is the case that a number of different industries have a review period for their carbon levy and the carbon competitiveness regulation as well. The greenhouse industry is no different. We will work with them and assess where they are at with respect to some of their efficiency investments and so on and where the industry is at right now and what will be required going into the future.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that intensive agriculture in greenhouses received a carbon tax exemption, recognizing that greenhouse plants absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but given that farmers who need to run grain dryers powered by natural gas and propane are not eligible for any rebate program although their plants also absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, Minister, how is it fair that one sector of agriculture gets a carbon tax exemption for absorbing carbon dioxide while another sector of agriculture does not?

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

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important to note that when I talk to farmers and ranchers and processors across the province, what they ask me is: what can they do to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions, and what can they do to increase their profits in doing just that? I want to correct the member. There is actually a 50 per cent rebate program through the climate leadership plan on retrofitting and upgrading those grain dryers, so there is an opportunity for farmers to become more efficient, reduce their costs, and become more profitable.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, grain farmers were not involved in the program with the carbon tax exemption.

Given that Alberta agricultural production absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and given that Canada is a neutral carbon sink, helping to clean the atmosphere for the rest of the world, and given that this NDP government is setting Albertans up to fail by refusing to claim our fair share of global CO₂ absorption while their policy is all tax with no environmental benefit, Mr. Speaker, why won't the NDP scrap their job-killing carbon tax?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that the premise of the question is premised on a number of different scientific statements that actually are at variance with reality, the rest of the answer to the question is necessarily difficult to give. Climate change is real and anthropogenic. CO₂ emissions cause the change in climate. There are a number of different ways that we are both reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a change in climate. All of those things are facts.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Community Economic Development Corporation Tax Credit

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta organizations that work in rural communities or with social outcomes have long advocated for a tax credit for community economic development corporations as exists in other jurisdictions. Momentum, a Calgary-based organization, has been spearheading consultations on encouraging local economic development. A few weeks ago the Minister of Economic Development and Trade announced a new tax credit that promotes investment in local economies. Could the minister give us the background to this announcement?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. You know, Alberta businesses told us that they need enhanced access to capital, and we listened. We know that this is especially true for businesses who operate in the social and community economic development sphere. That's why we introduced the community economic development corporation tax credit program. This is going to support diversification initiatives that contribute to improved economic and social outcomes for Alberta communities. We're very proud because communities have been asking previous governments for many years, and our government delivered.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the announcement. This tax credit is similar to that

offered in some Maritime provinces but is new to Alberta. In what way is this tax credit . . .

An Hon. Member: Preamble.

Ms McKittrick: . . . different from the two previous programs introduced in Bill 1?

The Speaker: Is the hon. minister ready to answer that question?

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that amusing comment. During our stakeholder consultation, when we went out and talked with industry and community leaders on the investor tax credit, they recommended that we find a way to be able to provide a similar tax credit for community economic development corporations. We're allocating \$9 million over three years for that very purpose. What do these tax credits do? If a group of people, whether it's a co-operative or a social enterprise, want to come together to create a corporation, they can do so. They can then go out and raise equity, offering 30 per cent tax credits for Albertans who invest in this entity, which in turn invests in . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Be cautious of the preamble.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister give the Assembly ideas of the kinds of economic development projects this tax credit would help spur or develop?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for her advocacy and her work in this space. Quite frankly, the member participated in a number of consultations that we had with groups like Momentum and other community initiatives. Some of the examples. A business owner offering mentorship and training to employees to help them overcome employment barriers could qualify. A business offering affordable food products to low-income families. A value-added ag business or tourism operator developing a new product or resource in a rural community would also qualify. There are a number of projects, and we're proud to support them.

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

2:30

Diabetes Support in Schools

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Approximately 4,000 Alberta children with type 1 diabetes need daily injections, regular blood sugar checks, and awareness of food consumption and physical activity. A supportive school environment is critical, but most Alberta schools do not adequately accommodate them. As a result, they are excluded from field trips and school events and may not even have access to the snacks they need while in the classroom. To the Minister of Health: why is Alberta one of only two provinces that does not have a policy or guidelines to support children with diabetes?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question. Certainly, this has come to my attention over the last number of months, and we know that we need to have a coherent type 1 diabetes strategy in our schools to ensure that

students are both healthy and ready to learn. I'm very happy to say that we've been working diligently on such a plan and strategy, and there'll be more to come very, very soon.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Given that students in Alberta should be able to expect the full support of their educators and given that teachers and education professionals can be instructed to and given permission to administer life-saving treatments such as epinephrine injections, Minister, will you commit to allowing educators to receive training to recognize low blood sugar symptoms and administer life-saving insulin to diabetic students?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Dr. Starke: You don't give insulin for low blood sugar.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An interesting medical diagnosis going on here on the floor of the Legislature.

This is very true, and we know that there are a lot of advances in the administration of medications and therapies for type 1 diabetes. It takes more effort and extra attention, but certainly we are on the road to building a coherent strategy to help to solve this problem. You know, having education aides on the ground certainly helps, and we've hired thousands of them to actually help with the job.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. member. [interjections]

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'm just trying to help kids. I'm not a vet or a doctor.

Given that children with type 1 diabetes can need more than 10 test strips per day to monitor their blood sugar and given that families who rely on these test strips face sometimes out-of-pocket costs of more than \$2 per strip, or \$600 a month, and given that there have been innovative medical advancements that provide new and better tools to address this issue, will the minister commit to finding a solution that helps families better manage this disease?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, as I said before, we are working on finalizing the guidelines around this. You know what you need to do, though? You need to make sure you have people on the ground. You don't fire 4,000 teachers. You don't fire 4,000 nurses. You don't come out saying: it's going to hurt. We have a plan that's going to help.

The Speaker: Calgary-Hays.

Energy Resource Revenue

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I asked the Finance minister to tell Albertans how much the oil differential is costing us, the minister assured us that, quote: good news is on the way in the second-quarter fiscal result. Meanwhile his department forecast a \$22-per-barrel differential, and that figure hit \$50 yesterday. To the minister: why do you refuse to admit your government has a revenue crisis when your own numbers from your own department tell a very different story?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member. Our path to balance is intact. It's based on three principles: a strong and diversified economy, stable spending and cost containment, and reducing our reliance on resource revenue. We laid out a plan that would not bring in reckless cuts, cuts that the member from Lac La Biche said would hurt. On that side of the House they have no plan. They don't believe in diversification. They are cheering for Alberta to fail. They are cheering for our energy industry to fail. We are standing up for our energy industry and our business owners and operators in this province.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Given that the minister won't answer the question and given that the government's real-time national lost-revenue counter goes up a million dollars every 18 minutes but that the minister refuses to tell Albertans how much of that is Albertans' lost revenue and given that Alberta accounts for 80 per cent of Canada's crude oil production and that the counter will easily hit \$7 billion today, to the minister: doesn't this mean, by your own figures, not mine, that Alberta losses have already reached \$5.6 billion since August 30? Can you at least confirm that?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we've demonstrated through the lost-revenue clock is to ensure that every single Member of Parliament, when they go in and out of the buildings, sees that this is an absolute crisis, the price or the differential, and that action needs to be taken and taken immediately. That's why I'm very proud to work with a Premier who has taken action on a number of different fronts, including adding even more value to our resources here in Alberta. Previous governments talked about it. You know what? I'll give credit to one Premier. Peter Lougheed did really lay the groundwork for investment in our pet-chem sector . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Given that the government won't admit the shortfalls in their own information and given that according to revenue loss numbers provided in the committee last month by Energy department officials that Alberta loses \$210 million a year for every dollar of differential and given that the differential hit \$50 yesterday and continues to climb and that we do not have one new pipeline to lower that figure, to the minister. According to your figures, not mine, Alberta losses will run \$9 billion to 10 and a half billion dollars in the coming year. Do you at least agree with that number out of your own department, unlike agreeing with the others?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what won't help Alberta and Alberta families: a \$700 million tax cut for the richest 1 per cent, firing 4,000 teachers and 4,000 nurses. This is all part of their grand formula that the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills said would hurt. We are investing in our energy sector. We are investing in our province. We will continue to fight for pipelines in all directions. Albertans know that we committed 50,000 barrels per day for Keystone XL. We will continue to fight for Trans Mountain. Canadians want it. We will continue to hold the federal government's feet to the fire and not take advice from that side of the House.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Bonnyville–Cold Lake.

Charitable Gaming in Rural Alberta

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard from several charities in my constituency – the Cold Lake Ag Society, the Dove Centre, and the Bonnyville seniors' society, to name a few – and these organizations have two key findings. First, they work hard for the seniors, farmers and ranchers, and disabled within my constituency. Second, they are all concerned that they are not treated fairly by the AGLC's management of charitable gaming in Alberta. Will the minister acknowledge that rural charities have a legitimate concern about their access to this revenue stream?

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the member from Lac La Biche – pardon me. Not the member from Lac La Biche; I don't agree with him at all.

That was a good question, the first one that I've heard today. What I will say to the member is that – you know what? – we are aware of the concerns that are being raised about several aspects of the Alberta charitable gaming model. We are working with AGLC to ensure that our charitable gaming model serves the best interests of all Albertans, including rural Albertans, and they are evaluating possible improvements to the charitable gaming model that will benefit the charities, the operators, the players, and, of course, communities.

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, again, to the minister for the first answer I've heard today.

Given that rural MLAs like myself hear about this problem of increasing prices for these charities and given that one of the key grievances is the wait time for charities' gaming opportunities and given that this gaming region for my constituency is having to wait up to or in excess of 40 months, will the minister admit that we need to change this so that Alberta rural charities can access this resource, just like everybody else?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member. Again, that is a very, very legitimate concern that he's bringing forward. I'm going to invite the member to bring that issue specifically to the Minister of Finance. As I had mentioned, we are working with AGLC. We've raised those concerns. We recognize that, especially for rural charities, waiting up to two years is a significant period of time and that a lot of charities rely on the casinos for a significant portion of their operating budgets. I thank the member for raising that question, and we are working with AGLC to identify solutions.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you again to that minister for answering my question. I very much appreciate it.

Given that the current model for distribution of revenue means that rural charities are at a severe disadvantage and given that under the current model a charity in urban centres can expect to receive in some cases up to 600 per cent more in funding, will the minister admit that the current revenue distribution model is unfair for rural

charities, who are helping some of the most vulnerable Albertans, and take the steps to review it?

Thank you, sir. [An electronic device sounded]

2:40

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm sure it can't be true, but I thought I heard a phone vibrate in here. I hope that's not the case.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I'll thank the member for that question on this important topic. As I had mentioned, we are aware of this concern. The Minister of Finance is working very closely with the AGLC and also engaging with different entities around the province. What I will say is that, you know, a lot of these charities are doing very good work, but I can tell you that what wouldn't help them is blowing a huge hole in the budget in order to give a \$700 million tax cut to the richest 1 per cent while at the same time firing thousands of teachers and nurses and cutting off programs that help these very communities. I am proud of . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjection] Thank you.
Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Oil Sands Development

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently a good Canadian patriot released information pertaining to a campaign against our oil sands. She provides information that the groups that are funding these campaigns use environmental groups for these attacks in order to secure America's energy future, not for environmental reasons but economical. This Canadian industry, the oil sands, that enriches our nation, that funds the construction of our schools and hospitals, that employs thousands of Canadians, is being attacked under the guise of environmental stewardship.

Syncrude contributed to the Birch River wildland provincial park, enabling the creation of a conservation area of 3,300 square kilometres connecting Wood Buffalo national park to several other parks to form a protective boreal forest twice the size of Vancouver Island. Syncrude's east mine will be completely reclaimed within the next decade, which fully includes reclaimed sections like the Sandhill fen research watershed. The west mine was reclaimed using the water capping process. Water capping, composite tailings, and centrifuge tailings are remediation solutions where Syncrude invested \$3 billion to develop these made-in-Canada solutions.

The oil sands initially did have serious emission concerns, in 2009, but thanks to Canadian industry that invested in research and continues to develop more efficient mining practices, in 2017 CNRL's pathway project brought emissions down to below the U.S. refined average, freshwater usage dropped by 30 per cent, 25 per cent less natural gas was used, Mr. Speaker, and carbon dioxide is captured and sequestered. That is less emissions than they create in Alaska's northern slope, Brazil's Frade project, the Marun fields of Iran, Indonesia's Duri region, and Venezuela's Hamaca fields. I guarantee that none of these nations are investing in environmental initiatives on par with what our oil sands industry has done. I won't delve into things like labour rights, community investment, or human rights, that aren't exactly priorities in these areas.

It's time Canadians stood together in pride for our oil sands industry, fight fraudulent activists, and ensure a Canadian energy independence.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Members of the Legislative Assembly's Role

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the role of an MLA? I'm often asked this question by school groups, at the door, or when meeting constituents. There is no job description and no formal obligation beyond sitting in this House. Some of our work is public: opening businesses, making announcements with ministers, and also, of course, through the Assembly webcasts. Some of the work happens in our constituency offices, like notarizing documents, discussing provincial issues with residents, or helping them resolve government service matters.

However, another equally important role that MLAs have is as community builders. We have the responsibility to work with our communities to support emerging initiatives and to be a booster for our constituents both within our constituencies and in the Assembly. It is an honour to be an MLA. It means representing my community and speaking about their achievements, and it means working within my community to help make things happen for the better.

This summer, after an incident on the Sherwood Park freeway, a group of cycling clubs, shops, and organizations came together to advocate for safer cycling.

Because the opioid crisis affects all our communities, a group of Sherwood Park agencies and individuals collaborated to create an interactive exhibit and outreach campaign in our community.

Early in my mandate as an MLA I brought together a group of constituents to form the Strathcona County Diversity Committee to develop antiracism initiatives in our community. Thanks to their work, council and community organizations now recognize our First Nations and Métis communities before every meeting. This group continues to work to make our community inclusive and safe for everyone.

Another group of constituents formed the Strathcona Sustainability Association and have organized forums on solar energy, recycling, and waste-reducing alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, c'est un privilège pour moi de parler de ma communauté. It is a privilege to highlight the achievements of individuals and organizations building communities in my constituency.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there is a request for unanimous consent to introduce a guest.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

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

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this House Elizabeth Johansson, president of the Non-Academic Staff Association. She's accompanied by Nancy Furlong, the director of operations of the same union. Of course, many of you know that I had the privilege of being the president of this union, which represents the workers at the University of Alberta. They are here for a specific announcement that will be made by our Minister of Labour that will

impact the lives of approximately 5,000 of their members. I'm so happy that we're able to do this for them. Please give them the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: Proceed, hon. member.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to provide notice that at the appropriate time I will move the following motion pursuant to Standing Order 30:

Be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, to discuss the impact of the significant recent increase in the oil price differential, its negative impact on Alberta jobs and the economy, and measures that can be taken to ensure that pipelines are built following the delay or cancellation of several recent major projects.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 28

Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce Bill 28, the Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

The proposed legislation will modernize family law in our province to better support all families. Bill 28 would do three things. First, it would provide clear rules about property division for unmarried couples, which would help promote settlement and decrease stress on families and children. Second, it would allow applications to be brought for sick or disabled adult children of parents who are not married or are not divorcing. Third, we are proposing to repeal the Married Women's Act. This legislation is out of date and no longer needed.

2:50

This is another step to ensuring a fair and accessible justice system for all. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and democratic renewal.

Bill 29

Public Service Employee Relations Amendment Act, 2018

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and introduce Bill 29, the Public Service Employee Relations Amendment Act, 2018.

The act governs the relationship between some public-sector employees, employers, and unions. With this bill we are ensuring the act aligns with what is in place for workers in other jurisdictions across the country. These changes build upon earlier changes that were needed following Supreme Court decisions on the right to strike. With this bill we are also creating consistency for labour relations in the postsecondary sector. These changes will help bring the Public Service Employee Relations Act in line with existing

constitutional protections for employees and create more consistency in the way labour relations are governed in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three letters here to table for my constituents. They are concerned about charity funding across my constituency, but this is a problem across Alberta. One of them is from the Bonnyville Senior Citizens Society, and it was written to my office on November 14, 2018.

The next one is from the Cold Lake Ag Society, and they're very, very concerned.

The last one is from the Dove Centre, which is a centre that helps people with disabilities.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other members? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a column in today's *Calgary Herald* by Licia Corbella called A Lesson in Insults by the NDP in Alberta's Legislature, which talks about the ongoing inappropriate behaviour of the government in the Assembly.

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

Mr. Loewen: Yes. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of an article in the *Calgary Herald* by Corbella that says at the top: "To say that Topp, Notley's former chief of staff, is hostile towards Alberta's main industry would be a gross understatement." I think we're pretty clear on where the NDP stand on these issues. Of course, their ranks are full of unapologetic anti-oil activists, and this article talks about that very same thing.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I have one tabling today also. I would like to table five copies of the annual report of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the period April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018, as per the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

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. Mr. Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, pursuant to the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council annual report 2017-2018.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have a historic list of points of order today, and it's my hope that some of my clarification might minimize those numbers. I need to clarify that my intent was directed at the tone of the comments, and I think I may have left an impression that it was specific comments that were made. I think that at least a couple of these points of order may, I hope, become not points of order after we hear. Nonetheless, it would be the members.

I have the first point of order, which I believe was by the Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Questions about a Previous Responsibility

Mr. Mason: Yeah, I believe it was as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During the questions from the Leader of the Official Opposition he attempted to ask the Minister of Environment and Parks a number of questions on activities that she may or may not have been involved in prior to becoming an elected official or a member of the government, including appearing on behalf of her employer at the time, that I believe was the Alberta Federation of Labour, at a hearing.

It's very clear under *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 498, that it says that question period "constitutes the most visible part of the parliamentary day where the government is held accountable for 'the administrative policy and conduct of the ministers, both individually and collectively.'"

Now, quoting that, Speaker Bosley of the House of Commons said:

It has always been a fundamental rule of questioning Ministers that the subject matter of the question must fall within the collective responsibility of the Government or the individual responsibility of one of its Ministers. This is the only basis upon which Ministers can be expected to answer questions.

Then under the guidelines in *House of Commons* on pages 508, 509:

When recognized in Question Period, a Member should . . .

And there's a list of them, but the relevant one is to

- ask a question that is within the administrative responsibility of the government or of the individual Minister [themselves].

Furthermore, there are precedents indicating that a question should not . . .

- address a Minister's former portfolio or any other presumed functions, such as party or regional political responsibilities; [or] . . .
- seek information from a Minister of a purely personal nature.

And it goes on. There are a number of others that I could go through.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that you did deal with it, but I find it interesting that the opposition should question people about things that they did long before they were involved in elected office. I think that they should look in the mirror in this respect because their leader, of course, claims that his previous positions, using the notwithstanding clause to prevent same-sex marriage or his opposition to a woman's right to choose, are no longer material to his role as the Leader of the Official Opposition. He can't have it both ways.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, if you look back at this question period and every question period since the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed has become the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I'd say 80 per cent of the content of the answers back to him are talking about his past role in the federal government, certainly before he was in this Chamber. So I think, first of all, it's a little bit rich of the Government House Leader to do that.

But with that aside, the question was to the environment minister. The environment minister still currently has that portfolio. She has not moved from the environment portfolio. I think it would be tough for the Government House Leader to argue that the hon. environment minister does not have a significant role within her department to play on pipelines, in regard to Northern Gateway in particular.

Mr. Speaker, it would also be hard to argue that Northern Gateway is not important to the province. If it had gone through, it would provide 525,000 barrels per day of capacity. In fact, according to CAPP, for example, producers would have had no way of knowing ahead of time that 525,000 barrels per day of the Northern Gateway pipeline project approved in 2014 by the Conservative government would then be rejected by a Liberal government in 2016. This is what's important: if Northern Gateway had come on as planned, we wouldn't be in the situation we are in today. It's very important. We have the environment minister, who takes positions on these issues. The fact is that this pipeline is not being built, and it is a serious, serious issue to be discussed with the government.

The leader brought up the fact that somebody from the environment minister's last organization she worked for – I don't know if it was the last organization but an organization she worked at before – said, and I quote:

It's good to be back at a hearing . . .

a hearing where the AFL spoke against Northern Gateway.

3:00

The Speaker: Keep going. Get to the point.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am getting to the point.

. . . to present at this stage. I have with me Shannon Phillips . . .

Sorry; the hon. minister of the environment, though not at that time.

. . . and she is one of the Alberta Federation of Labour's executive staff,

which then confirms that she was at the NEB hearing.

Now, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked that question because the minister of environment's position on Northern Gateway is important to her government's philosophy or intent when it comes to pipelines. The fact that they protested against and actively tried to stop Northern Gateway and then ultimately stood by as Justin Trudeau stopped that pipeline is an important and reasonable thing for the constituents that we represent, to understand where the environment minister's position is.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the supplementals to that question, once he, the Leader of the Opposition, tried to establish in his opening question some content and some history to it so he could ask the question, he then went on to ask very clear questions about the environment minister and her cabinet colleagues and the Premier's position on Northern Gateway and ask for an explanation on why they protested against a pipeline that, if it had gone through, would probably be built right now or very close to it, and we would not be in the terrible situation that we're in. It certainly has to do with government policy.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a copy of the Blues that I have. The statement by the Leader of the Official Opposition says:

When she was a staff member of the Alberta Federation of Labour, did she attend a hearing of the National Energy Board . . .

The Government House Leader made a point of order. I then noted that. The hon. leader then continued:

. . . as part of an AFL submission opposing approval of the Northern Gateway pipeline?

The minister responded by saying:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what the question is in relation to government policy.

Oral questions. Based upon the information, the guidelines that we're all familiar with, the government must have the administrative competence that is related to the point. Issues outside the influence of the government ought not to be considered. Read paragraph 409 of *Beauchesne's* and page 509 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I do want to give as much latitude in

asking questions and providing answers, but I would again ask that you ensure the focus is clearly on government policy.

You've heard me say today a couple of times that indeed you ought to be staying away, all of the members in this place, from questions that are purely of a personal nature. I recognize that that is not entirely a science, but I think the expectation of myself and this House generally is that personal comments ought to not become a part of the question. They need to be focused on policy. In this particular instance I would think and I know that the opposition leader will no doubt be conscious of that going into the future. In this particular instance there probably was a point of order, but I think the resolution is more on a go-forward basis.

The Opposition House Leader makes a good point. The Government House Leader can take it under consideration. There have been in the past references to members of a personal nature that I think need to be in tow.

The Opposition House Leader.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a second issue. I believe that in the first supplemental of the last question that we were talking about you rose in the middle of that question and then interrupted the Leader of the Opposition to give him some instructions. I don't have the Blues in front of me, so I don't want to attempt to quote those instructions, but I believe it was in the first supplemental. I'm just trying to make sure we're roughly on the same page. I know there were a lot of points of order. You interrupted him and then asked him to move on, that his question was not about government policy. That question clearly was about Northern Gateway, a pipeline that – if the government across from us had not protested against it and let Justin Trudeau cancel it, we would not be in the serious energy crisis that we're in at this exact moment. That is a fact. He was asking about that. So I rise on 13(2) and ask if you could please explain to us how Northern Gateway and the government's position on Northern Gateway are not part of government policy.

The Speaker: You're asking for an explanation from me?

Mr. Nixon: On 13(2), if you could explain your ruling.

The Speaker: I'm going to read the Blues.

Does the Government House Leader or anyone else have any comments to make with respect to the request?

Mr. Mason: Is that allowed under 13(2), Mr. Speaker? You know, if you want me to make a comment, I will. The question that you ruled out of order was not just about pipelines but was actually directed towards the minister's personal opinions in the past.

The Speaker: I'm going to read the Blues, if I might.

Hon. members, I was qualifying the – I just read the Blues, and the reason I made the decision that I did: again, context, hon. member. The reference was: "Yesterday she implied that was not the case. Will she be forthcoming today and admit that she went before the NEB to argue for the vetoing of Northern Gateway?" That was that reason as to why I made the comments that I did.

Is that your clarification, or is that your case in terms of the point of order? Do I address your question?

Mr. Nixon: Well, you've explained that that's your ruling, and I don't think I get an opportunity to explain why you're wrong, so I would like to move on.

The Speaker: I'm not wrong. The chair is never wrong.

Mr. Nixon: Exactly.

The Speaker: I know all of you experienced members recognize that principle.

I hope that points of order 3 and 4 – I hope I made my comments more clear about my interpretation of the comments about truths and falsehoods, et cetera. I was speaking to the general principle of avoiding these issues that cause so much consternation on both sides of the House.

I think point 3 is yourself, hon. member.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your comments. I am not convinced that it makes it clear. I do think that it is worth a moment to attempt to provide some clarity to members so that we don't end up in this spot for the remainder of the time that we're here.

3:10

I'll explain to you why real quick, Mr. Speaker. I will refer to *Hansard*, November 20, 2018. I actually think that may be yesterday. I may be mistaken. The Deputy Speaker, speaking from the chair, said:

Hon. members, I have reviewed the Blues. The hon. Premier did not accuse the Leader of the Official Opposition of intentional falsehood or lying. As noted in *Beauchesne's* paragraph 494, "it is not unparliamentary... to criticize statements made by Members as being contrary to the facts." Again, this is a difference in how things are interpreted and not a point of order.

Now, certainly, the context that was discussed at that time was nowhere near as tame as what took place in the House today. I find myself in a different position than I'm used to, one defending the Deputy Premier as well as the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition. There were times today when you rose, Mr. Speaker, and made comments about falsehood, basically implying that it was similar to putting false motives on another member or flirting, I guess, with calling another member a liar, which is certainly unparliamentary. In the case of the Deputy Premier, while I do think that what the Leader of the Official Opposition said in the question was accurate, the Deputy Premier clearly disagrees. Her right as a member in this Chamber is to be able to stand up and say: what you were saying about me I don't believe is false or true. The Leader of the Official Opposition also did that a couple of times today, and both times, Mr. Speaker, you cautioned him to not use the word "false."

I believe that it is clear that a member should be able to rise if they feel that what is being said about them is wrong and say: that is false. I do not think that rose to the level that either the Deputy Premier or, quite frankly, the Leader of the Official Opposition was calling either of their colleagues a liar. So I rise again, Mr. Speaker, on 13(2) to ask if you could explain that because I sense that it's confusing for all sides of the aisle at this point after this question period.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, on 13(2) I also think that there is some greater clarity required on this question because I think some members on this side were rather confused. In my time here it's always been the case that it's not the words themselves particularly but the context in which they're used that determines it. So there's nothing unparliamentary, in my experience or my opinion, about saying that a statement is false. If you say that a statement is a lie, then you're implying that the person deliberately used a falsehood

to mislead the House. So you can't say "lie" in any context, and I understand that. But to say that a statement is false, in my opinion, is not the same as saying that the member deliberately made a false statement, which is clearly unparliamentary.

I think it's an important distinction. It's not the words themselves that offend the rules; it's how they are used. If they imply that another member of the House particularly, deliberately misled or lied, that is out of order, but to suggest that a statement is false, in my experience, Mr. Speaker, is not unparliamentary.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I believe that I need to give greater clarity. I may well have left an impression of confusion on both sides of the House, and I will go back and review my comments more explicitly. I'm inclined to say that my comments earlier, notwithstanding what the Government House Leader has said about context – that is always the place. But I need to be more clear to the House in the future. I think the arguments being made by both sides of the House are correct. I was however responding to the tone where there seemed to be a sense of deterioration with those kinds of comments. I will review the matter and make sure that I clarify the matter so people are not confused in the future. I'm hoping that might apply to number 4 as well. I think it's the same issue.

Mr. Nixon: Just in trying to make sure that everybody is on the same page, maybe I could help you, Mr. Speaker. I believe number 4 was by the Government House Leader. He seems to be indicating that it was the same issue that I just raised, so I'm assuming he's withdrawing it. I don't want to withdraw on his behalf.

I do have two more, and they are different issues. I will attempt to be brief on the next one if that's okay, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Nixon: On this one, again, we need an explanation, not in a way to try to slow down the House, but the opposition is confused on this issue and possibly the government members are. Yesterday there was a point of order and there have been a couple of points of order where we were talking about members not talking through the chair. But today, Mr. Speaker, again you called out the Leader of the Official Opposition. It appears to us that you're now indicating that not only should we be speaking through the chair, which I do agree is the process of this place, but that we need to continue to maintain eye contact or look at the chair the entire way through the question. I'm not aware of anywhere in standing orders or in parliamentary tradition where that is the case, and it is causing confusion for us on this side of the House. I guess what I'm asking is: what exactly is "through the chair" to you, and how would you like us to handle that? If it is to look at you the entire time, if you could explain where that is in parliamentary process so that we understand what we are supposed to do.

The Speaker: Government House Leader, do you have any comment?

Mr. Mason: I'd rather look at you, Mr. Speaker, than at some members of the opposition.

The Speaker: I'm sure other speakers may have experienced the same phenomenon. When I hear the two parties disagreeing with each other, I feel that I must be doing something right, but when they agree with each other, it begins to make me a little uneasy.

On the question, the context of 13(2), you will note and, I think, you would find ample demonstration of that also given by myself earlier as well as by other Speakers of the House that have

addressed it. I can only speak to when I was here. I've made that same comment to several ministers over the period.

Again, back to the point that was made earlier, it is always about context. For me, the ruling was tendered – probably what prompted me was to avoid what I sensed at the time would be the issue of an escalation of personal comments. If you'll note, I seldom say, if at all, to keep your eyes on the Speaker all of the time. I think there is ample flexibility, and I hope that clarifies for the future. At the time that I make that, I will try to be more explicit when I ask that. But it's not a correction. It's just a preventive intervention on my behalf.

What are we on now?

Point of Clarification

Mr. Nixon: The last one, I believe. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this one in regard to a question with the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky Lake.

An Hon. Member: Smoky.

Mr. Nixon: Smoky. Sorry. Smoky Lake is on the other side of the province, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker. Fair enough.

Mr. Speaker, you stopped the member in the middle of his question and called him out and corrected him for making a comment which I believe was something to the effect that perhaps she should write a book. This is causing, again, some confusion. We have seen rulings from the chair in this place. Your comment at the time was that that was a personal I don't know if the word was "attack" – I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, Mr. Speaker; please know that I'm not; I don't have the Blues – but that it was of a personal nature.

We've seen rulings from the chair, Mr. Speaker, when some of our members have been called xenophobic in this place, where that was not found out of order. We've seen rulings when some of our members have been called snowflakes. That was not found out of order. We've seen several rulings from the chair when we've been called climate change deniers, which was not ruled out of order. It has always offended many people over here because of its relation to Holocaust denier and the similarities in the two terms. That was repeated. I'm not questioning those rulings. Those are the rulings that you are making, but it seems to become pretty confusing to us.

It's further confusing to us because the last comments and rulings from the chair – you were not sitting in the chair at the time – were in regard to some comments that told this side of the House that we and the people that support us were not capable of critically thinking. At the time the chair said that she felt it was "lighthearted banter" and that she would like to see more of that in this place.

3:20

The hon. member did not refer to anything personal, suggested perhaps that somebody would like to write a book about other ideas, and that is now too far and enough to interrupt them during question period as they were attempting to ask questions on behalf of their constituents.

I think you can see, Mr. Speaker, how it's pretty confusing. From our perspective, it looks like the government of the day is allowed to call us some pretty horrific names in our perspective, and our member is called out for just suggesting that somebody write a book. I'd like you to explain that under 13(2).

The Speaker: Does the Government House Leader have any comments? I take it that he's not looking at the chair when he's speaking, so one must assume that he needs to be told as well to speak to the chair. Do you have any comments, Government House Leader?

Mr. Mason: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty clear that in this place there's a great range of latitude that's afforded to members in terms of characterizing the other side, the other side's ideas, and so on. I don't know about writing a book. I personally wouldn't be, you know, offended if someone told me to write a book.

An Hon. Member: I think I'd like to read it.

Mr. Mason: You won't like it.

The Speaker: It's seldom that I see the Government House Leader searching for words.

Context, context, context: that always applies. It seems to me that, with the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky, I was again in the context of today and particularly the situation. This is what I said. It was one of preventive intent. I said "folks." I didn't identify the member. I was speaking to both sides of the House. "Folks, try and stay away from the personal comments about members." The book reference did get mentioned in earlier parts of this Legislature. I'm not sure if that was the intent of the member at all, but I was intending it as a method, a word of: let's not go down those personal comments any further. That's where I think point of order 1 started, with the need for me to be more clear.

Do you have another comment, hon. member?

Mr. Loewen: Yes. Thank you very much. I just want to be clear here that the members of the governing party can call us names over here, personally attack us, and a suggestion to write a book is something that is ruled out of order? I just need to have that clarified.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Loewen: And I guess that under 13(2) I do want a little clarification, too. Is it standard under 13(2) that the Government House Leader gets to comment? I understand that 13(2) is your opportunity to explain yourself to us, so I'm not sure if it's quite appropriate. Maybe you can clarify that.

The Speaker: Point well taken, hon. member. Because we are in the points of order list today, I procedurally may have departed from the norm. Your point is well taken about the book. Again, I can only tell you, hon. member, that the intention was around avoiding, staying away from the personal comments on both sides of the House. I hear what the Opposition House Leader has said, and they apply in both places. In the instance of the book, we all have history of these events in this place, and that was the intention as to why I was doing it. I will be more clear, more concise, inasmuch as I can be, as each individual context comes forward in the future.

That was a very interesting day.

Emergency Debate

The Speaker: A Standing Order 30 resolution by the Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Oil Price Differentials

Mr. Panda moved:

Be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, to discuss the impact of the significant recent increase in the oil price differential, its negative impact on Alberta jobs and the economy, and measures that can be taken to ensure that

pipelines are built following the delay or cancellation of several recent major projects.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I moved this motion for emergency debate because of the existing situation. As you know, Alberta oil is produced with great difficulties because of the climatic challenges and logistic challenges. In spite of all these challenges Albertans have put in a lot of hard work to produce that oil, which we are selling at a discount of unprecedented levels. Usually the discount is at \$5 to \$15 per barrel between WCS and WTI, but in the last few months we have noted that it has reached approximately \$45 to \$50, in U.S. dollars, just the discount. So we are only getting a fraction of the price of WTI.

That warranted some emergency debate, because the industry has come forward – the industry used to be together before, and thanks to the NDP government now the industry is divided. After their climate change plan and after these issues with the differential, now the industry is not on the same page. Some of them want production cuts; some of them don't want that. Now all the employees that are unemployed are losing hope, and the ones that are still working think that some of those companies may lay them off soon, so they are also worried. Recently the Keystone pipeline was also delayed because of the Montana federal court's judgment. Also, Trans Mountain: this Premier and the front-benchers here and the backbenchers have taken a victory lap so many times in so many months, and it is still halted. There is no timeline from the federal . . .

The Speaker: Urgency, hon. member, urgency.

Mr. Panda: Also, Northern Gateway was killed. Tim McMillan of the upstream producers' association, CAPP, said that if Northern Gateway had come as planned, we wouldn't have been in this situation.

Because of all those reasons, Mr. Speaker, this is a real crisis. It's a national economic crisis, and we owe it to Albertans to discuss and talk about the actual issues and offer them constructive solutions. Our Leader of the Official Opposition proposed voluntary cuts to production. That's one solution. And there are many other solutions. I'll talk about what we've proposed and how the government has time and again mocked us, ridiculed us, and brought Albertans to this stage.

The Speaker: Hon. member, we've got to talk to the principle of necessity.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, as you may have noted in the last few weeks, just in the last 10 months Albertans have lost about \$13 billion, not millions but \$13 billion. That's why I'm asking for this emergency debate, because people are losing hope. This government is appointing envoys who have actually in the past opposed the development of the oil sands and opposed pipelines. Because of this government's actions, Albertans are on the edge. That's why we need to debate this, so please allow us to debate this.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, those arguments were far from compelling about the urgency of this situation. Make no mistake about it; this is an urgent situation, and the Premier has made it very clear that the price differential and the surplus of oil in our province that we can't move to market has indeed created a serious crisis. Alberta is losing money, the

economy is losing money, and Canada's economy is affected as well.

3:30

It's something that the government takes very seriously and is very focused on, Mr. Speaker. To that end, we've taken action on a number of fronts in recent days and weeks, including doubling our support for petrochemical upgrading, building our support for the Trans Mountain expansion project in addition to other actions we've taken such as supplying significant amounts of oil to support the Keystone XL project as well.

I'd like to thank the member for bringing this forward and to indicate on behalf of the government that we do believe that this is an urgent matter and that we support the application to set aside this afternoon's business in order to discuss this critical topic, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll just briefly add my voice to the call that this is an urgent matter that I think deserves the attention of the House this afternoon, at least for part of this afternoon. A Standing Order 30 should not be taken lightly. Some recently published research that was sent to me by a constituent says that pipeline bottlenecks in this province are depriving our upstream industry of between \$15 billion and \$39 billion in royalty applicable earnings in 2019 alone – that's a single year – which could translate into roughly \$1.5 billion to \$4.1 billion of lost revenue to this government. That is, I think, a crisis, and I would urge you, please, to support an urgent debate for this afternoon.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who wish to speak to the matter?

The oil differential being experienced by the Canadian oil industry is having a major impact on the economy. I think we all recognize that. It is my sense that the House recognizes the urgency of the matter and wishes to dedicate its time and energy to address that urgency. Therefore, as it seems to be the desire to discuss that, I would rule that it is urgent.

I will now ask whether debate on the urgent matter shall proceed. If there are any objections to the question, in accordance with what is outlined in Standing Order 30(4), I'll be asking members who support the motion to rise in their places. If there are no objections, the debate will proceed.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Hon. member, please proceed with the discussion.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said before, Albertans are losing, even in our Premier's own words, \$80 million to \$100 million per day. I want to talk briefly about how we got here and what we can do to remove some of these bottlenecks that currently we are experiencing. The reason we are here is because of the actions and inactions of this government, so I would like to talk about some of those actions.

When this government came in, the oil price was low, so I don't blame them for the world oil price. But they made a bad situation worse with a series of actions when they came in. When they came in, they started the royalty review. That created some uncertainty with investors. Then they brought in bills like, you know, the climate change action plan and then the cap on production, the 100-megatonne emissions bill. Then they increased corporate taxes.

They increased the personal income tax. Most importantly, they brought in labour laws. So they changed them, and also they brought in lots of layers of regulatory overburden. With that, Mr. Speaker, the confidence of investors was shaken because they were worried about the competitiveness of this industry. As you know, we have our own challenges. Because of the climate in Alberta and because we are landlocked, our cost of production in northern Alberta is really high compared to the light oil in the U.S. and everywhere else.

There is also another thing, Mr. Speaker. Of all these infrastructure projects that were on the drawing board when this government came into office in 2015, three of them are gone now. When they came to power, Northern Gateway was there, and then their federal ally Justin Trudeau killed that project, and our Premier actually supported that. Instead of opposing that, she actually supported it and celebrated. The same thing with Energy East. When the Prime Minister changed the rules midway through the project, this government didn't protest. They were very quick in protesting Northern Gateway when they were in opposition, but when the Prime Minister was killing these projects, they didn't lift a finger for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, that actually caused a lot of concerns with the industry, and all the multinationals started leaving Alberta because of the views of this Premier and because of some of those appointments this Premier made, like Tzevorah Berman to the oil sands advisory group. Even the minister of environment: I mean, now she can conveniently say that her views have changed, but we found the proof that she actually protested against the Northern Gateway pipeline. Now we have Brian Topp leading this group of envoys to go and meet with industry leaders. Those actions have unsettled the industry. That's why they are all coming out and telling us that they don't have any confidence in this Premier's team of ministers and advisers and envoys.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Also, Madam Speaker, when the Trudeau government brought in Bill C-48 and Bill C-69, this side of the House actually wrote to the standing committees and wrote to the federal government. We asked the Minister of Energy and the minister of environment to join us or include us in efforts to stop those bills, but for months and months this government sat on their hands and did nothing to stop the federal government.

Also, Madam Speaker, we talked about turning off the taps to B.C. because if we don't take any action, the opponents of the pipelines, who are emboldened by the front lines of this government – you know, they're tasting the victories of court battles and blockades and physical protests and all. This government hasn't done anything, so that's why we asked them to follow our lead on the fight-back strategy.

The Leader of the Official Opposition talked about how to fight the opponents, who are actually the enemies of Alberta and the enemies of Canada because they're doing a disservice to Canada. We said, "Join us in our fight to stop those antipipeline activists and antinationals," and this government just mocked us and did nothing. Now Prime Minister Trudeau said that he wants to phase out the Alberta oil sands, and he's doing one action after another. Our Premier thought that she had the support, and she thought that by implementing the carbon tax, we'd get social licence, but we didn't get that.

Now she's asked for crude by railcar, and she's asked for additional locomotives and tanker cars. The Prime Minister's team is looking at how to withdraw those railcars, so that means that we won't have the capacity to move the oil by rail. All these actions

one after the other, Madam Speaker, are causing a lot of anxiety to the industry, and they're fleeing Alberta and Canada one after the other and taking their capital to other jurisdictions where they can get a better rate of return.

3:40

Madam Speaker, that's why we said: okay; industry cannot come together on their own for two reasons. One, a legal reason, is that they can't appear to be colluding; the second, thanks to this government's efforts they're divided. Now they're not on the same page. This government actually divided the industry, which was working together for decades and decades. They've done some good things together. They shared the innovation, they shared their research, and all that is under threat because they can't talk to each other thanks to this government's efforts.

Now, we don't know what Brian Topp is actually going to talk to them about. We know that there is an election coming in six months. Now the Premier brings Brian Topp and others. Particularly, Brian Topp being a former political operative, I don't know what his mandate is. For the reasons I explained, I can't trust even if he has good intentions because we have seen what Tzevorah Berman did before. She got the opportunity to know all the secrets of the government, sitting on the oil sands organizing committee, and now she is using all that information to work against us. Brian Topp: what is he doing? Is he going to do fundraising for the NDP? What's his mandate? I don't know.

The possible solutions we talked about came from the industry itself. Voluntarily some of them have agreed to cut production. About 145,000 barrels they agreed to cut, but if others also come forward and cut the production to the extent of 250,000 barrels, that will stabilize the market. Currently we have about 300,000 to 400,000 barrels of oil that are creating the off balance in the market. As our leader proposed, if the industry comes forward and does that as a temporary measure – it's only a temporary measure.

There is a lot to be done by this government, which they haven't done for three and a half years. Now just before the election, six months before the election, they're trying to tell Albertans that they're trying to do something, but credibility is the issue here, Madam Speaker. Industry has lost confidence in this government. So they have to act swiftly. They have to consult them; they can't divide them.

Our proposal is to help them get together because they can't do it themselves. Let the government work with them and advise them because it's in the public interest. It's Albertans who own that resource; it's not those oil companies: Suncor or CNRL or Shell. They only have the licence to operate as long as it is in the public interest. They had to get that. They're there at the pleasure of Albertans, so if they're not working in the interest of Albertans, then they lose that social licence to operate in Alberta. It's as simple as that. Albertans are the ones who have to grant permission.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my honour and pleasure to rise today to speak to this emergency debate on the differential. You know, I'll start off by clarifying a few points from the hon. member across the way. Essentially the reason that we're in this situation is because of a lack of market access, but I want to clarify the significant number of proactive steps and measures that our government has taken, our Premier, our Minister of Energy, in order to support Alberta's energy sector.

Madam Speaker, first and foremost, Alberta energy producers are the most responsible energy producers in the world. We have the highest standards here in Alberta when it comes to our

environmental standards and oversights to our safety standards to our approval processes.

Now, our government did a number of things. When we first came into office, the price of oil was collapsing, Madam Speaker. That's part of the reason the former Premier called the election a year early. We are starting to recover. Let me tell you that one of the first things we did was announce and carry out a royalty review. Now, what the member opposite fails to acknowledge or understand is the number of companies around this province who applauded our government's work on the royalty review. We assigned a panel that went around the province engaging with industry. They listened, they made recommendations, and our government adopted them.

Because of that, Madam Speaker, the activity, the number of wells being drilled, the activity in our energy sector increased. We made changes so that our royalty framework would reward innovation and would encourage wells to continue to be drilled even when their output starts to decline. We made it even more competitive for industry here in Alberta, and I challenge any member of this House to find companies who will go out and criticize our modernized royalty framework that our government undertook. That's something I'm very, very proud of, the work that our Minister of Energy did.

As well, Madam Speaker, there are a number of initiatives that we've done: calling on the federal government, working with them, to try to reclaim orphan wells to get companies back to work and to deal with that issue. As well, I know that the Minister of Energy has been working with the AER on the issue of regulatory approvals, trying to find ways that the AER can expeditiously approve projects, which is very, very important.

As well, you know, Madam Speaker, we did introduce a climate leadership plan and one I would argue is not only the most robust climate leadership plan in North America, but we've demonstrated real leadership that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. Quite frankly, that day that it was announced was a historic day, to have a number of energy CEOs on stage beside indigenous leaders, beside environmental NGOs, our Premier, and our Minister of Environment and Parks announcing Alberta's climate leadership plan. We were the first to develop a made-in-Alberta plan that has seen significant new investments in our province that would disappear the day that that plan – if it ever did disappear, the money would disappear. The opposition would rather have Ottawa impose a climate plan on Alberta. I don't think Albertans want that. I think they want an Alberta-made solution, and that's what our government has delivered.

But I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that the energy sector is not just onboard with a climate leadership plan; in fact, you've got companies like Exxon Mobil who are spending a million dollars to campaign in favour of a carbon tax or a price on carbon because they are investing hundreds of millions of dollars into energy efficiency, into reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, into reducing their footprint, their water usage. A great example: Imperial in their Aspen project that they just announced, several billion dollars of new investment here in Alberta announced a couple of weeks ago. The technology that they're using reduces their water consumption by 25 per cent. You know where that solution came from? Alberta Innovates. Alberta Innovates helped to pioneer the technology. They worked with energy and our energy sector and our business sector to develop this technology that now Imperial is using. I'm very proud of the fact that that's a made-in-Alberta solution that Imperial is using here in Alberta, that we will see used internationally. A number of innovative technologies and processes are developed here in Alberta because we are the best.

Now, Madam Speaker, what I will agree with is that we need to do more for market access, but what Albertans know and need to recognize is that it is a little rich coming from the Leader of the Official Opposition and the opposition to talk about the fact that we are lacking market access and pipelines to tidewater when the very member served for 20 years in Ottawa. Twenty years, 10 of those in cabinet. If we recall, the Northern Gateway pipeline, on that pipeline, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the Crown, a.k.a. the Leader of the Official Opposition and former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, failed to adequately consult with indigenous communities. That pipeline would not have moved forward, and that's on the shoulders of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the former federal government.

3:50

Our government and our Premier have been proactive since day one. We have been working with the federal government and with all Canadians to demonstrate the urgency and the need for market access. Madam Speaker, two weeks ago or a week and a half ago I announced the Keep Canada Working phase 2, demonstrating a lost-revenue clock that will be displayed in Ottawa. I said it today in question period. Federal Members of Parliament will not be able to walk through that building without passing by at least one screen that shows the ongoing lost revenue. Over \$80 million a day Canadians are losing. This is a crisis. Since August 30 over \$6 billion has been lost because we lack market access. We on this side of the House have been trying to ensure the federal government understands this is a crisis and action is needed.

No one has been a louder champion and spokesperson for market access and pipelines than our Premier, Madam Speaker. She has travelled across this country several times demonstrating that Alberta's energy sector is the most responsible and that we are the best because of the actions that our government and our industry have taken – we've worked very collaboratively with them – and that this pipeline is critical. There is not a road, a school, a bridge, a hospital, or a bike lane in this country that does not owe something to Alberta's energy sector. The Premier has said it, our Minister of Energy has said it, and I've said it on numerous occasions.

What we need to do is move forward in ensuring that Trans Mountain doesn't get held up any longer. Now, our Premier has taken a number of steps, including appointing three special envoys to be able to engage with industry. The Member for Calgary-Foothills tried to say that industry used to be all united in their voice and somehow now they're not. I don't know where that member was in the past 20 years, but all of industry and CAPP especially do not all have one unified voice. There are different players. There are small companies, large companies, international companies, and those that are using different processes that aren't all on the same page. In fact, there are a number of companies that are calling for us to curtail. That is not a uniform calling. Not all of industry is calling for that curtailment, Madam Speaker.

Now, our Premier and our government have been very clear that all options are on the table, but what we are going to do with these three individuals is engage with industry to ensure that we hear their concerns, their feedback, their ideas before we act. We have done that from day one. The Premier has invited me to sit on a number of committees. One is a market access committee. I sit on the U.S. working group. I work with our industry in forestry to try to resolve the softwood lumber dispute that's currently going on. I engage with our manufacturers. Madam Speaker, we have and will continue to work closely with industry, acting on their advice and looking at ways to help move this forward.

We are looking at an immediate, a short-term, a medium-term, and a long-term strategy, including calling on the federal

government for increased rail capacity. I can tell you that we also have been calling on the federal government to appeal the Federal Court of Appeal's decision. They haven't done that yet. We are turning up the heat on the federal government because they must act, and they must act now. This is a Canadian crisis. This is not just about Alberta.

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

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleague the Official Opposition Energy critic for having brought forward this motion as I called for this Legislature to debate the urgency of the price differential crisis this past Monday. As members have indicated, this has gone from a serious economic problem to a bona fide crisis for Alberta. Let us be clear. What we are facing now in terms of its gravity and its potential impact on Alberta's economy and this government's finances is of the same order of magnitude as the global financial crisis posed to many national governments in 2007 and '08. If the severity of this price differential continues in what is by far our largest industry and export product, it will permanently impoverish Albertans and massively damage the fiscal health of the Alberta government. So this is truly an emergency.

Madam Speaker, it's true that historically Alberta has received less than the global price for its oil and gas sales, but it is far more true now than ever before in our history. Over most of the past month the global price for heavy crude has been trading north of \$60 a barrel while we've been skipping just above \$10 to \$15 a barrel for Alberta heavy crude. West Canada select price yesterday, \$14 a barrel, but west Texas intermediate, around \$60 a barrel; a \$45 price differential. That is devastating. The Premier has suggested that the implication of this is an opportunity cost of \$80 million a day. Most of those in the industry indicate that it's costing Canada's economy at least a hundred million dollars a day.

Jim Gray, one of the éminence grise of Alberta's energy industry, former CEO of Canadian Hunter Exploration, calculated for me his view that the total de minimis cost to the Canadian economy of the oil price differential plus the gas price differential plus the \$12 billion that eastern Canadians spend on importing foreign oil is at least \$46 billion per year and \$14 billion in forgone government revenue, at least \$5 billion in annualized forgone royalty revenues for the government of Alberta that is already dealing with an \$8 billion NDP deficit, parenthetically, the highest deficit of any provincial government as a share of gross domestic product.

This is a crisis, Madam Speaker. We've seen this train wreck happening in slow motion over the past several years as it has developed, and many Albertans, including this party, have been blowing the whistle, calling for urgent leadership and action. Instead – instead – as Gwyn Morgan, the former president of EnCana, in a *Financial Post* editorial today said: every time it looked like we saw a light at the end of the tunnel, it turned out to be a train bearing down on Alberta's economy driven by Justin Trudeau.

Let us unpack this, Madam Speaker. First of all, there are two issues here. There is what I would call the structural reasons for the price differential related to the failure of governments to get coastal pipelines built, and then there is more of a temporal challenge in terms of current inventories, that I will address first.

My colleague the member for Calgary already spoke to this, but the consensus in the energy industry is that about \$20 of the \$45 price differential, about 50 per cent of the current differential, is a structural challenge attributable to a lack of global market access, meaning that we are price takers, as we all know, and end up having to sell our oil to the Americans at whatever price they want to give

us for it. But another 50 per cent of the current catastrophic price differential, about \$20 to \$25 per barrel, is attributable to a current glut of oil inventories in Alberta, which has put the market off balance. Now, we're producing about – what? – 4.4 million barrels per day in Alberta, which is significantly higher than a couple of years ago because of increases in incremental production as a result of major capital investments, particularly in the oil sands.

The problem is that that has bottlenecked, and some are arguing that the vertically integrated companies are playing into that bottlenecking problem by maintaining high levels of production because ultimately they profit from the low price for the feedstock by selling cheap Alberta oil downstream to refineries in the United States, paying royalties on only \$14 a barrel here, then upgrading in the U.S., selling in global markets at \$55, \$60 a barrel, paying a lower U.S. corporate income tax rate. But this resource, Madam Speaker, belongs to Alberta. It belongs to Albertans, not to those companies to whom we give a permit to develop it responsibly. That is why I called on upstream producers to take voluntary individual action, not through any form of horizontal collusion but voluntary action, to reduce by approximately 5 per cent of oil production in Alberta, which would be in the range of a quarter million barrels per day. If we can get to that point through voluntary action, we believe that that would bring the current inventories back to balance and would eliminate about half of the current price differential. We'd be going from roughly \$15 a barrel to roughly \$35 a barrel, and at least the industry could make a go of it at that price point, and the impact for the Alberta treasury would be less severe.

4:00

I'd like now to reiterate that call. Madam Speaker, this has nothing to do with collusion. Most of the upstream producers have already done the responsible thing in reducing voluntarily and unilaterally their production, but a few major producers are refusing to do so because they're making huge profits off it. I understand the market, but I also understand that in the long run – in the long run – the temptation to engage in predatory pricing to drive mid-sized and small producers out of the market is not in the long-term interests of the Alberta economy. If this situation continues for six or nine or 12 months, the impact on employment and investment in this province could be catastrophic. That is why I've called for this action. I invite the government to join us in that call.

There are other measures that could be taken, too many to detail here, but one would obviously be increased rail shipment. It's deeply concerning that the federal government is now proposing an accelerated timeline to remove jacketed railcars for oil shipments, that will accentuate the bottlenecking. Let's plead with the federal government, which is hammering us on so many fronts, to at least maintain those railcars in place. They are the backbone of our capacity to move about 300,000 barrels per day on rail right now.

I need now to switch in my two minutes remaining to the structural challenge, a federal government, cheered on by the Alberta NDP government, that vetoed the Northern Gateway pipeline. The hon. the environment minister went before the NEB to lobby for a veto of Northern Gateway. The Premier publicly said that she was opposed to Northern Gateway. This government did nothing to defend our constitutional jurisdiction when the feds forced TransCanada to drop the Energy East pipeline because of this ridiculous proposal to link that project to upstream carbon emissions. The NDP's opposition to Keystone XL, the Trudeau government's surrender to President Obama's veto of that project, and the failure to overcome the obstructionism of the B.C. New Democrats on Trans Mountain all have created this crisis.

We need a fight-back strategy. We need to create alliances across the country. I commend the new government of New Brunswick,

which is joining with Alberta, at least with this party, in opposing Bill C-69, the no more pipelines law. I applaud the new government of Ontario in doing the same thing in their financial statement. But, Madam Speaker, in my last 30 seconds, we need to have a fight-back strategy to respond in real time aggressively to the lies and myths told about our energy industry, to put the anti Alberta energy special interests on the defensive, to challenge the charitable status of political pressure groups masquerading as charities, like the David Suzuki Foundation. We need to empower the majority of First Nations, who are pro development.

I can carry on at a later date. But we need to move from the defence to the offence to protect our resources.

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

Ms Littlewood: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to be able to rise and speak about this very important issue. In my constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, that is where many of the workers in this industry make their lives. I often talk about the fact that the towers that the management and the owners are in are in places like Calgary, but it's actually the workers that drive to the plants every day in Fort Saskatchewan and surrounding areas that make our home their home. So this issue is of great value and importance to our community.

I think about the homes that they buy, the hockey teams that they help invest in and help coach and donate money to and collect bottles to support, and I think about the hospitals that are invested in also because of our very important oil and gas and energy industry in the area. That is the cost of the inability to get market access. The cost of not being able to utilize and get our full value into our economy is hurting those things. It's hurting families that want to be able to come out and make Fort Saskatchewan their home, make Lamont their home, make Bruderheim their home. It's hurting, the fact that we see a lot of nonprofits that have had a much more difficult time fund raising in the last four years, five years because of being hit with a suffering global oil and gas market economy.

The more than \$80 million a day that is lost to the United States from Canada is absolutely unacceptable. It's part of the reason why we have been working on the Keep Canada Working campaign. I know that everyone around here has been standing behind it, and we've had so much support from Alberta and across the country. That's why we have been able to get from it being 4 out of 10 Canadians to 7 out of 10 Canadians understanding what we lose every day that we don't work together and work in the best interests of our entire economy.

Thirty billion dollars, Madam Speaker, is being lost to the United States. I said before – and I'll say it again – that it's not good that we do have members of this Chamber that have been actively campaigning for the President of the United States, that would rather keep \$30 billion in the United States as opposed to it building our bridges, building our pedestrian walkways, that are very important to our constituents. You know, I'm fine with America wanting to make themselves great, but I would rather them not do it with our money. That's unacceptable. It's our resource.

I'm very thankful that our Premier has been working on this issue for so long. Those that think this has been newly taken on by the Alberta government have not been paying attention. This is something that I have been talking about since the election. It was something that I proudly talked about in both forums in our constituency, talking about the Trans Mountain expansion and Energy East, because they were and are projects that can and should go to Canadian coasts, where we have the most control over our

own political climate. I'm glad to see that we are supporting the Keystone XL pipeline. We have committed 50,000 barrels a day to that because any option does become necessary when we are trying to get more of our resources to market so that we can create the jobs that actually fuel our economy.

The idea that this has not been a priority since our Premier was sworn in: they just were not paying attention to how hard she was working. She had agreements with governments across Canada, and we had people that were coming onboard because of the incredible work that was being done around leadership on climate change. The inability to break the land lock, that the Leader of the Official Opposition was unable to do: 10 years of failure of being in a federal Conservative government, working with a provincial Conservative government in Alberta and not able to get the job done.

After we were elected, we chose not to kick sand in the faces of people that we were trying to work with because we are all trying to come to the table to be team Alberta and team Canada. That doesn't mean that you scream and pound your fists and flail on the floor to try and score political points when it's to the detriment of our economy here.

We continue to work on this issue. It's an issue where what we are doing now is we are grabbing the bull by the horns. The Premier announced an incredible announcement yesterday, a transformative policy, that she chose the RMA, the rural municipality association, as incredible partners, as municipal leaders because that is where petrochemical facilities are built, because they need space. She chose those reeves and those councillors and those mayors to share transformative policy about adding value in Alberta to Albertans' resources to create jobs.

4:10

We have an example of where it's already working. This isn't a pie in the sky idea. We actually see a project that is now up and out of the ground just outside of Fort Saskatchewan in Strathcona county. Inter Pipeline was putting piles in the ground this year. They were able to reach a final investment decision a year ago on a policy that our government put forward to actually incent that investment. So we have 150 businesses that are involved with that project right now – 150 Albertan businesses – and more than 500 workers on-site putting that site together. They are procuring the pieces of that amazing puzzle, that is going to become a polypropylene facility. They are procuring those pieces from Alberta businesses. That's why they were successful, because we said that you need to invest in Alberta if you are going to use Albertans' money.

The people that have the jobs there are the people that keep our local economies working. They are the people that send their kids to university. They are the people that spend money at local small businesses. Without that investment we would not have the sort of positive feelings of the people that really have faith in their economy. It wouldn't be there if it wasn't for the work that we're doing. That was really important news to be sharing on behalf of the government. So yesterday the government decided to double the investment of a piece of legislation that we put forward in the spring that will invest in upgrading. It will invest in infrastructure for petrochemical projects. It will invest in those things that add five times the value or more to raw resources that we are awash in.

We have the skill of our workers, and we have an incredible society that is built on public health care and public education and roads, that are paid for by the taxes that we pay, and they know that they're going to be able to get their resources to market.

Investing in twinning a bridge that goes into Fort Saskatchewan grows the economy. I don't know why the Conservative

government before never did it. I don't know why it was not a priority to invest in not only safety but in economic growth. They apparently thought that it would just take care of itself, but it doesn't. These sorts of things take thoughtful policy, that an NDP government would do, that the Conservatives refuse to do. I don't know why that is, Madam Speaker. I don't know why that is that the UCP call that feeding at the trough.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The pipeline bottleneck and the impact that that is having on everyday Albertans, on jobs, on the take to this provincial government, the impact on the deficit on this province, the impact on debt are nothing short of a crisis.

What's so tragic is that it is a crisis that was absolutely avoidable. There is plenty of blame to go around. It goes back to previous federal governments. It goes back to this government, when they first came to power, not really being serious about making sure that pipelines got built. They didn't look over the shoulder of the federal government to make sure that the Trans Mountain regulatory process was done properly.

The recent Trans Mountain court ruling that stalled that project is not new law. The Federal Court did not make up new law. All they did was apply law that was found originally in the Northern Gateway case. So it was absolutely knowable by experts in Alberta Energy, by the minister, and by the Premier. They should have known that this pipeline was at risk if the regulatory process run by the Trudeau government was not executed properly.

As we now find out, to the great detriment of Albertans, to the great detriment of our finances and the countless, tens of thousands of Albertans who are out of work now as a result, we're in a real crisis situation in this province. There are no easy answers to this. The long-term solution is to build pipelines, but the long-term solution to build pipelines has been known for a decade or more.

Some of the things that the hon. member had just talked about in terms of petrochemical diversification: while those may sound like great ideas, we're a decade away from those bearing fruit, best case maybe five years. What does that do for the family right now who is having a hard time making ends meet because they can't get work? What does that do for the companies that are choosing to invest not in Canada, not in Alberta, but in the United States? It is booming in Texas and in North Dakota, and what are we doing here in Alberta? We're sending our rigs down south, we're sending our workers down south while Albertans are having a hard time making ends meet. That is the result of poor government policy choices by the NDP and by the federal government, and that is why this is a national crisis.

Total Energy Services recently announced that they were going to close five western Canadian branches. They are in the best case moving the people who were going to have those jobs here in Alberta down to the U.S. More likely, they're hiring Americans. They're not hiring Albertans. Those are people who will not be able to suit their kids up for hockey this winter. Those are people who are going to have to go deeper and deeper and deeper in debt at a time of rising interest rates. Those are people who are entrepreneurs, who've got a welding unit on the back of their truck, who are going to see that sitting idle, who are having a hard time finding work, can't find work at all.

The rig count in this province has gone down from a high of 850 rigs in 2013 to 590 rigs today, and a forecast recently by Peter Tertzakian is that it may drop again to 500. Peter Tertzakian very recently said that there's a risk we could lose this winter's drilling season.

The dilemma, the challenge, the crisis that we face is not related only to heavy oil. It's having a contagion on light oil as well. While we know that the differential for heavy oil, for western Canadian select, is in the \$40 range and we're getting between \$13 and \$18 for a barrel of oil – the cheapest oil on the face of the Earth is coming from Alberta as a result of pipeline bottlenecks – light sweet crude is trading at a 50 per cent discount to WTI. That is a massive impact on the take to Albertans from the resource that all of us own.

There are a lot of reasons why this has happened. I think the federal government deserves a lot of blame for the changes they made in the 2017 budget, which I believe today's announcement may or may not address, to the capital cost allowance treatment for oil and gas investment. It used to be that you were able to write that off in a year, like you can in the United States. If you're an investor with capital to invest in the energy industry, where are you going to invest it? In the place that gives you the best return. So that capital has been flowing out of this country into the United States ever since that change was made.

It's part of a layering problem. It's not just low commodity prices. In fact, until very recently the price of oil was upwards of \$70 a barrel. That's more than enough margin to make a very healthy profit. But it's the layering impact of labour law changes, of federal tax changes, of provincial tax changes, of hostile regulators. That makes it very, very difficult to do business in this province as it relates to oil and gas.

So what's the answer? Scotiabank just today released a note that talks about the impact of the differential. They say that Alberta producers are potentially losing between \$15 billion and \$39 billion a year in royalty applicable earnings – not top-line revenue; royalty applicable earnings – in 2019 alone through this differential. That results in a cost to the Alberta treasury of between \$1.5 billion and \$4.1 billion for one year. While this government says their path to balance is intact, under no circumstances can we get anywhere near a balanced budget with a \$1.5 billion to \$4.1 billion hole in the budget.

4:20

While the Official Opposition may say that we can ask producers to voluntarily withhold production, that creates a real problem, several problems. One is the free rider problem. If company A reduces production and company B does not, company B disproportionately benefits. This is not the kind of problem that can be solved simply by crossing our fingers and asking nicely. The other problem, of course, is collusion. If the government convenes a group of private industry to sit down together and decide collectively to reduce production, that creates a problem with collusion.

My strong view – and this is a view that Scotiabank has actually done the arithmetic on. They have found that if we take collective action, Scotiabank suggests that under section 85(1) of the Alberta Mines and Minerals Act the provincial government has the power to “make regulations fixing the maximum amount of petroleum that may be produced under Crown agreements” if such a regulation is found to be in the public interest. Scotiabank believes that if we temporarily reduce output by 140,000 barrels a day, roughly 4 per cent of conventional oil sands output, we will save in the neighbourhood of \$300 million to \$2.9 billion to the Alberta treasury in the form of royalties. That would avoid between \$3 billion and \$27 billion of the \$15 billion to \$39 billion in forgone upstream royalty earnings to the province. That's a lot of numbers, Madam Speaker, but what it means is that in desperate times, desperate measures are required.

This government: instead of acting definitively and decisively in the best interests of all Albertans in protecting the value of the

resource that all of us collectively together own, what do they do? They do what every government does who is frozen and paralyzed like a deer in the headlights, not sure what to do. They strike another committee. In Calgary just yesterday for a couple of events in my constituency, I can tell you that the people in my constituency have told me that they are furious that someone like Brian Topp is being flown back in from Ontario to tell them their business. That is the last thing this province needs. What this province needs is a government with the guts to take action. Is it a dramatic step to forcibly constrain and curtail production for a short period of time? It absolutely is. Is it a simple thing to do? No. But when we're facing the kind of dilemma and we're facing the kind of crisis that we are in this province right now, it demands leadership and it demands action. It does not demand another committee.

If we can save the schools and the roads and the hospitals and the debt repayment costs, if we can save the jobs of those tens of thousands of Albertans – I can tell you that I'm hearing stories about potential layoffs coming in head offices, potential layoffs coming in the field. Those are potential layoffs coming very, very soon as a result of this high differential, at a time when we should be recovering with higher oil prices, we should be thriving, we should be prospering, our budget should be on the way to balance. There's absolutely no excuse for that. There are people who are going to work every morning wondering: "Is today the day? Having survived the worst economic downturn in a generation, is today the day that I lose my job? Is today the day that I have to go home to my family and say: 'I'm sorry; we can't afford Christmas this year. I'm sorry; we're going to have to give up hockey'." That's what it means to the people of Alberta.

That is why this government needs to show leadership, take strong, definitive action, and have a reasonable plan to curtail production, get the price back up, and keep Albertans working. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister of the environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise on this pressing matter of the widening differential and its persistence. It is not at all out of the realm of possibility that this short-term commodity bump, now that it has moved into a longer term issue for Alberta's balance sheet, very soon will become an issue for the national conversation. I have not yet had a chance to review the federal Finance minister's quarterly update this afternoon, but I will say this. If we do not see an appropriate response from the federal government with the kind of urgency with which our government has addressed this matter, then I will be left dismissing this quarterly update as something of a tone-deaf piece of political communication. I think the time for action is now on this matter.

That is why we ask the federal government for their co-operation with respect to rail capacity. I was in the hon. member for Strathcona county's constituency a couple of weeks ago, and you could just see the bitumen cars lined up at the rail station, Madam Speaker. I remember saying to my kids: "You know, that's millions of dollars for schools, for hospitals, for roads, for bridges sitting in those railcars right now that can't go anywhere. If you wonder why you hear the word 'pipeline, pipeline, pipeline' on the news all the time, kids, that's why." Within those cars are jobs. It's the future of this province, but it's also the economic driver for the country. So we definitely need some of those short-term solutions around rail.

We definitely need to explore some of the short-term solutions with industry around supply. There's no question about that. That's why we appointed three very respected negotiating envoys to discuss that matter with industry because it is by no means a

consensus, a suite of solutions out there. If it was, it would be done already, Madam Speaker, but it's not.

Then, of course, other short-term solutions include making sure that the 22-week timeline, as laid out by the federal government, with respect to the marine scoping of the NEB redo proceeds according to an appropriate timeline, Madam Speaker, and then, of course, that the redo on the indigenous consultation, for which there isn't a specific timeline for reasons of ensuring that the duty to consult is appropriately discharged by the Crown, also proceeds. But the regulatory piece is something that our government is watching very, very closely. Once again, if we see that that 22-week timeline is slipping, we will have much more to say about it, and it'll be much more than a clock meeting the Members of Parliament as they go into the House of Commons to go to work in the morning.

In the medium term, Madam Speaker, this government must grapple with the broken regulatory system that led us to this place in the first place. Of course, we have a new piece of legislation that the feds have brought in, in part to address some of these issues, the fact that the Federal Court of Appeal dismissed the Northern Gateway approval as well as the TMX approval. We have to make sure that we're not fixing a broken system with a broken system.

And there is no question that when the Northern Gateway pipeline approval was rejected by the Federal Court of Appeal, its approval by federal cabinet was rejected on the grounds of inadequate indigenous consultation, and not just a little bit, Madam Speaker. The court was scathing in its appraisal of the Crown, which was the previous Conservative federal government, and how they discharged the honour of the Crown in engaging indigenous people.

Here are just some quotes.

The inadequacies [were] more than just a handful and more than mere imperfections. [They] left entire subjects of central interest to the affected First Nations, sometimes subjects affecting their subsistence and well-being, entirely ignored.

They went on to say that it was not a case where the proponent of the project, Enbridge itself, had failed to reach out to aboriginal peoples.

Far from it, said the court.

Once the pipeline corridor for the Project was defined in 2005, Northern Gateway engaged with all Aboriginal groups, [et cetera], with communities located within 80 kilometres of the Project corridor.

This failure lies squarely at the feet of Stephen Harper's federal government, that failed to take indigenous consultation seriously, just as they failed to take indigenous issues seriously with respect to poverty, with respect to the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry, Madam Speaker, just as they did with respect to economic inequality, social inequality, child poverty, all of the other important issues that the federal government utterly – utterly – abandoned their duty on, their fiduciary responsibilities under the Constitution Act of this country and their basic level of human decency when it comes to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

4:30

That's where the failure of Northern Gateway lies. So own it, and then fix it. Do not do more to undermine the system. But Stephen Harper's government did more to undermine the system when they refused to scope in the marine safety components that were within the NEB process of the Northern Gateway, within the TMX approval. They just didn't do it. They just didn't bother, Madam Speaker. Now we are at a place where, again, the courts are saying: well, no; actually, you have responsibilities to discharge here. So there's plenty of blame to go around because, in my view, the

federal government ought to have caught that, too. They didn't, and that's why they need to fix it. They need to fix it expeditiously. They should have fixed it with a legislative solution, but if they can stay to that 22 weeks, then we'll see. But at the end of the day, there must be a pipeline to tidewater.

So that's that piece, Madam Speaker. Then there's the longer term solution, and that is, of course, Alberta getting full value for its resources here at home – upgrading, refining, partial upgrading – so we get better capacity within pipelines. All of those things put Albertans to work. I know that for a generation oil and gas workers have been sort of on-site or in their union halls or elsewhere around their kitchen tables wondering: “Why don't we get better value for our resources? Why aren't we upgrading our natural gas and other light ends into plastics, into polypropylenes, all these things? And why aren't we shipping more refined product?”

Sure. It does mean that we would have to account for the greenhouse gas emissions associated with those activities here in Alberta. That's why we have a climate leadership plan to deal with those emissions, because climate change is real, and you have to. So many working-class people have said for so long in my experience both in the labour movement and the New Democratic Party and elsewhere: why aren't we getting better value? The Minister of Transportation, when he led our party, certainly took that position, and I was so proud to run on that in the 2012 election, in fact, Madam Speaker, because I come from a family with lots of oil and gas workers on the one side.

My dad was an electrician who worked on the oil rigs. People like to talk about my past, apparently, in this House. They want to, you know, bring my personality or my past into this Chamber. Okay. Let's totally have that conversation. Let's talk about how my dad lost his job during the national energy program. That's why, when people say, “Oh; we should bring a Trudeau in to make climate policy for us,” I say: “Oh, no. I don't think so.” Because in my house that was a big, fat I-don't-think-so in the 1980s, when my dad lost his job.

You know, on my dad's side of the family there were lots of oil and gas folks, lots of kind of socially conservative folks. We didn't always agree on a lot of things growing up, around the Christmas table and so on. Certainly, my parents were a little more progressive, but some of the extended family, not so much. But one of the things that we always agreed on was adding value to Alberta's resources so that we as Albertans, as owners of those resources, would get the full economic and social benefits of those things.

So when my Premier stood up yesterday to announce a new program that would bring in \$20 billion worth of new investment in upgrading, adding value to our resources, with 15,000 jobs for ordinary working people – construction jobs, oil and gas jobs – I've never been so proud. You know, my dad is not here anymore. He spent his life not doing fancy jobs in the oil and gas industry. He wasn't in one of those towers. The phone would ring at 2 o'clock in the morning, and he would have to go and drive to the oil rig. He would be so proud of this, too.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to be able to talk here today about this issue and this crisis. Of course, it is a crisis when we look at this price differential and how it affects the budget. We know that Budget 2018 didn't account for the current oil price differential. That's something we do know.

When we hear the government say, “Oh; we're still on track,” I am skeptical. I'm sure a lot of Albertans are skeptical, too. I think

what probably is most alarming is that the government plan already is to take us to over a hundred billion dollars in debt and billions of dollars in interest each year. When we see these things happening, we see this price differential, we know it's costing the Alberta government millions of dollars. What is the effect going to be down the road? So that way we know it's a crisis.

Nobody believes that things are still on track. This government doesn't have a very good track record when it comes to planning anything fiscal, that's for sure. Of course, we in the Legislature here are being asked to vote on programs and make fiscal decisions without a clear understanding of the province's finances. There's no way we should be asked to do this without the government being very clear and open and transparent about how this is going to affect the finances of this province.

Now, we know this is an issue, too. We have the Energy minister on April 9, 2018:

We need, as I mentioned earlier, two out of the three pipelines. If Kinder doesn't go, we still have KXL and line 3. Like, we need two of the three.

Madam Speaker, we don't have two out of the three. We've got zero of the three; that's what we have. We have exactly zero.

The Finance minister says, quote: 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. End quote. Madam Speaker, that doesn't sound like a very good plan right now, does it? We have zero pipelines. He's confident that all pipelines will be built. Now, this month's court ruling delaying Keystone XL and the ongoing delay of the Trans Mountain expansion put this budget's expectations into doubt. There's no doubt about that. This fiscal plan assumed that pipelines would be built, and still the government had projected upwards of a hundred billion dollars in debt. So, Madam Speaker, this is a crisis. The government needs to come clean. The Finance minister needs to come into this House and tell the people of Alberta what the finances are in Alberta.

Now, when the Premier was asked if she'd told Trudeau there'd be no objection if Northern Gateway was vetoed, this is what she said:

What we did was that we talked to the federal government, right after they were elected, about the need to get a pipeline to tidewater. We said that we needed one of those pipelines to go west and that we would work with them to get one of those pipelines to go west.

Well, Madam Speaker, we've got zero pipelines right now. This government sat on their hands and watched as Northern Gateway was vetoed and shot down and said absolutely nothing.

Also on Northern Gateway the Premier said:

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

Well, that's interesting. When the Northern Gateway was shut down for lack of consultation, what did this government do? We saw the minister do it just now. Blame the Conservatives, of course.

Now, Trans Mountain has the same issue. It's shut down right now, too, because of consultation. What does the NDP do now? Well, they cry foul: this is horrible; this is absolutely unacceptable. What happened with Northern Gateway? Nothing. Crickets. If two are shut down for the same reason, why wouldn't the reaction be the same? Madam Speaker, I would say that it's because this government really doesn't have their heart in pipelines. Their heart is not there. Their mouths are there. Their heart is a long ways away.

When we talked about Bill C-69, the Deputy Premier said:

How is it standing up for Alberta to hop on an airplane and jaunt off to Ottawa every time you get a chance.

That was on May 16, 2018. Well, of course, on February 8, 2018, Bill C-69 was introduced. On June 4, 2018, the NDP government defeats Motion 505 to fight C-69 in this House here. On June 20, 2018, Bill C-69 passes in the House of Commons. Then on September 25 the Premier finally says that ministers will go to Ottawa about C-69. That's three months later, after it's already passed. We asked for action long before that.

4:40

Now, Madam Speaker, let's talk about Keystone. The Premier on May 2, 2015, in a CBC interview, when they were talking about the NDP federal leader, was against Keystone. What did the Premier say? Quote: we're against it. End quote. Does that sound like support for the oil and gas industry? Does that sound like support for a pipeline, a pipeline that they say that they need for their budget, which will still leave us a hundred billion dollars in debt?

When asked about lobbying the U.S. for Keystone, what did the Premier say? Quote: no realistic objective. End quote. Does that sound like support for pipelines? Does that sound like a reason why we might be here today in a crisis? Sounds like it to me. We had an Alberta envoy to Washington who was told to stop lobbying for a pipeline, and then, of course, they replaced him.

Now, there was an article, an op-ed, done. The title was A Pipeline that Should Not Be Built. Who would have written such an article? Well, one of the three people that the government calls respected envoys to go and support pipelines. Does that make sense? Brian Topp: that's the person that the government has appointed as an envoy over this issue, the guy that wrote an article entitled A Pipeline that Should Not Be Built.

We know that we've seen pictures appear like the environment minister at an anti Northern Gateway rally. We know she spoke against Northern Gateway at an NEB hearing. We have a minister of this government that's travelled to B.C. to campaign for an anti-oil activist. We have an Education minister that chants "no new approvals" for oil sands on the steps of the Legislature. We have NDP that have hired anti-oil activists: Tzeponah Berman, Brian Topp, and others. We could create a huge list.

Today I asked for an apology, a retraction. Can you at least say: we were wrong; we shouldn't have hired these people; we shouldn't have been protesting pipelines for the last five to 10 years? Could we at least have an apology and a retraction for Albertans, an admission that they did something wrong? You know what happened? Nothing. No apology. Unapologetic anti-oil activists.

So why are we here today? Well, that's a really good question, isn't it? We have people like this that are saying that they're representing the oil and gas industry in Alberta when their past has said otherwise. What I would suggest is that we get credible people working on this. Credible people. I don't know that when the environment minister goes off to Ottawa supporting pipelines they can actually take her seriously, with her past. I don't know that when Brian Topp goes to Ottawa and talks to people anybody will look at him seriously either. How could they?

Madam Speaker, we've heard a lot today about how the Conservatives couldn't get pipelines built. Well, earlier today I asked in this very House one simple question: can anybody in the government point to a single major pipeline proposal that the Conservatives didn't approve and support when they had the opportunity? You know what I got for an answer? Nothing, of course, because there isn't one. When the Conservatives were in power, they built four pipelines. That's actually built. They approved all pipelines while they had the opportunity.

What do we have here? We've got two pipeline cancellations, we have a crisis on our hands of epic proportions, and we have a government that nobody believes has their heart in this. We hear the words. We see the lips moving, but we don't see the heart in it, and I don't think Albertans see it either, and that needs to change.

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

Seeing none, we will move on.

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

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

Bill 25 Canyon Creek Hydro Development Act

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

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. An Act to Recognize AMA Representation Rights. We've had the opportunity this morning to talk about this bill a little bit, and some information was brought forward that we felt made it incumbent to send it to committee. Now we are in Committee of the Whole, and we are talking about the substance of the bill. Unfortunately, because we're not going to be able to have more time and more opportunities to be able to present to Albertans a fulsome discussion on this bill, at this time I would like to be able to bring forward an amendment.

I will provide that for you, Madam Chair, at this time.

The Chair: This is amendment A1. Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Hunter: Okay, Madam Speaker. I am to move that Bill 24, An Act to Recognize AMA Representation Rights, be amended in section 1(2) by adding the following after the proposed section 40.1(4):

- (5) The Minister shall make available to the public any proposed amendments to the AMA Agreement respecting compensation matters at least 3 months prior to amending the AMA agreement to allow the public to . . .

The Chair: Hon. member, I believe you're speaking to the wrong bill. This is to Bill 24. We're on the Canyon Creek Hydro Development Act.

Mr. Hunter: I'm sorry. I had two people talking at once.

The Chair: The amendment is for a different bill. We are on Bill 25, Canyon Creek Hydro Development Act.

Mr. Hunter: I thought they said 24.

The Chair: All right. We are on Bill 25, Canyon Creek Hydro Development Act. Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 25 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

4:50

Bill 24

An Act to Recognize AMA Representation Rights

The Chair: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Hunter: You know, I have lots of grey hairs, but my hearing is probably because of my construction background, Madam Chair.

It's now my pleasure to be able to stand and speak to you about this amendment. If you would indulge me, I would like to read the amendment at this point. Is that okay?

The Chair: Actually, the document is back here at the desk. Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you. I move that Bill 24, An Act to Recognize AMA Representation Rights, be amended in section 1(2) by adding the following after the proposed section 40.1(4):

- (5) The Minister shall make available to the public any proposed amendments to the AMA Agreement respecting compensation matters at least 3 months prior to amending the AMA Agreement to allow the public to provide feedback on the impact of the proposed amendments on patient outcomes and the effective use of public resources.
- (6) The Minister shall make public any feedback received pursuant to subsection (5) with the consent of the submitter.
- (7) If the consent of the submitter cannot be obtained under subsection (6), the Minister shall make public that feedback in an anonymized format.

The purpose of this amendment, Madam Chair, is to be able to help provide physicians with certain rights. We felt it was also incumbent as there are two parts to any equation. In this situation the other part to the equation with physicians is the patients, the people who are actually involved in receiving that treatment and the care. What we're trying to accomplish with this amendment is providing some transparency for the system that this bill would be introducing, the value of that transparency, which this government has talked about many times, being able to provide that transparency in a system where we hear on a constant basis from patients that they need to know, you know, what kind of care they're receiving, what the outcomes are, and if there are any good ideas, that they could be able to give that feedback to the physicians. This bill I believe should be, really, about doing best for what the patients want and need.

"The primary objective of Canadian health care policy is to protect, promote and restore the physical and mental well-being of residents . . . and to facilitate reasonable access to health services." Physicians have told us that they know nothing about this agreement, which we talked about earlier. Some have even said that they do not want the AMA to negotiate with the government on their behalf. As the information is trickling in, we're starting to get this information from physicians. Even the way that it was presented to us in this House – maybe we can talk about it a little bit more in Committee of the Whole. It was very disingenuous in the way that they presented it to us.

Physicians now, from what we're getting in terms of feedback, Madam Chair, are completely blindsided by this. This bill is something that should have been presented to physicians and provided for them to give their feedback – these are the pros and cons to it; these are the things we like or we don't like – yet they haven't done that. When they gave their brief on this, they said that this has been accepted by 89 per cent. In reality only 30 per cent of the physicians took part in it, and of those 30 per cent that actually

took part, they were voting on zeros for the contract, not an actual bill such as this bill.

That's been flawed, and hopefully we'll be able to talk a little bit more about that and get some answers from the government on that, but when it comes to being able to make, in my opinion, a faulty bill better, I think that it's important and incumbent of the government to take a look at the other part of the equation. That other part is the patients.

This is what this amendment does. It provides the ministry with a mechanism so that we can get the feedback and we get that transparency with how that interaction with the patients is going. By doing that, if this bill does pass – as the government has a majority in this House, there's no doubt that it will pass – at least this would provide that patient that kind of care and transparency to what is happening here in the House.

Now, is the public aware of how their resources are being spent? This has been a question that has been asked in this House many times. I believe that they do have the right to know about future proposed amendments the government is making on any agreement regardless of the association. This bill would facilitate the mechanism where they can do that, where they can have that knowledge about any future amendments to this so that they would have at least three months to be able to consult and get that fulsome discussion that they so need. The money being used to fund these agreements are, after all, the public resources. They should know about any future proposed agreements and should be allowed to provide feedback on the impact those agreements will make on patient care and outcomes and also public resources.

This bill does nothing to address patient care and outcomes, which does bewilder me why that's the case. In our province patient wait times have become unmanageable. The province has been throwing more money at the system with nothing to show for it. The very people that this bill will affect have not been consulted, so, again, there are two parts to this equation. You've got the physicians and you've got the patients, yet the patient component has not been consulted. Both physicians and Albertans should be involved in any decision that will affect them. That's just good governance. This government has done little to prove to Albertans since the beginning of their term that they have their backs and are looking out for what's in their best interest. In speaking with Albertans, this bill just proves that there has to be more transparency and accountability when it comes to matters that will affect physicians and the general public and their resources.

Now, the province is spending almost \$22 billion on health care every year, and I believe that accountability is paramount for a file this large. This is actually the largest, as you know, and has been talked about many times in here. We spend more on health care than any other province, than any other jurisdiction in Canada, so having that transparency is, I think, just a prudent approach. This cost of health care needs to be addressed if Alberta is going to deal with its fiscal challenges, and if there is any hope to be able to gain a path to balance, this file certainly has to be addressed.

This amended agreement with the province says that doctors in the province of Alberta will not receive an increase until 2019. What about after 2019? What's the case at that point? Now, do we really think that any deal made with any associations should not be made public to Albertans so that they are given the opportunity to address their concerns or to give their praise? Again, providing the pros and cons to it. Are Albertans not footing the bill when amendments are made in the future regarding compensation matters? This is something that we believe is prudent, to be able to approach this at this point and provide that option for us to know: what are the future amendments that are going to take place, especially on a \$22 billion file?

5:00

Since we know that most physicians were not involved with this current amending agreement and that their feedback is not being taken into consideration, it is safe for me to say that this is just another decision this government has made that has the potential to increase spending on health in the province without having to prove that it will also improve patient care and outcomes.

This NDP government has proven to Albertans that they do not consult the public on how to spend their money, and this amendment would give them that recourse. This amendment would make sure that the public, which would include all Albertans and physicians, would be fully aware of any proposed agreement between the minister and the AMA at least three months prior to its amendment. It would allow the public at that time to provide feedback on the impact of those proposed amendments on patient outcomes and the effective use of our public resources. It would also make the public's feedback public, which, obviously, makes sense, seeing as it's public feedback. This is exactly what the government says that they are trying to do with this bill, so I can't see why this amendment would make them nervous in any way. If the AMA is made the sole representative of all physicians, the minister should make physicians' pros or cons public in the future.

I have also asked to have included in the amendment that if the submitter's identity is either not included or is illegible, then the feedback will still be made public in a proper format.

Madam Chair, all we're trying to accomplish here today is what the people of Alberta want, increased transparency and accountability. The reason I feel it is necessary to bring forward these amendments is because the bill does not deal with patient outcomes and the effective use of public resources, which is a concern that I hear on a regular basis. We want Albertans to be aware of any future agreements after 2020 so that they have a place where they can respond.

Unfortunately, this government's narrow focus on the next election dominates their thinking. A short-term focus is not what Albertans want or need and not what this legislative body should be ramming through. With high-running deficits that have ruined the economy, the short-term focus neglects very real fiscal challenges. In Alberta those challenges are massive, and the NDP government is not ready for them.

In a CBC article from March of this year entitled *We Need to Have a Difficult Conversation about Alberta's Health-care Costs*, it discusses how spending has been soaring, particularly for our oldest patients. The article goes on to say that "if you talk with enough health-care thinkers about why Alberta has historically spent so much on health, you'll hear the same answer: We could afford it!" Madam Chair, the problem is that Alberta is not doing as well as we used to. The policies the NDP have implemented negatively impacted energy investment in Alberta, and if you read the article, the plummeting oil prices have been the cause of Alberta's future demise.

This is why making the public's feedback about the impacts of proposed amendments on patient outcomes and the effective use of public resources public is so very important. Albertans deserve to know how their money is being spent and be able to express their experiences on whether they feel they're getting their money's worth. You'd think that this would be accepted by the NDP because it's very voter facing.

Now, I ask all members of the House to vote in favour of our amendment to Bill 24 in an effort to show an act of solidarity and transparency and accountability, which this side of the House is very much in favour of.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and to the member for an amendment which gives us an opportunity to both reply to the amendment and, I think in response to the amendment, to some of the questions that were also raised during second reading that I know hon. members want an answer to that directly relates.

I just want to back up. The member talks about how this came as a surprise and out of nowhere, and I actually just want to go through some of the facts and the timeline, back to the 2011 negotiation. In 2011 – as you'll recall, it was before this government was in place – there had been a Conservative government at that time for many decades. In the 2011 AMA agreement the government of Alberta committed to work towards giving the AMA general recognition with an opportunity through an appropriate legal framework if the AMA provided a written request. This was section 2(b) of the 2011 agreement. The 2011 agreement has been in place for a long time. It was negotiated under a Conservative government, implemented under a Conservative government. They actually renegotiated multiple times even after that, but 2011 was the first time they said that they would recognize it within an appropriate legal framework if the AMA provided a written request. Again, section 2(b):

Upon the written request of AMA, [Alberta Health] will work towards entrenching a general recognition of AMA within an appropriate legislative framework.

That was what was agreed to in 2011.

We have records from at least as far back as 2013, from December 2013 I have for sure, where there was a written request from the AMA. Again, that was an agreement negotiated by a Conservative government, and the request came to a Conservative government in 2013, and then it was in 2015, when we formed government, that we had an amending agreement and now a final, ratified agreement yet again. This isn't something that came out of nowhere. I want to start with that.

Secondly, there are many, many, many AMA letters to members and to all physicians across Alberta talking about the negotiation processes and some of the things that were unfolding in that discussion. These were sent to physicians in Alberta. Certainly, I understand that not everyone has time to read every piece of correspondence that comes to them, but this is from the AMA to all of the physicians of Alberta, and there are many records of discussions around negotiations and what some of the items were that had been agreed to or were being considered. The AMA, like all staff group organizations, wants to ensure that their members are informed of what they have an opportunity to vote on. There are many of those documents. We get the President's Letter sent to our constituency offices as well, and there's regular correspondence between staff associations and MLAs.

Physicians definitely had an opportunity to review the agreement and vote against it if they did have concerns. The AMA provided those regular updates and detailed themes of the negotiations and president's messages. I just want to reinforce that this is something that was in the works since 2011. What is new is that we said that we would do it when we sat down in the last round of negotiations, not just that if they sent a written request, we would do it, but we agreed that we would table it this session.

I understand, you know, once burned, twice shy. They asked for it in 2011. They said that it was going to happen. They wrote a letter saying: we'd like it to happen. It didn't happen. But we said that we were going to do it, and this NDP government had a consultation in good faith and said that we would follow through on the commitment, that was made under a previous Conservative government, that wasn't implemented. I just want to make sure that everyone is aware of that piece of the timeline.

The other piece in regard to the amendment that I want to mention is that no other staff group negotiation – I know we have at least one former Conservative Minister of Labour. Certainly, no negotiations with staff groups would have been publicly posted three months ahead of time for any of those staff groups for members of the public to engage through the negotiation process. There is a role for the employer, and there is a role for the payee, or the employees, and physicians definitely are in receipt of payments from the government of Alberta, and the government of Alberta has to act in the role of an employer when they're entering those discussions.

I just want to clarify that this is about representation rights. This isn't officially a negotiation. This is about sitting down in good faith and working through challenges and coming up with solutions. I think we have a very good track record of doing that. Both the amending agreement and the new, ratified agreement of this last year I think show that when we sit down at the table and we work through the challenges, we can come up with good outcomes that lead to better outcomes for Alberta patients, more funds being returned back to the pot to be able to provide additional front-line services, and I think we've done that in a way respecting the employment arrangement that is in place with physicians here in Alberta.

5:10

It's my opinion that we should be voting down the amendment. I think it would compromise potential negotiations in the future. It would definitely impact the relationship, and it doesn't reflect what was actually reached through discussions with the AMA. Tentative agreements are shared with all members for a significant amount of time before being ratified, and I think that that is something that was available for members to choose to read or not read, but this is something where I stand by the process that we put in place.

I think what is evident is that, yes, not everyone voted, but even in our democratic elections not everyone votes, yet we respect the opinion that is rendered on decision day. That is indeed what happened here. An overwhelming majority of those who voted yes, that they wanted to move forward with ratifying this agreement, and this is one piece of ratifying that agreement. That's why I'm recommending to all colleagues that we vote against the amendment as proposed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to the amendment presented by my good friend and colleague the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner. This amendment will bring patient care and patient outcomes to the forefront of Bill 24. It will ensure that the bill is focused on the patient, holding the AMA and government accountable for how money is being spent.

Physician compensation is expected to take up \$5.1 billion of the \$22 billion health care budget. Nearly a quarter of our health care budget is spent on physicians, and this bill does not have any transparency or accountability for this money and how it is being spent. In order to make this bill stronger, we must ensure that transparency and accountability are adopted. This amendment can do this by making sure that the public is aware of compensation arrangements between the government and the Alberta Medical Association and by ensuring that all changes to an agreement are made public three months prior to any amendments.

The amendment will also provide an avenue for the public to weigh in on the changes made to the AMA agreement. Physicians and all Albertans will have the opportunity to raise their concerns about how the changes could affect the outcomes for patients.

Madam Chair, Bill 24 is not as strong as it needs to be, and that is why I stand in support of this amendment. This bill does not include any form of transparency or accountability, which seems like a potential oversight by the government but one we're used to from this government. It also fails to address the quality of care that patients are receiving as well as their health outcomes, and that is one key part that we are missing in our health care system, accountability to the patient. By creating a method for the public to actually engage in the amending process, we create greater transparency in our health care system. All agreements made must put the patient first.

Alberta's patients should be in the centre of any legislation that looks to make changes to health care. This bill does not anywhere address the patient. It does not talk about holding physicians accountable for the treatment that they give their patients. We all want to see a health care system that is efficient in delivering high-quality care. We all want a system that does not leave people waiting for surgery for over a year. We all want a health care system that is solely focused on achieving the best possible outcomes. In saying this, I feel it is important that physicians have the right to share their recommendations and concerns with the government. The proposed amendment will allow physicians to voice their concerns with any changes made.

You know, we have been reaching out to physicians across this province, and I certainly have done that. A lot of physicians, due to our single system, are already under the AMA and are accepting of everything that they have provided thus far, but there are other physicians, particularly specialists, who don't feel that the AMA represents them well. You know what? You can use that comparison in any group setting, for any group that has a membership to something. There are always going to be factions, groups within that that may not agree entirely, that may not be entirely feeling represented. Those are some of the key points that we're seeing in this, that there are groups within the AMA that aren't in agreement with some of their decision-making.

This amendment will make sure that physicians can continue to make their voices heard without any repercussions. The lack of consultation has resulted in a lack of understanding about the possible implications of this bill or about how the majority of physicians feel about this particular piece of legislation. We have seen time and time again that this government does not do adequate consultations. For three and a half years we have tried to teach you how to consult.

Certainly, you embraced it with the time zone changes that you wanted to do, the daylight saving time, and we thought then and there: they finally understand consultation; they finally understand that they have to speak to people other than their own membership to get some answers. It's unfortunate that again I have to stand here and remind the government side about what consultation is. In this situation you truly didn't consult a lot of the physicians. You were relying on the very association that you're empowering to relay the message to the physicians that are their members, and the members are saying that they weren't even aware of this. This government did not provide any oversight to ensure that the membership that they're going to legislate to their association – that's disappointing. Anyways, this amendment will stop this from happening in the future. The government already knows what the concerns are and could act on them accordingly.

Nevertheless, we need to bring this back to the patients. The government could have used this bill to create accountability within

the Alberta Medical Association to improve patient outcomes. The goal of this bill could have tied compensation to those outcomes, which has been discussed many times, but instead you're just using this to formalize a process. In Bill 24 not once are patients mentioned at a time when this government should be advocating for patients. This government is supposed to be the protector of our health care system and needs to do everything it can to get the best deal for Albertans, yet we've seen wait times for hip, knee, and cataract surgeries rapidly rise under this government's mismanagement.

You chose to spend money on building laundry services for some of your health regions when they could have simply contracted that out. You chose to try and build a structure for your lab, and your people can't even do the basic accounting and project management on it, to the point where it's costing you double, \$600 million. It doesn't even faze you over there. It's a shame.

I mean, have you told the doctors what you did with the pharmacists, that when you were negotiating with them, you only allowed two in the room and made them sign a nondisclosure agreement? Are the physicians aware of what you did with the pharmacists, that you sent them on their way unable to even tell their own pharmacists what they had signed? That certainly is the interpretation from the pharmacists. I'd love to get clarity on that. Have you told the physicians what you've done? Are you going to lock them in a room, too? Probably.

Anyways, the trend is very concerning, and we need to address this growing crisis at hand: again, mismanagement in our health care system; spending has increased while outcomes decrease.

This bill completely ignores the patients' best interests in order to appease the negotiating body. Don't get me wrong; I respect what the AMA tries to do in some regards. We know that the collective voice tends to be stronger than an individual's, and that's why this amendment is so important. This amendment states:

The Minister shall make available to the public any proposed amendments to the AMA Agreement respecting compensation matters at least 3 months prior to amending the AMA Agreement to allow the public to provide feedback on the impact of the proposed amendments on patient outcomes and the effective use of public resources.

If you do not believe that the money we relay to physicians affects the treatment and care, I challenge you on the pharmacists. The pharmacists have been attacked provincially and federally on their fees, to the point where it is actually economically unfeasible for them to even provide the influenza vaccinations. Does that worry you at all, that people are going to get reduced access to flu vaccination simply because pharmacists aren't being compensated enough?

5:20

Can you imagine the efficiencies we'd find with help from professionals who are on the front line? Can you imagine the innovative, cost-saving, efficient way of driving ideas that would come this way when we incorporate everyone in the process? This government didn't go out into Alberta's many communities and consult with physicians on this bill. You did not give our many health professionals the opportunity to weigh in on this.

I cannot see a reason why this amendment would not be supportable. The government goes on about how they've expanded transparency. I would challenge that you even know the definition of transparency and accountability. I know that those are big words.

Now, the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner hit the nail on the head with this amendment. If the government will not give us more time to study this bill, then we will propose an amendment that will allow for continuous consultation going forward. Will the government

have to listen to the recommendations brought forward from the public? No, but they will all be on record. If 200 physicians write to the government to raise a concern and the government chooses to ignore them, that failure is on them.

I cannot express how important this amendment is. It is a way to fight for better quality services with the most cost-effective investments available. I'd like to thank all the members for listening to me speak about this very important amendment, and I hope they rise in support of this crucial change to Bill 24.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I would like to compliment my colleague from Cardston-Taber-Warner for introducing this amendment. I believe it's a very important amendment that's brought forward today. I think that the most important aspect of the amendment is that any compensation agreements should be disclosed publicly for the benefit of the taxpayer. I think that's a fundamental, paramount, important thing for all Albertans to hear, that we're actually having these discussions, that there are voices fighting for them and defending that critical, important issue. I hope that the members opposite actually support this amendment going forward when we vote on it.

The biggest issue, I think, to be coming from this is a matter of confidence. When you look at this government, whether it was the carbon tax that they brought in after a campaign went by in its entirety and they never even mentioned it or Bill 6, that, again, saw massive protests outside this building by farmers coming up and saying that they had never been consulted, the need for transparency on consultation is important. I think that for any government it's important but also for this NDP government, with two glaring issues that have happened in the past where better consultation would have made a way better outcome for Albertans. I urge the members opposite to consider this, that we need to strengthen consultation and to make public at least three months prior to amending an AMA agreement – the public feedback is a very simplistic but important amendment to Bill 24.

Broader issues from Bill 24. As mentioned earlier, I think that freedom is a very important aspect. Whether it's freedom of association of doctors and physicians being able to have a choice of whether to have the AMA representing them or not, I think it should remain a voluntary decision for these doctors and physicians. I wish that that was in Bill 24, but unfortunately it is not.

With a parallel to Bill 6, you had mandatory WCB coverage, that this NDP government thought was important. Again, rather than the voluntary nature of lots of farmers being able to have the private insurance that they chose, they're actually being forced to have WCB coverage, to which lots of farmers would say: okay; well, I'll just have two sets of insurance because I would prefer my private insurance, which has better rates for the workers. Again, it's this mandating nature of the NDP to have mandatory WCB coverage or mandatory AMA representation that I think does a disservice to Albertans.

I encourage again the members opposite to consider this amendment. There was a tremendous amount of work put into it by my good colleague down the way, and I hope that they can actually approve this amendment.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Are there any other speakers to the amendment? Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the amendment that's being presented today by the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner. This amendment, I believe, speaks to some of the sensibilities that we need to bring to the negotiating process that's been presented in Bill 24. We know that the main purpose of this bill is to formalize the relationship between the government and the AMA and that this bill ultimately creates a large negotiating body that is going to oversee negotiations between the Alberta government and the doctors, the physicians, of Alberta.

When we take a look at the historic role of the AMA, we can see that it offers and has offered residents, physicians, and medical students a wide variety of services and benefits that can help them with personal, professional, and financial needs. Alberta's physicians have principally been paid in Alberta through a fee-for-service model, in which doctors bill the government a predetermined fee for each service that they perform. The AMA has been the organization that has represented most but not all of the doctors in Alberta when negotiating that fee-for-service model. This amendment speaks to this process. This amendment, I believe, is worthy of support because it's trying to bring some balance to ensure that in something that's as critical as the health care of our province and the services that we provide for our citizens, they will have some capacity to understand and be consulted when these kinds of negotiations are going on.

Madam Chair, we know that this amendment speaks to the concept or the idea that they would like to see a three-month window where consultations could take place that would allow for public feedback on the impact of any proposed amendments or compensation matters within the agreement. This amendment speaks to this concern that the public needs to have some sort of say. It would be at least a three-month window prior to amending the AMA agreement, which would allow for public feedback and would allow for public consultation on the impact of the proposed compensation amendments on patient outcomes. They could have some feedback on how that's going to affect patient outcomes and the effectiveness of the use of the public resources that we have through this agreement.

Madam Chair, we know that every government, including this one, can sometimes struggle with consultation. It can create serious issues for Albertans when we don't consult in an appropriate fashion. I know that we've had this conversation in this House many times over the last three and a half years. I can remember having this same kind of discussion when it came to Bill 6. I was just speaking to a farmer in the last couple of weeks, and we were talking about Bill 6 and the imposition of OH and S and workers' compensation on the farmers of Alberta. He was still not happy with the consultative process that went through and believed that these were just imposed on him as a farmer. His words were that he'll never be able to hire another worker again simply because there wasn't a proper consultative process that actually listened to the farmers in the process.

I would encourage this government to consider this amendment, which would bring in a three-month period of consultation. I know that I've had many conversations. We in this House have all gone through the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and we realize that in the next set of elections there will be new boundaries. Should I be successful in my campaign to once again represent Drayton Valley-Devon, my boundaries will be changed to include portions of the county of Parkland.

5:30

I have sat down already with elements of the county of Parkland, with the mayor, Rod Shaigec, and I have had the opportunity to hear their concerns with regard to the coal phase-out. They were very

concerned with the fact that decisions with regard to the coal phase-out were made without any consultation with the county of Parkland, one of those counties that is going to be primarily hit by those decisions, when they have Sundance, Keephills, and Genesee, all of these power plants in my constituency. I was able in my conversations with them to find out that it's the county of Parkland that will have a 25 to 30 per cent reduction in their tax base, hundreds of workers that will be without jobs.

They were talking about the problems that have been created because of a lack of volunteer firefighters now because they no longer have, well, the good-paying jobs that have been there through the coal. Now they're going to have to start hiring a professional firefighting force, all because there was a lack of appropriate consultation.

I would encourage this government to support this amendment because it will allow for some consultation and for the patients to be able to get involved in this process and be able to look at whether or not this is going to be a positive impact for the citizens of Alberta. Madam Speaker, "the Minister shall make available to the public any [changes] respecting compensation matters at least 3 months prior to amending." This will allow the public to consider any new compensation arrangements and to provide feedback on the impact these compensation arrangements will have on patient outcomes. Now, this amendment will allow Albertans to reflect on how addressing physician compensation will not only impact the proposed amendments but also whether it's an effective and efficient use of public resources.

Madam Speaker, we know that – I keep saying Speaker; I'm sorry, Madam Chair – we're going to be going into an election where there's going to be a \$50 billion debt. This government, in my opinion, has made some very poor choices and decisions that have placed us in this position. We're going to have a debt-servicing cost of around \$3 billion a year. The resources that we have as a province are going to have to be managed in a very, very careful and efficient way. This amendment speaks to this capacity to allow Albertans to be able to ensure that the resources that are going to be used in the Alberta government, in health care – if it's going to allow this to be done more efficiently and to be able to have the feedback to ensure that we have efficient use of these resources, then this is a good thing. This is a positive thing that we need to be able to consider doing.

The decisions made by government do affect the citizens of this province. None are more important than the decisions that can and will affect the health of our citizens. It's a reasonable position, I believe, Madam Chair, to have the minister "make available to the public any proposed amendments to the AMA Agreement respecting compensation matters" so that Albertans can have the opportunity, can provide the feedback that they need in an era when the fiscal realities of this province are going to be stretched to the limit.

I would ask that this House carefully consider this amendment, that they realize on both sides of the House that we are going to have an opportunity here with this amendment to make this piece of legislation better.

With those comments, Madam Chair, I would thank you for your time.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Chair. As always, it's an honour to rise, and it's really a huge honour to rise on this particular amendment. We're always talking about transparency. It's probably one of the most used words in this Legislature on both sides of the House.

One of the things that I wanted to share was that this summer my uncle, who was a very, very dear man to us – he actually passed away this summer – had a fast-growing glioblastoma, and it was some of the best care I've ever seen in my life. He had actually gotten hurt and as a result went into the hospital, and as a result of the injury was diagnosed with the glioblastoma. We had just some of the best people with us at that time: the neurosurgeons, the neurologists, all of the people that were there, the nurses, the doctors, the whole thing. It was just such a privilege to see the level of care when he came in, especially in emergency. He was a lovely, lovely human being. I mean, they loved him on the floor. The cancer was growing very, very rapidly, so he had bits and pieces that he was able to retain, and then other days he was fully aware.

You see that level of quality care, especially in emergency, and if any of you have ever had an experience in emergency, especially when you're coming in on an ambulance or anything like that, it's pretty incredible in this province. It's pretty incredible once you're triaged and put through, the level of care that we receive here.

These discussions around this particular thing and why it's so important to me in particular is that when my uncle was going through this, that quality of care and the commitment to the people that were in there, that was like an actual phenomenon. These people don't even have to think about this; this is their job. These are incredible people. These are people that we should be uplifting and honouring for who they are. When you look at the membership of doctors – I mean, this is just for doctors in particular, but I'm sure that there will be other situations where other groups will be getting involved. But if you look at how we honour the people that take care of our loved ones, especially when they have limited days left on Earth and you know that, we want to make sure that when we're passing legislation of this magnitude, that 30 per cent isn't our number.

I guess the question, Madam Chair, that I have is: when we're thinking about this group of people, what was the process that they went through in order to make sure that they had access to be able to answer the questions on the survey? I'm not quite sure how the government got to the point of having, well, I guess it's 29.4 per cent, whatever the number is, of the membership to vote on becoming a part of this association. The reason I ask is, again, because all of us have been impacted. All of us have been there. All of us have had those doctors standing across from us giving worst-case scenarios in the kindest voices.

Four and a half years ago a very good friend of mine passed away from pancreatic cancer at the Tom Baker centre. Again, those doctors that were with us in the ICU were some of the strongest, most incredible people I've ever met, and they stood with him. We didn't realize we'd only have him for another hour or two. Like, we didn't know if he had days or what. Because of his brain power, he was totally lucid right up until he passed away. He was still giving out codes to his wife and the passwords for the computer and the bank statements and all that kind of stuff. Again, the incredible doctors that were there, that were taking us through this process: they were incredible people.

I don't think that we can take lightly the level of intervention of an association like this and feel safe to be able to pass legislation with only a small percentage of them buying into that legislation. That's why we've tried to refer it. That's why the hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner is asking for time to be able to share information, which is, by rights for all Albertans, exactly what I'm assuming health care is all about, to be able to transparently share that information. But when you look at the numbers, I think the government would have a difficult time explaining this to the average Albertan as well.

Like I said, once we got the bill, I actually sent it out to all of the various mediclinics and doctors in our area. We have amazing doctors

out in Chestermere, Rocky View, Langdon, and Strathmore. And, like I said, I only received a few responses back, but the responses that I got back were that they didn't know about it. That's concerning, don't you think? That's concerning from the perspective of the fact that we have this honourable and incredible group of people that we hold at this high level to be transparent, yet they're not equally represented.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? Seeing none, I will call 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 5:40 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

| | | |
|----------|--------|-------|
| Aheer | Hunter | Smith |
| Drysdale | McIver | Stier |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Babcock | Gray | Miller |
| Bilous | Hinkley | Nielsen |
| Carson | Hoffman | Payne |
| Connolly | Kazim | Renaud |
| Coolahan | Kleinstauber | Rosendahl |
| Cortes-Vargas | Larivee | Sabir |
| Dach | Littlewood | Shepherd |
| Dang | Loyola | Sucha |
| Drever | Malkinson | Turner |
| Eggen | McCuaig-Boyd | Westhead |
| Fitzpatrick | McKitrick | Woollard |
| Ganley | | |

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| Totals: | For – 6 | Against – 34 |
|---------|---------|--------------|

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Chair: The committee will now rise and report progress.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 25. The committee reports progress on a bill: Bill 24. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Seeing the very late hour, I move that we call it 6 o'clock and adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon. Happy RMA to everyone.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:58 p.m.]

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