



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, May 23, 2019

Day 2

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UCP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

Aheer, Hon. Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UCP)
Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP),
Official Opposition House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),
Official Opposition Whip
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
Government Whip
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UCP)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
Premier
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UCP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, Edmonton-South West (UCP)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
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Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP)
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
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Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UCP)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),
Deputy Government Whip
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UCP)
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, Calgary-Acadia (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Sonya Savage	Minister of Energy
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Community and Social Services
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Children's Services
Doug Schweitzer	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

Parliamentary Secretary

Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary of Immigration
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STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

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Chair: Mr. Gotfried
Deputy Chair: Mr. Orr

Allard
Eggen
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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Allard
Barnes
Bilous
Dach
Dang
Gray
Horner
Issik
Jones
Reid
Rowswell
Stephan
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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goodridge
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Amery
Carson
Ganley
Glasgo
Guthrie
Irwin
Long
Neudorf
Nixon, Jeremy
Pancholi
Rutherford
Walker
Yao

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Ellis
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Goodridge
Gray
Lovely
Nixon, Jeremy
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Gotfried
Horner
Irwin
Neudorf
Nielsen
Nixon, Jeremy
Pancholi
Sigurdson, L.
Sigurdson, R.J.
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

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Deol
Ganley
Horner
Issik
Jones
Loyola
Neudorf
Rehn
Reid
Renaud
Turton
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Amery
Barnes
Dach
Feehan
Guthrie
Hoffman
Renaud
Rosin
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Turton
Walker

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
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Armstrong-Homeniuk
Feehan
Getson
Loyola
Rehn
Rosin
Sabir
Schmidt
Sigurdson, R.J.
Singh
Smith
Turton
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 23, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly a former MLA and minister, a long-time friend visiting the Assembly today who is seated in your gallery, Wayne Drysdale. Most members here will know Wayne, who spent 10 years in this building as the MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, from 2008 to 2019. He held the portfolios of Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Transportation. Wayne has also spent 15 years as a councillor for the MD of Greenview. Following his career as an elected official he is now the new senior vice-president of Nauticol Energy in Grande Prairie. I would ask Wayne to please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul, please.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to members of the House the MP for Lakeland, MP Shannon Stubbs, and her husband, former MLA Shayne Saskiw. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, please.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to introduce to you and through you to all the members the deputy mayor of Vegreville, the hard-working Tina Warawa. Tina is the front-line worker for politics. Thank you, Tina. Would you rise?

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members from the Sun Country Christian School. The students are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Sterling Reimer. They also have some chaperones with them. We've got Dave, Wanda, Dave, Helena, John, Geoff, and Bethany. If they could please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House the students of Lacombe Christian School from the heartland of industry, innovation, and fertile agricultural land. The teachers with them are JennaRae Sauvé and David Allers, and a number of chaperones: Amy Keller; Adèle Brouwer, I think it says; Janis Butcher; Keith Vaandrager; and Jacki Talsma. I'd ask that they all please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly

Destiny Christian School. The students are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Glenn Mullem. They have three chaperones here today: Brendon Gerber, Rosanne Fraser, and Emma Kunaka. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise here and introduce to you and through you the students of Calvin Christian School. The students are accompanied today by their teachers, Fred Neels and Alana Schipper, and also their chaperones: Wilma VanderVeen, Henk VanderVeen, Edith Beyer, Cora Maljaars, John Bill van Garderen, and Annemarie van Garderen. I'd like to ask them to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-McClung, please.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly an energetic and bright young student currently enrolled at NAIT, Joseph Backewich. I ask you to please rise. I was proud to spend an afternoon with Mr. Backewich discussing leadership, volunteerism, the duty of elected officials to stand up for the rights of everyday Albertans, as part of a job-shadowing project. I ask that all members join me in extending the traditional warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly, whether that be by traditional desk thumping or the less-endearing practice of hand clapping recently imported from Ottawa.

The Speaker: The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, please.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this House two very exceptional people that are working hard to ensure that our youth are receiving the best education. Education is the foundation of our prosperity, and it is my honour to introduce a couple of these people that are on the front lines, helping to shape Alberta's future. Will you please stand when I call your name. First, Cathy Hogg, the president of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, a trustee with the Prairie Rose school division, and also a rancher in Cypress Hills. Secondly, Brian Callaghan, executive director of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta and past superintendent of schools for Canadian Rockies public schools located in Bow Valley and Northland school division in Peace River. Thank you both for your service to the people and kids of Alberta, and please accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there any other introductions? The Member for Edmonton-Glenora, please.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two. The first is Karen Becker, who's with the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta as well. She is the association's vice-president, a trustee for Wetaskiwin regional public schools, and she is also a champion dog breeder. I'd ask that she rise and we all give her the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

My second. It's a pleasure to introduce several former colleagues of mine, whom I will ask to stand as I say their names: Tonya Malo, Laura Ehrkamp, Courtney Morrison, Courtney Malo, and Dr. Andrea Hasenbank. These women worked tirelessly in this building on behalf of Albertans, and I look forward to them having that opportunity again one day. I ask that all members join me in extending the traditional warm welcome to these phenomenal women.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a true VIP in my life, my son, Justin Gotfried. Justin is a third-year international business student at Mount Royal University, has had the opportunity to do an internship in Ottawa with the Conservative Party of Canada, and continues to be active in political life. I'd like him to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Statement by the Speaker

Rotation of Questions and Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we proceed to Members' Statements, I would like to outline the rotation that will apply for Oral Question Period and Members' Statements. As noted in the very fine procedural memo that my office sent out to all members yesterday, the Speaker's office received a document on May 16, 2019, signed by House leaders confirming their agreement on the rotation of Oral Question Period and Members' Statements.

With respect to Oral Question Period the agreement is based upon 18 questions each day and allows a four-day rotation. The Official Opposition is entitled to ask the first four main questions as well as the sixth, seventh, ninth, 10th, 12th, 13th, 16th, and 17th question each day. Private members of the government caucus are entitled to ask the fifth, eighth, 11th, 14th, 15th, and 18th question each day. Today will be day 1 of the four-day rotation.

I would like to remind members that questions and responses should be no longer than 35 seconds in length and that preambles to supplementary questions are only allowed for the first four rounds of questioning each day, as indicated in the House leaders' agreement.

1:40

With respect to Members' Statements the rotation is based upon a three-week schedule. According to Standing Order 7(4) each day up to six private members may make a statement of no more than two minutes in duration. Private members of the government caucus are entitled to four statements each day of the three-week schedule except for Tuesday, when they are entitled to three statements. The Official Opposition is entitled to two statements each day of the three-week schedule except for Tuesday, when they are entitled to three statements. This week is week 1.

I will also table a copy of the House leaders' agreement at an appropriate time in the daily Routine later today.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-North.

Ramadan

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, my congratulations and best wishes to you on your election as Speaker of this House.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour as a member of the House and an MLA of Islamic faith to rise today to mark the holy month of Ramadan. As we fast from dawn to sunset during this holiest and most solemn month of the year, we deepen our faith and seek spiritual renewal and reflect on ourselves, our actions and our values. Let this be a time for all Albertans, regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds, to join those marking Ramadan by remembering the less fortunate and celebrating acts of kindness and charity.

For everyone here in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world I wish a blessed and peaceful Ramadan. May you experience renewal during this time of sacrifice and prayer. [Remarks in Arabic]

The Speaker: The Member for St. Albert.

Provincial Tax Revenue and Government Spending

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is impossible to blow a \$1.4 billion hole in our province's revenues, call it tax relief, and then expect to deliver services we need without cutting. Our new Premier wants Albertans to believe that a massive tax cut to corporations will result in the trickle-down of jobs, investment, infrastructure, and that's just a fairy tale.

Let's look at one ministry and see what's at stake: Community and Social Services. If this government freezes and/or cuts vital supports in any way, real people will be impacted immediately. They may call it finding efficiencies or transformation, but the result will be the same. There are approximately 60,000 Albertans that rely on AISH. It isn't possible to fund new people who require AISH and qualify for it by cutting. Will they cut the extras that people on AISH need such as funding for special diets, people who use G tubes, or the \$50 that's available every month to fund the maintenance costs of service dogs? How about PDD supports?

Will this government ask families and support organizations to continue to do more with less so they can dilute services to pay for the massive tax cuts? Will there be a cap on funding for sexual assault services, making it harder for people to leave dangerous situations? Will this government follow the Premier's close ally Ford here, too, pretend to address wait-lists for kids with autism by introducing cruel caps and means tests that do nothing to wait-lists but slash and burn existing services? Will this government halt the progress we've begun around addressing the overwhelming need for service dogs in Alberta?

It is impossible to address grinding poverty, unemployment, and homelessness by cutting. The Premier wants to take us backwards and call it progress. We're smarter than that. Albertans know we can create a prosperous future without cutting. Each one of us was elected to serve all Albertans – all of them – those without deep pockets, access, and influence. It's important to remember that.

Thank you.

Brooks Bandits Junior A Hockey Championship

Ms Glasgo: The city of Brooks was proud to host the national junior A hockey championships at the Centennial Regional Arena from May 11 to 19. Brooks welcomed fans and teams from across Canada. Hotels were full, and the streets were lively. The energy was electric. For a city that has been through some tough times, this tournament was the excitement and positive energy that we all needed.

It was a true honour to host our Premier in Brooks and participate in the puck drop at the final game. The community welcomed the Premier and myself with open arms and thunderous applause. Never did I think that a group of hockey fans would be excited to see politicians at a game.

Our local heroes, the Brooks Bandits, went into the final game with a perfect record in the tournament and defeated the Prince George Spruce Kings 4 to 3 in the final, making them the national champs.

I would like to take this time to thank Hockey Canada for choosing Brooks, the many volunteers who dedicated their time and talent, the fans for making this tournament possible, and the city of

Brooks for creating an incredible atmosphere for this event. Congratulations to the Brooks Bandits players and coaches on an amazing season.

The Speaker: The Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Energy Industries in Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your recent election.

It's an honour to rise today for the first time and thank the great people of Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland for electing me and letting me serve in this place. Like in so many other parts of our province many of our constituents in Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland work in the oil and gas sector, coal-fired generation plants, and agriculture, obviously. Too many of them have suffered for the past number of years as oil prices plummeted and jobs have disappeared. On top of that, many seniors and others on fixed incomes suffered under the carbon tax, trying to make ends meet.

However, Mr. Speaker, hope is on the horizon. In Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's throne speech yesterday our government outlined its plan to bring back jobs, investment, and hope to the people of Alberta. We will get our pipelines built, our natural resources to market, and we will get our fiscal house in order. In just these past two days we've repealed the carbon tax and sent a strong message to Ottawa on bills C-69 and C-48. We'll ensure that Albertans have the services they need and our education and health care systems are the envy of all those in the world. We will ensure that Alberta once again is the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

To the great people of Lac Ste. Anne and indeed all Albertans that are counting on us: I have every confidence that this new government is up to the task.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-McCall.

Oil Transportation by Rail

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We must move our resources to market. We need action, not political gains. There is no doubt that pipelines are the long-term answer, but we are still awaiting decisions on the Trans Mountain pipeline. Despite much bluster this new UCP government has also not offered us any positive news on the Keystone XL pipeline or on line 3 either. Meanwhile our oil stays in the ground, and Albertans suffer as a result.

Our leader saw this issue and took immediate action to address it. She signed a multiyear deal to move 120,000 barrels of oil per day by rail, starting this summer. These contracts were worth \$3.7 billion and were anticipated to generate about \$6 billion in economic return. This means multiple billions in profit for the people of Alberta.

The new Premier plans to be the champion of jobs, yet he's openly threatening to kill these contracts and the countless jobs they would create. He will hurt companies doing business in this province as well. CN Rail has warned that they have already made significant capital investments, and there will be costs to Albertans. Not only does moving oil by rail help clear backlog, reduce the differential, save jobs, and make a considerable profit; it sends the right signal to international investors.

The election is over, and it is time for the Premier to set aside his rhetoric and make the right decision for Albertans. If we are going to pay for the capacity, we should use that capacity. We need to get our oil to markets, whatever it takes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Provincial Election 2019

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today as the MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat. I want to thank my constituents for putting their trust in me. They have given me the opportunity to serve them three times: twice with the Wildrose Party and now, the third time, with the United Conservative Party.

I would not be standing here today if it wasn't for the hundreds of volunteers who donated their time, money, and ideas while knocking on thousands of doors over the course of the campaign. The efforts of future leaders like 17-year-old Ben Lloyd and 16-year-old Kieran Straub, who recruited countless volunteers, spent many hours working hard for Alberta and many hours working hard for our fiscally conservative movement. It was up to us to show the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat that they had an option, that they could vote for a positive vision under the United Conservatives at a time of economic hardship.

The last election, Mr. Speaker, was one of the most difficult for me. It was heart wrenching hearing the stories of women and men who were unemployed or underemployed; stories of workers and families moving to Oklahoma, Texas, North Dakota, Argentina, and even Iraq because they could not find a way to put food on the table; stories of seniors who could no longer afford their rent, utilities or even gas for their car. Many mentioned how expensive food had become.

1:50

This should not be happening in southeastern Alberta, a leader in the oil and gas sector and a leader in agriculture. This should not be happening in a community that has helped build both Alberta and Canada, a community that has contributed and continues to contribute greatly to our prosperity.

I stand here today because of the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat and because they have put their trust in the United Conservatives. It is time to bring back jobs, build pipelines, restore Alberta's tax competitiveness, and eliminate unnecessary and costly regulation.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

2017 UCP Leadership Contest Investigation

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take the opportunity through you to congratulate the Premier on his election victory. In fact, in the days before that election it was confirmed that the RCMP were investigating serious allegations of fraud related to the 2017 UCP leadership race. It is unprecedented that you have an active police investigation into something that touches on the interests of both the Premier and the Solicitor General, who were both candidates in that race. In the interests of protecting the integrity of our justice system in Alberta, why has the Premier refused to hire a special project . . .

Speaker's Ruling Questions on Internal Party Matters

The Speaker: I would caution members when asking questions that may be about party-related business and not the business of government, but I turn to . . . [interjections] Members, I would ask you not to interject when I've provided direction about a question. I did not say that the question was out of order. I offered a caution about asking questions related to party matters and not government

business. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to make this about government business, I'll be happy to continue to hear all sorts of questions on the matter.

The Premier.

2017 UCP Leadership Contest Investigation (continued)

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by congratulating you on your election and all members of this place on the privilege of serving Albertans, in particular the hon. Leader of the Opposition and to thank her for her service as Premier. I look forward to working together in this Chamber.

In response to her question, Mr. Speaker, obviously police services are completely independent in the decisions they make and the operations that they have. We fully respect that independence.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that even the Premier's own caucus is not convinced of RCMP or police independence. After his business was raided by the RCMP during the election, the member for Calgary-East suggested that our government had orchestrated the raid. Now, that's ridiculous. The fact is that the Premier and the Attorney General have authority over the Crown prosecutors and the police they employ. To preserve public trust in our justice system, the Premier must appoint a special prosecutor. Why won't he?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, obviously, the police and the Crown prosecutor service operate independent of any kind of political direction from government, be it this government or the former government, and we respect that independence. We will always preserve and protect it.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition on your third supplemental.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that there are clear policies in other provinces that dictate that a special prosecutor should be called in when the matter being investigated involves members of Executive Council. Indeed, in Alberta there has been a clear practice and a clear precedent. Again, why is the Premier ducking this important decision? What are you afraid of?

Mr. Kenney: Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. Once again, police and the Crown prosecutor service are completely independent from any form of political direction or interference from government. We fully respect that convention, that legal principle, as have previous governments in Alberta.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition on your second set of questions, please.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm not surprised that the Premier has been having some trouble dealing with this matter. In fact, when asked by media about the police raid on the Member for Calgary-East's business, the Premier said that the member had not been contacted by the police. But it turned out that the member's own lawyer then told the media that he had been contacted to execute a search warrant in furtherance of the investigation. To the Premier: were you misinformed at the time? And now that you are informed, why have you not taken action and ejected this member from your caucus?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it's sad to see on the first day of this new session the leader smearing a member of this place, who was duly elected, who is not facing allegations against him, who's not under charge. Would the Leader of the Opposition like to identify which members of her caucus were under charges of serious sexual misconduct? I'm not asking that they be removed from the NDP caucus. In this country there's a presumption of innocence under our legal system and in this Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I can say is that not one member of this caucus is now or has been under investigation by the RCMP, but the member opposite cannot say the same.

Now, it's possible that the Premier was misinformed about what was going on with the Member for Calgary-East, but let me ask him a simple question that I think he must know the answer to. Will the Premier please inform this House: has the Premier himself ever been contacted by the RCMP about this matter?

Mr. Kenney: No.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much. The fact is, Mr. Speaker – and I'm glad to hear that, but we still know there's an investigation under way – that we don't know what next thing is going to come up in the UCP leadership corruption investigation. Albertans are concerned, and frankly I'm concerned. I'm concerned, as I've said, about the integrity of our justice system and our democracy. Albertans deserve the truth. So this is my question: will the Premier commit to informing this House if and when he is ever contacted by the RCMP about this matter, and if not, why not?

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition very clearly again referred to a specific party matter, the leadership race. I encourage you to make your questions about government business or policy.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I see the member is now launching on a desperate fishing expedition. Instead of talking about jobs, the economy, or pipelines, it's a continuation of the fear-and-smear campaign we saw in the last election, that was so resoundingly repudiated by Albertans. Obviously, I and my office and, I would expect, any member of this Legislature would co-operate with the police on any matters, and I will continue to be fully transparent on this and all related issues.

The Speaker: On your third set of questions, the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Budget 2019

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, everyone in this House will remember when the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul told his constituents last year that the United Conservative budget was going to hurt. End quote. But then the Premier said, before he was Premier, on February 20, before the election, and I quote: there will not be any cuts. To the Premier: who exactly was telling the truth before the election?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the recent election campaign I signed the United Conservative public health care guarantee that a UCP government will maintain or increase funding for a publicly insured and universally accessible health care system. The members of the families represented by all of these MLAs and

our constituents depend on that publicly insured, universally accessible system, and that is why we have guaranteed stable or growing funding for public health care.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much for that answer to a different question.

Nonetheless, during the campaign the Premier accused us of, quote, making stuff up when we warned of his plans to cut, but then the Premier said yesterday that there will be some tough decisions ahead. To the Premier: will you acknowledge that what you told Albertans before the election is very different than what you are telling them now?

Mr. Kenney: No, I won't, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, bringing fiscal discipline back to Alberta will not be without challenges. Unfortunately, our government has inherited a huge fiscal mess left behind by the NDP, which recklessly increased Alberta's public debt from \$13 billion to \$56 billion. They had us on track to a hundred billion dollars in debt. They underwent five credit downgrades. They drove our interest costs up to billions of dollars, and we will have to make some difficult decisions to bring balance back to our finances.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's going to hurt; Albertans will be affected; tough decisions ahead. The truth of what the UCP is planning to inflict on Albertans is becoming clearer and clearer every day. Yesterday the Premier's defence was that, "Oh, the usual groups," he said disparagingly, "were going to complain about the budget plans." To the Premier: do these so-called usual groups, who you're already dismissing, include the students stuck trying to learn in overcrowded classrooms or perhaps the patients waiting longer in emergency, or was it both that you're planning to dismiss?

2:00

Mr. Kenney: Neither, Mr. Speaker. I, of course, was referring to the NDP-affiliated government union bosses who campaigned for the NDP, and Albertans rejected the campaign of fear and smear from those NDP-affiliated special interests. The opposition leader talks about inflicting things. I'll tell you what. They inflicted a \$60 billion debt on Albertans, and it now falls to this government to clean up the huge fiscal mess left to us by the NDP.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition, for your final set of questions.

Climate Change Strategy

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know what? Climate change is a serious issue. World-renowned climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe has said, "The longer [we] ignore climate change, the more difficult and expensive it's going to be to fix – and the more suffering there will be." But the Premier and his caucus just don't seem to grasp the scope of the issue. Asked about climate change this week, the minister of environment dismissed it as not being a crisis despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Why won't the Premier stop ignoring the problem, stop denying the science, and put forward a real plan to stop climate change?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I have never denied the science of climate change, and I have always acknowledged the important challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That is why our government, as underscored in yesterday's throne speech, will

bring forward legislation to have a more intelligent approach to a levy on major industrial emissions, that will address over 60 per cent of the emissions in our economy, and to support technology through research and development to reduce carbon intensity. But what we will not do is punish Albertans for heating their homes and driving to work.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not just scientists who are warning about climate change. The Bank of Canada says, "Climate change continues to pose risks to both the economy and the financial system." They go on to say that "economic activity and the environment are intertwined." By next year estimates show that the cost of climate change will be \$5 billion annually and will rise to more than \$20 billion in the years to come. So why won't the Premier concede that without a real plan, as opposed to what he's just referred to, to address climate change he is in fact putting our economic future at risk?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, as I say, we will address the major industrial emissions, but what we will not do is take the NDP's approach of punishing people for living ordinary lives by heating their homes, filling up their gas tanks to drive to work. Not even the opposition leader could identify by how much her carbon tax cash grab was purportedly reducing emissions, when asked a few months ago, because the answer was negligible, no measurable effect on carbon emissions. It wasn't about the environment; it was just an NDP cash grab.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca . . . [interjections] It's my first day.

For your final supplemental.

Ms Notley: Yeah. Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, seven megatonnes, the equivalent of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the whole province of Manitoba: that is what we have reduced emissions by since we brought in the climate leadership plan. And you, Mr. Premier, are going to undo that work, and you are going to let down future generations, and you're going to jeopardize our economy if you do not come up with a substantial plan to address this problem. Canadians need Alberta to lead. Stop pushing Alberta to the back of the line once again.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, if there was a reduction in emissions under the NDP, that was at least in large part because the economy shrank under the NDP. Fewer people were working. Fewer people were driving to work. Less industry was producing things. You know, you could have the NDP in government for much longer, and they'd continue to reduce emissions by killing jobs and economic growth in Alberta. What this plan is about is getting back to turning Alberta into an engine of job creation, and we're going to do that, yes, with Bill 1, the carbon tax repeal act.

The Speaker: Take 2. The Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Highway 813 Athabasca River Bridge

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bridge crossing the Athabasca River on highway 813 at the town of Athabasca is an essential part of the transportation infrastructure within my constituency. This bridge is in desperate need of replacement not only for the efficient and safe movement of people but for the continued success of industries within this region of our province. The Alberta Transportation 2018 construction program lists this

bridge in the design stage. To the Minister of Transportation: has the design of the replacement bridge been completed?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is correct in pointing out that our government is committed to ensuring the safe passage of people and goods on Alberta highways and to adequately maintaining and renewing Alberta's road infrastructure. Now, on the bridge on highway 813 that the member references, interestingly enough, the design at one point was complete, but it's no longer complete. There's been a recent slide in the area, which requires a little bit more design work. The design revisions are progressing and expected to be completed by the end of September.

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the replacement of this bridge is crucial for individuals in the Athabasca region and given that this bridge is critical for the safe and reliable transportation of energy, agriculture, and forestry products coming out of the region north of Athabasca, to the minister: when can the people of Athabasca expect a new bridge to be completed?

An Hon. Member: Hooray.

Mr. McIver: I appreciate that.

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. member, I would love to give him an exact date, but alas I cannot today. As I pointed out in my first answer, the design work is not done, and of course you can't put a price on a bridge until after the design work for that bridge is done, and once you put a price on the design work, then of course you have to fit it into the budget. As much as I know it's an important question, I will tell the hon. member that we will get that answer as we progress with the design.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, rural Alberta transportation infrastructure is necessary for our wealth creation industries to succeed. Without the timely replacement of crucial transportation infrastructure these industries begin to lose hope that their needs are being heard. To the minister: can you confirm that the replacement of the Athabasca River Bridge will continue to be a priority for this government?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bridge that the hon. member refers to obviously has to be a priority. My understanding is that with the absence of the bridge the alternate route is an additional 80-kilometre trip each way. Consequently it's a big issue, and there are areas north of the bridge which are hard to access without this particular piece of infrastructure. I would tell the hon. member it's a priority, and I will keep him informed as we move along.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Minimum Wage

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 1, 2018, Alberta became the first province to ensure that all working people made at least \$15 an hour. Now this Premier and his UCP government are

beginning to cut away at that \$15 per hour minimum wage despite promising he wouldn't. His first victim? Youth workers. After that, he's going to launch a panel to study whether restaurant servers should earn less. Young people work hard, and so do those in the restaurant industry. Why does this Premier feel that their work isn't worth as much?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods for the question. Our focus, and what we ran on, is getting Albertans back to work, all Albertans, youth and adults. We were elected with a mandate to bring investment back to Alberta, grow and diversify the economy, and we need jobs for the youth. Under the previous government youth unemployment increased, and we want to bring them back to work and provide them with the experience and the skills to actually get their jobs in the future.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this UCP government's plan to target hard-working people in the restaurant industry is an attack on women and given that the vast majority of restaurant servers are women and given that this move is hardly surprising coming from that party, I will ask this. To the Premier: why, when we're already combatting the second-largest wage gap between men and women in the country, do you want to make it worse?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we were elected with a mandate to get Albertans back to work. That is our focus, to get more jobs in the restaurant industry, in particular, so we can have people who can build skills and experience for the future.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in February this Premier went before a group of restaurant owners and, frankly, donors and said that his proposal to lower the minimum wage applied to only, and I quote directly, people with a modest level of human capital, will the Premier or perhaps the minister on his behalf apologize for this awful comment, or does he actually consider young Albertans and Alberta women to be worth less?

Mr. Kenney: I will not apologize for using a term that the NDP government used on its own websites to describe, for example, people who have never worked before, who had less chance to work because of job-killing NDP policies. But the member is correct. I did speak to restaurant owners, hard-working entrepreneurs who employ hundreds of thousands of Albertans, at a meeting that was boycotted by that member, who smeared restaurant owners. Mr. Speaker, many of them are women and men who work 18 hours a day, put their life savings on the line to create jobs for Alberta, and we want to help them do exactly that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs? Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: It's okay, Mr. Speaker. We look the same.

The Speaker: Fair point.

United Conservative Party Fundraising

Ms Sweet: Mr. Speaker, Albertans expect and Albertans deserve ethical government. The UCP has already shown that this isn't a priority for them with their kamikaze leadership scandal and an MLA who is currently under RCMP investigation, but the Premier's campaign to lower the bar continues. A fundraising letter was sent out and is signed by the Premier, using the Premier's title. To the Premier: do you think it's acceptable for the UCP to use the position of Premier to raise money for the UCP?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it's very disappointing to see that the opposition has chosen to take this tack early in this Legislature. They're the same tactics they used that caused them, quite frankly, to now sit in opposition. To be clear on this issue, we're confident that we've done nothing wrong, that everything was within the rules. Having said that, the Premier and our cabinet and our caucus have indicated to the party that we would prefer in the future not to use our titles that we have in this place. We haven't done that because we think we've done anything wrong. We just think it's something that we should do going forward. Again, I encourage the members to try to raise the bar in this place.

Ms Sweet: Given that this isn't even the first time this month that the UCP has tried to use the Office of the Premier to raise money for their party – an e-mail sent under the name of the environment minister repeatedly invokes the title of Premier to cash in for the UCP – and also given that in 2012 the Ethics Commissioner investigated a former PC MLA for using a government title to raise money for his own campaign, to the minister of environment. As a former Wildrose member you took to PC-style corruption with ease. Are you surprised how fast that happened?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, you see it here: Team Angry from the NDP. This is their new approach. There's nothing but anger and fear and smear. It's shocking to see what has happened to the Official Opposition in this place. I often warned those on the other side, when they sat on this side of the House, that if they continued these tactics, they would sit on that side of the House. I hope they continue it because you know what's going to happen? They'll end up sitting on that side of the House for a very long time. Let me be clear. We did nothing wrong. We have no concerns with how we've acted on this. We're confident with that, but we think in the future we won't use our titles inside our party e-mails.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I would hope all members of this House can agree that ethics are important and that these Redford-style attempts to use government to line party coffers is wrong, to the Premier: will you commit right here and right now to return every single cent from this unethical fundraising campaign, and if not, why not?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, on April 16 an enormous number of Albertans voted to reject these exact tactics. The opposition has not realized that their tactics of fear and smear and not focusing on Albertans are what's caused them to sit on that side of the House. You know what's going to happen going forward? This side of the House is going to focus on Albertans. We're going to focus on jobs, the economy, pipelines, and getting Alberta back to work, and if the opposition wants to focus on spending their time filibustering and

banging their desks and doing those things, they can have at it. We're focused on Albertans.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-South East.

Provincial Debt

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday and Wednesday I was honoured and humbled to be here. Now I'm a little embarrassed. Alberta's fiscal trajectory is not just unsustainable; it is dangerous and puts at risk our ability to fund essential services in the future. Lack of long-term financial planning and politically motivated short-term spending have decimated our once debt-free province. A blue-ribbon panel was formed to find the best path forward in this regard. Can the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance please update this House as to their progress thus far?

The Speaker: The Minister of Treasury Board and Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question, Member for Calgary-South East. Cleaning up Alberta's debt problem starts with expert advice and a credible plan. Our independent, nonpartisan panel of leading experts has been tasked with recommending a path to a balanced budget and proposing a realistic plan to start paying down the debt situation the previous government has put our province in. The panel received their mandate on May 7 and are currently reviewing our finances to determine how we will restore the Alberta advantage.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. During the election campaign we were working with financial information that I believed understated the severity of Alberta's financial crisis. With the additional information that you have available to you now, can the minister comment on whether or not Alberta's true financial situation is shaping up to be materially different or worse than what we were led to believe?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're now just looking into some of the big challenges left to us by the previous government and digging into some of the details of questionable spending. There are certainly also some headwinds facing us on the revenue side. GDP has slowed recently, and resource revenues remain volatile. We'll be taking these changing factors into account as we go forward in the development of our forthcoming budget plans.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, Minister. Given the information available at present, can the minister still see a path to balancing the budget by 2022-2023?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we are deeply dedicated to bringing Alberta's finances back to balance. This was a key piece in our platform, and I believe Albertans expect us to be responsible financial stewards of their hard-earned tax dollars. While we are seeing additional economic headwinds, we're committed to bringing this province's finances to balance. To download our current spending habits on future generations is irresponsible, and Albertans expect more from this government.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Indigenous Treaty Rights

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, home of the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Métis, and other indigenous peoples. Recently an article in the *Star* pointed out that the current government has been pointedly refusing to engage in treaty land acknowledgements. This has been noticed by indigenous people, who say that it displays an underlying lack of intent to honour our path to reconciliation. If the government refuses to make land acknowledgements, will they at least stand and assure the House that they recognize that Alberta is on treaty land largely covered by treaties 6, 7, and 8?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government commits itself to the path of reconciliation and shared prosperity in the spirit of the treaties, and we will continue to honour the First People, who built these communities on this land. A key part of reconciliation is ensuring that the barriers to ownership of resource projects by indigenous Albertans are removed. That is why our government is proposing the indigenous opportunity corporation, which will provide indigenous communities access to capital and remove a barrier to their ownership of important resource projects.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully, I'll get an answer to this question. Does this government acknowledge the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the articles of the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people, which outline the right of indigenous people to free, prior, and informed consent with matters regarding their treaty rights outlined in treaties 6, 7, and 8?

The Speaker: The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Thanks. Like I said, our government is committed to empowering indigenous Albertans to take charge of their own destiny. That's an important issue, and I'm still looking into that. Thank you for the question. I'll get back to you.

2:20

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the approval of the Northern Gateway pipeline as a result of the failure of the Harper government, of which our new member was a senior minister, to adequately address the free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous people, can the Premier and this minister commit that he does in fact acknowledge treaty rights and his duty to consult with indigenous people and that he will not put Alberta's economy and good jobs for working people at risk by repeating the Premier's past failures on existing energy projects like the Trans Mountain project?

Mr. Kenney: Of course, we respect the Crown's duty to consult, Mr. Speaker, but you know something? The NDP opposed the Northern Gateway pipeline and encouraged their ally Justin Trudeau to veto it, thereby betraying First Nations who want to be partners in prosperity in developing those resources. The NDP did nothing to support the Eagle Spirit consortium or the other First Nations who were opposed to the Trudeau veto of Northern Gateway. This government, however, is going to take the historic

measure of creating a Crown corporation to facilitate aboriginal co-ownership of major projects.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora, please.

Education Funding

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the Minister of Education on her appointment as well as the arrival of her new grandchild.

Many Alberta families are having children. In fact, it's expected that 15,000 new students will be walking into Alberta schools this fall. School boards are worried that the UCP won't give a single dollar to these new students. The Education minister went before hundreds of teachers this past weekend and didn't offer any hope. Zip. Zilch. Nada. Will she tell this House, tell school boards, staff, parents, and students: will there be any new funding for the new students this fall?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. I look forward to answering it in the supplemental. I was, however, saddened to learn of the traffic accident involving a school bus in Edmonton this morning, with 11 students and their bus driver having been taken to hospital with some minor injuries. We are hoping for their quick recovery. We send our hearts out to the students and to those families.

Thank you.

Ms Hoffman: I think I'm quoting the now Speaker when he used to say, "Well, it isn't called answer period," and that sure is true, Mr. Speaker.

Given that the Calgary board of education is painting a particularly grim picture, projecting a \$40 million deficit for the coming fall, and given that the deficit could lead to the firing of hundreds of teachers, can the minister explain to the more than 100,000 students in Calgary public schools and their parents why she intends to rob them of the skilled teachers needed to support their success?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Let me be clear. Our United Conservative government has committed to maintaining or increasing education funding, but we do respect the autonomy of local boards to make decisions on their spending. They're in the best position to address those questions and their budgets.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you. The first two questions were: will the minister agree to fund growing enrolment? Given that the Edmonton public schools alone are anticipating more than 4,000 new students this fall and given that the Premier regularly says that government budgets need to run the same way as household budgets, does the minister think that it's responsible for parents to buy the same amount of food, clothes, and live in the same house if they have 4,000 more children in their house next year?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Education I am focused on strengthening our education system and

delivering on our campaign platform commitments. We will maintain or increase education funding. We will proclaim the Education Act. We are committed to preserving and protecting educational choice and supporting safe schools that protect students against discrimination and bullying. We have a clear mandate from over a million of our voters, and we will continue to work with that. Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Support for Business and Job Creation

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last government created an environment that drove business out of the province. What is the government doing to bring business back to Alberta?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance, please.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for that question. Our government has a robust plan to, again, attract investment into this province, create jobs and opportunity for all Albertans. We've been clear in our platform that, of course, Bill 1 was the repeal of the carbon tax, which will create 6,000 additional jobs and more opportunity for businesses. We also will be rolling out a job-creation tax cut and other measures to reduce red tape and regulatory burden to attract investment and jobs into this province.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. What is the expected impact of the corporate tax rate?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we announced publicly last week, we will be reducing our corporate tax rate in this province from 12 per cent down to 8 per cent over approximately three and a half years. That will leave us with the most competitive business tax rate in the country and one of the most competitive rates within North America. We're confident that that move, amongst others, will, again, attract investment, create job opportunities and opportunities for all Albertans.

The Speaker: Calgary-Falconridge.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How many jobs will this bring to Alberta?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the job-creation tax cut, we've had some of the best economists in this province inform us that when fully implemented, this job-creation tax cut will create \$13 billion of economic activity and create 55,000 new jobs for Albertans.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-City Centre has a question.

Edmonton Medical Lab Hub Construction Stoppage

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, this government was elected on a platform of jobs, pipeline, economy, yet one of its first actions was to throw hundreds of Edmonton construction workers out of work as the Premier halted construction on the long-needed new Edmonton laboratory clinical hub. Now, I've heard

directly from my constituents in Edmonton-City Centre how our investment in much-needed infrastructure kept them, their suppliers, and their contractors working during a tough economic time. To the Premier: why have you ended good, mortgage-paying jobs building a much-needed new health facility simply because of your own ideological agenda?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to reiterate a campaign commitment that our government had during the campaign, that commitment was to maintain or increase spending in health care, and that includes maintaining or increasing our investment in health care infrastructure, including infrastructure for laboratory services. I'd also like to point out – and thank you to the hon. member for his question – that those plans were actually to remove jobs from his riding, Edmonton-City Centre, to another location.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The facilities available in Edmonton-City Centre have been highly inadequate for some time. Land here is expensive. It made sense to move that site.

Now, given that this Premier seems to have a rather low opinion of the work done by lab service technicians, having said to reporters, when talking about privatizing health services in Alberta, that crucial tests that help doctors save lives through accurate diagnosis and targeted treatment don't actually touch patients or heal people, and given that this demonstrates an astounding ignorance of how essential lab service workers are to providing critical care, how many can expect to lose their jobs as a result?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we're talking about ideology, I mean, I'd just point out to all Albertans the decisions that were made by the previous government when it came to laboratory services and the decisions regarding infrastructure, including that lab hub. Our decisions as a government going forward are going to be focused on patients. It is going to be focused on listening to experts. It's not going to be taking a report from the Health Quality Council of Alberta from 2016 and ignoring it. It's not going to be taking Dr. Ballem's report from 2017 and ignoring it. It's not going to be taking pathologists out of hospitals and moving them into a location away from hospitals. Our government is going to listen to experts and listen to patients.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Health Quality Council of Alberta recommended this option, and indeed we recognize that 70 per cent of major health decisions are based on lab results. Given that a new, modernized central lab hub will give Albertans faster, more efficient access to the newest, most accurate testing while providing good, mortgage-paying jobs and indeed diversifying our economy by allowing for translational research, why are those jobs not going to lab technicians here in Alberta instead of in Ontario? Can this Premier just simply admit that he's got it wrong and allow this essential, life-saving, job-creating project to continue?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to point out to Albertans that those two reports from the Health Quality Council of Alberta did not recommend this at all.

While we're taking lessons from the other side, I just would like to focus a little bit on their record for the last four years when it came to health care spending. Open-heart surgery wait times increased by nearly 50 per cent. Cataract surgery wait times increased 30 per cent. Hip replacement wait times increased 30 per cent. Knee replacement wait times increased 23 per cent. The percentage of the patients admitted through emergency within eight hours dropped from 46 per cent to 43 per cent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

High Level Wildfire

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the past days we have seen wildfires force evacuations in the town of High Level, surrounding areas, and the Dene Tha' First Nation communities of Bushe River and Meander River. Brave first responders and front-line staff have stepped up to fight the flames, and thankfully, sir, residents have been able to evacuate safely. Despite this, the fires continue to rage. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what is the current intensity of the flames, and how close to homes, property, and businesses are the fires at this moment?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for that particular question. I can confirm to you that one of the decisions that we took when this fire came up was to move quickly and make sure that we evacuate our citizens in High Level, and I can assure you that, as we speak, they are safe and being taken care of in Slave Lake, in Grande Prairie, and in Peace River and other centres within this particular province.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the intensity and location of the fires, I understand the evacuation order of 72 hours has been extended. Can the same minister please update the House on the supports that are being offered to displaced residents, and when can we expect they will be able to return safely to their homes?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, once again for that particular question. At this point in time we are reviewing all of our options to make sure that by the time citizens get back to High Level and Mackenzie county, they are going to be safe. I can also assure you that we have worked closely with all of our municipal partners to make sure that our evacuees are getting all of the help and support that they need.

The Speaker: The member for his second supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. Given that communities in northern Alberta are eagerly welcoming evacuees from the High Level fire but are having to pay up front for costs and then getting reimbursed later by the province, will the government commit funding to communities hosting evacuees that they can access right away to pay for costs to support people fleeing from nearby natural disasters?

Mr. Madu: Thank you once again for that particular question. I can assure this particular House that our government is looking at all of our options. Our guarantee is to make sure that all of the support and the care that they need they will get from this government.

The Speaker: The Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Rehn: Congratulations to you on becoming Speaker of the House.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Albertans paused to remember the Fort McMurray wildfire, which ravaged northern Alberta and caused the evacuation of tens of thousands of Albertans. Now another massive wildfire in northern Alberta has led to the evacuation of approximately 5,000 people from the High Level area to communities like my home of Slave Lake. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: was this evacuation a success, and are all those affected safe?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for that particular question. In times like this Albertans have always answered the call. This evacuation has been successful thanks to communities like Slave Lake, Grande Prairie, Peace River, and others. More than 3,200 have been processed at our evacuation centres and are in safe conditions. Others have found lodging with friends or relatives. This would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of our first responders, emergency staff, and municipal officials, who are working so hard to keep our communities safe.

The Speaker: The Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Slave Lake we understand the power of these wildfires, and we'll be there for the evacuees until the very end, but given that over 1,000 evacuees are being hosted in Slave Lake and they're eager to return home and to their normal lives, does the minister know when this evacuation order might be lifted?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, once again, and thank you to the member for that particular question. Government has no greater duty than keeping our people and communities safe. Right now firefighters from Alberta and across Canada, emergency staff, nonprofit workers, and municipal officials are working hard to fight this fire and manage the evacuation. We are hopeful that residents will be able to return home soon, but for safety reasons the evacuation order will remain in place for at least a few more days.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I have heard concerns about the financial pressures of being away from home for several days, particularly when it comes to day-to-day expenditures, can the minister say whether there will be financial assistance provided to evacuees, especially considering that many of these folks cannot work right now?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government will be there for all those affected. I will escalate our relief effort if the situation gets worse. We are currently working with our municipal partners to understand the needs of those affected. Last Tuesday I met with

the mayor and council of Slave Lake and had a very productive conversation about this. While we review our options for assistance, we are asking evacuees to check on their insurance coverage and to keep all of their receipts.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie.

Rural Crime

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The House of Commons Public Safety and National Security Committee released a report about the growing concern rural Canadians have about rising crime rates in rural communities. In the last four years communities in rural Alberta have seen dramatic spikes in break-ins, thefts, assaults, violence against women, and long waits for the police to show up. The committee's report says that the provinces should assist with police resources. What measures will the government take to ensure that rural Albertans feel safe, secure, and protected in their communities?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and answer my first question here in question period.

Nothing is more important than providing safety to Albertans here and our law-abiding citizens. Under the NDP and the last government *Maclean's* reported that 7 out of 10 cities that have had the worst increases in crime in Canada were here in Alberta. Our government is going to make sure that we focus on providing a fairer, faster, and more responsive justice system. We're going to be investing in things like ALERT to provide \$50 million in funding to make sure that we respond to this crisis in our rural communities.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Increasing funding to policing is only part of the problem. We are facing a shortage in courthouses, judges, and Crown prosecutors. Our criminal justice system is underfunded across the board, and rural Albertans are bearing the brunt. Some rural communities have seen a rise of 250 per cent since 2011. Rural Albertans need a justice system that inspires public confidence. What is the government doing to give rural Albertans a justice system that inspires public confidence?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you. We are in a crisis right now, and we are going to be investing to hire 50 new prosecutors here in the province of Alberta to deal with the backlog of cases that we have so that cases aren't dumped, to make sure that we actually are prosecuting these cases. This government is going to be focusing on making sure that we provide services here for our prosecutors and our police to make sure that they can get their jobs done. We're not going to be prioritizing free light bulbs, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be prioritizing providing police and prosecutors with the tools that they need to get the job done.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Among all provinces Alberta has the third-highest rate of sexual assault. In rural Alberta we have a lack of specialized professionals to support victims, investigate assaults, and collect evidence. Will the government increase support for some of the most vulnerable Albertans?

The Speaker: The minister of status of women, amongst other things.

Mrs. Aheer: The longest title. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election, too, and to the Member for Grande Prairie for her very first question in the House.

We're very, very proud of the fact that we spoke about intimate partner domestic violence as part of the platform pieces that we're going to be bringing forward, also the \$5 million that we'll be bringing forward, especially with regard to rural domestic violence, to make sure that rape and sexual assault kits are available – it's very important at such a horrible time – and that we have access to these incredible nurses that are able to do the work to help people at a very vulnerable time.

2:40 Students' Political Participation LGBTQ Student Supports

Member Irwin: Earlier this month thousands of young people took part in a student-led protest against this government's plan to roll back protection for LGBTQ students. I stood with students at Victoria school of the arts and heard from them how important these protections are. The Premier said that students should be in class instead of doing politics outside of school during school hours. Does the Premier or perhaps the Education minister stand by the Premier's assertion that students should not engage in political activity during school hours?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education is rising.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Education my most important job is to listen. I will have an open line of communication with everyone who has a role in our province's education system. I'm committed to ensuring that our schools are welcoming, caring, safe, and respectful and are respectful of diverse views, as we've heard from all students.

Thank you.

Member Irwin: Given that two weeks later busloads of students escorted by school staff travelled long distances to protest a woman's right to choose during school hours and given that the Member for Peace River was in attendance taking selfies with students and given that the Education minister referred to this political activism as a social justice activity, will the Premier or the minister admit that students' rights to political participation and free speech depend on whether or not they agree with the UCP government's views?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As minister I remain committed to hearing from all students from across the province with diverse viewpoints and perspectives, and I do respect the autonomy of local boards to make those decisions.

Thank you.

Member Irwin: Given that the Premier has a record of failing to apologize for past actions that have rightly upset the LGBTQ community, whether it be when multiple members' homophobic views were exposed or for not listening to them when it comes to legal protection from being outed, will the Premier take this opportunity, for once, to apologize to Alberta's LGBTQ students and their allies?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Our government has been very clear. We oppose mandatory parental notification of any student. Our United Conservative government supports safe schools that are free from bullying and prejudice, and we believe in the safety of all students as being paramount.

Thank you.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to provide oral notice of the following two motions. Government Motion 9:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize the rights of members to vote freely on all matters of conscience.

Government Motion 10:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express its opposition to the practice of members changing their caucus affiliations unless that member is to sit as an independent or has resigned and has been returned to the Assembly after a re-election in a by-election under the new affiliation.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice pursuant to Standing Order 15(2) that at the appropriate time I will rise to discuss the breach of privilege that occurred with the announcing of the repeal of the carbon tax to take place before May 30, one week from today. I have the appropriate number of copies of the letter that was provided to your office this morning.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Premier to table the appropriate number of copies of a letter he referred to that was signed by himself, the Leader of the Opposition, as well as the other leaders of the political parties in the province in his speech this morning.

The Speaker: Are there any other tablings? The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the appropriate number of copies of an excellent column by Keith Gerein, *As Alberta Burns, UCP Begins its Mandate with a Retreat on Climate Change*, in which he notes that if this “government doesn’t get its act together on climate change soon, the only destiny awaiting us is to join Nero on the wrong side of history.”

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of tablings with the requisite copies. The first is a copy of my letter to the Ethics Commissioner in regard to the fundraising letter.

The second copy that I have is actually an article from 2011 where our now-Premier apologizes for using government funds in fundraising letters when he was an MP.

I have another one of an article, *Mar in Red Ink and Hot Water; Fundraiser to Pay Off Leadership Campaign*, when Mr. Mar had to do that.

The fundraising letter from the minister of environment asking for money in regard to two event announcements in Grande Prairie.

Also, the fundraising letters from the now Premier to the United Conservative membership asking for funds.

The Speaker: Are there other tablings?

I have two tablings today. First, under the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, five copies of the report of late filing of nomination contestant returns, received in my office on April 23.

Second, I have five copies of the House leaders’ agreement for the Oral Question Period rotation and Members’ Statements rotation for the First Session of the 30th Legislature.

The Opposition House Leader on a point of privilege.

Privilege

Obstructing a Member in Performance of Duty

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise pursuant to Standing Order 15 to raise a point of privilege due to the actions of the government. They have offended the dignity and authority of the Assembly and run roughshod over the democratic process by violating the ability of members to do their jobs. This is a very serious and grave matter.

By announcing that the carbon tax would be repealed by May 30, it presupposes when this House will finish its deliberations and pass Bill 1. Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know, Standing Order 15(1) indicates that a question of privilege is “a breach of the rights of the Assembly or of the parliamentary rights of any Member.”

As well, to qualify for Standing Order 15, the issue has to be raised at the earliest opportunity. Now, the press conference where the Premier announced that there’d be no more carbon tax in Alberta effective May 30 occurred on May 13. The House was not in session at that time, and this is the first daily Routine since May 13. As such, I believe it’s the first opportunity I’ve had to raise this point of privilege and, therefore, it is in order according to Standing Order 15(2). I provided your office, Mr. Speaker, with a letter this morning where I advised of my intent to raise this point of privilege under Standing Order 15.

Now, Mr. Speaker, during a press conference on May 13 the Premier stated that Bill 1, quote, will be passed with an effective elimination by the 30th of May; by May 30 there will no longer be an Alberta carbon tax. End quote. That comment is in breach of parliamentary privilege of all of the other 86 members of this House. It presupposes a decision not yet made by the Assembly. These comments demonstrate a complete and utter disregard for the rights and privileges of the members of this House.

Presupposing a decision of this Assembly has been ruled on in this place on a number of occasions. One of the reasons why previous Speakers have ruled that this type of behaviour from government is inappropriate and presupposes a decision of the Assembly is when such comments don’t include any type of caveat with respect to the crucial role that this House plays in consideration and adoption of legislation. An example of that would be: subject to parliamentary approval. We wouldn’t be here in this place at this time discussing this issue if the Premier had in any way acknowledged respect for the parliamentary process, an approval that has yet to take place. Albertans rely on members of this Assembly to be able to debate pieces of legislation free from the presumption of the government, a presumption, Mr. Speaker, that was communicated through the media to every Albertan.

2:50

Now, you can correct me if I’m wrong, Mr. Speaker, but at the moment Bill 1 is in its second reading. There has not yet been an opportunity for amendments to be proposed, never mind an opportunity for deliberation and debate by members of this

Assembly. In fact, my colleague the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar was only briefed on this legislation yesterday, and our caucus is currently considering the vast implications of this proposed legislation. Yet the Premier has been speaking with the media presupposing our deliberations would be concluded within a week.

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, *Erskine May*, 24th edition, says about privilege on page 251:

Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House or Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge in his [or her] duty . . . directly or indirectly, to produce such results, may be treated as a contempt, even [if] there is no precedent of the offence.

In *Beauchesne*, sixth edition, on page 25 it has this to say about privilege. "It is generally accepted that any threat, or attempt to influence the vote of, or actions of a Member, is breach of privilege."

Mr. Speaker, in 2013 Speaker Zwodzesky ruled on a matter that parallels this issue: brochures paid for by government that presupposed a decision of this Assembly.

Speaker Wanner also had occasion to rule on a matter of privilege on this province's approach to climate leadership on June 6, 2016. In fact, I believe that our current Speaker introduced it in his capacity as the Official Opposition House Leader at the time.

Speaker Wanner also noted that the following passage from the Ontario ruling of January 22, 1997, whereat page 1420 of *Hansard* Speaker Stockwell stated the following when considering a ministerial pamphlet discussing the government of Ontario's program for reforming municipal government in metropolitan Toronto.

In my opinion, [the claims of the brochure] convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and lawmaking process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals – and that is all they are – been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them . . . It is not enough for yet another Speaker to issue yet another warning or caution in circumstances where the wording and circulation of the pamphlet appear on their face to cross the line. I say in all candour that a reader of that document could be left with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in Ontario, an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions.

In both cases, Mr. Speaker, a prima facie case of breach of privilege was found.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's comments mean that Albertans could be left with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in this great province, an impression that undermines the respect for parliamentary institutions. Clearly, the Premier's remarks are an attempt to influence the vote or actions of a member, specifically to rush deliberations in order to meet an arbitrary and, if I may say, reckless deadline set by the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that his actions were an affront to the Westminster system, the centuries old traditions and decorum of this House. One of the foundational pillars of representative democracy is that all 87 members are elected to represent the over 4 million Albertans we all serve. No one member, including the Premier, has the authority or the ability to dictate the outcome of the proceedings of this House. If that's the case, then we are no longer living in a democratic province.

The Speaker: As the Opposition House Leader will know, there is a tradition of allowing the government to respond should they choose to respond today or providing some time for them to bring their arguments together.

Mr. Jason Nixon: We'll respond today, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader is rising to respond.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little . . .

The Speaker: Pardon me, Government House Leader. To provide some clarity, this will be your only opportunity to respond.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Understood. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that clarity. It's good to be back, and also my first chance to congratulate you on your election to the chair.

I'm a little bit surprised at the Official Opposition House Leader that he would choose this issue to be his maiden point of privilege in this Legislature. Points of privilege ought to be a rare occurrence. They ought to be for genuine matters of contempt of privilege, as you know. I've heard you argue many times when you were an Opposition House Leader yourself. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, through you to the hon. deputy Leader of the Opposition, there also is a tradition in this place of not heckling while we're dealing with points of order and points of privilege, so she could probably try to adjust that. I know she's having trouble adjusting to her new spot in the Chamber, but that's the appropriate behaviour.

This ought to be for genuine matters if you're going to move a point of privilege. After listening to the remarks by the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, I fail to see how this is a point of privilege, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, I fail to see how I can even take it seriously. The facts as I am aware with regard to communication of information about Bill 1 are as follows. The Premier made the point several times in opposition, as you know, also on the campaign trail and in government that Bill 1 of a United Conservative government would be to repeal the carbon tax. Promise made, promise kept. No announcements made about Bill 1 infringe on the rights of members to be the first to see the final form of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as it's important that you know, no notice on the Order Paper is required for Bill 1. I think that you probably already do know that. I can assure you that no final copies of Bill 1 were distributed in advance of its introduction yesterday. In fact, I would like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, remarks made by one of your predecessors, Speaker Zwodzesky, on May 29, 2012, while ruling on a question of privilege that referred to

a press conference held by the Premier and the Government House Leader [of the day] . . . in which both the Speech from the Throne and Bill 1, the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2012, were discussed.

The speaker at the time stated:

In response the hon. Government House Leader [of the day] noted that during the press conference Bill 1 was discussed but only in general terms, and that no specific wording was provided to those in attendance. The Government House Leader acknowledged the importance of ensuring that members are the first to see proposed legislation in its final form before a bill is disclosed to outside parties.

We can accept the premise that no breach of privilege occurred from sharing information about the government's plan for Bill 1, not government legislation but the government's plan for Bill 1. That leaves the argument, as I understand it, from the hon. Opposition House Leader, that he and his colleagues were feeling undue pressure based on remarks by the Premier that the carbon tax

would be repealed as of May 30. First of all, I would note that the Premier was merely reflecting what the provision of Bill 1 states,

Coming into force and repeal

6(1) sections 2 to 5 come into force on May 30, 2019.

not when legislation is passed.

The exact quote from the Premier – and this is important, Mr. Speaker – is: well, first of all, Bill 1 in the new Legislature, which will be introduced on Tuesday of next week, will be the carbon tax repeal act, and it will be passed with an effective elimination by the 30th of May, so by the 30th there will no longer be an Alberta carbon tax.” I don’t interpret from what the Premier is saying that Bill 1 will be passed by May 30. That’s not what he said. In fact, the previous government loved – and the hon. Opposition House Leader knows it probably happened with several of the bills he brought to this place – to pass legislation with retroactive coming-into-force provisions. Bill 1, 2015, for example, was deemed to come into force on the same day it was introduced. Bill 2 that same session came into force on January 1, 2015, six months before it was introduced in this Chamber. So again I’m having difficulty seeing that this is a legitimate question of privilege.

Lets further walk down memory lane if we can, Mr. Speaker, and recall that the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview was a member of a government who introduced Bill 32, An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy in Alberta, on December 4, 2017. This bill, apart from being ridiculously titled, Mr. Speaker – in fact, I recall, I think, that you wanted to change the title – stated quite clearly on page 104, “144(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act, except sections 1, 114 and this section, come into force on January 1, 2018.” There we have the previous government, which the hon. Opposition House Leader was a part of, introducing legislation and expecting it to come into force within less than a month.

3:00

Let’s also add to that, Mr. Speaker, that the sessional calendar for that year, 2017, also showed that we were expected to conclude the business for the year by December 7, 2017, three days after Bill 32 was introduced. If that wasn’t ruled as contempt of the Assembly, then I’m not sure how members of the Official Opposition can claim with a straight face that any remarks by the Premier are putting them under pressure to pass Bill 1 by May 30, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, this opposition’s line of thinking: you would take it to the absurd conclusion that any date given on a coming-into-force provision provides pressure on the Assembly to have a bill passed before any date listed in the bill. That is ridiculous. In fact, if the opposition is feeling pressured on the need to pass Bill 1, I’m entirely sympathetic. After all, I had to wait three years for the opportunity to vote to repeal the carbon tax. Albertans have had to wait long and painful months for a government that was willing to listen to their concerns about the harmful impacts the carbon tax had on their monthly budgets, and on April 16 over a million Albertans voted to repeal the carbon tax. If that doesn’t provide pressure on this Assembly to do what is right and vote in a timely manner to do what they ask us to do, I don’t know what will.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the Assembly’s attention and, in particular, the Official Opposition House Leader’s attention to page 88 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which advises members that “they should not raise trivial matters as matters of privilege or contempt” and further advises that “the House should exercise its powers with regard to privilege and contempt sparingly.”

So I fail to see that this rises to the threshold of a prima facie breach of privilege, and I hope to see better from the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview in the future.

The Speaker: Thank you to both House leaders.

I’d just remind the Government House Leader that you’re bringing things to the Speaker’s attention and not the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview’s attention.

Both House leaders and all members of the Assembly will know that points of privilege are serious in nature, should not be entered into lightly. As such, a decision on a point of privilege should not be entered into lightly, so I will take my time, take a good opportunity to review the facts of the matter, and I look forward to reporting back to the House sometime next week with my findings with respect to this Standing Order 15(2).

Orders of the Day

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, a point of clarification for myself. It’s my first day on this side of the House. When we go through all of these, do you read them out word for word?

The Speaker: Government House Leader, it would be appropriate for you to read all names of all committees into the record for the purposes of *Hansard*, and I would prefer that you didn’t just refer to the Order Paper. Thank you, and good luck to you.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Madam Speaker, welcome. This is going to be great.

Government Motions

2. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
 - Be it resolved that
 - A. Select standing committees for the present Legislature be appointed for the following purposes:
 - (1) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing,
 - (2) Public Accounts,
 - (3) Private Bills,
 - (4) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and
 - (5) Legislative Offices
 and, in addition thereto, there be appointed for the present Legislature a Special Standing Committee on Members’ Services;
 - B. Legislative policy committees for the present Legislature be appointed for the following purposes:
 - (1) Standing Committee on Families and Communities,
 - (2) Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future, and
 - (3) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 18(1)(h) this motion is up for debate. Are there any members wishing to speak to the motion?

Okay. Seeing none, the hon. Government House Leader to close debate.

Mr. Jason Nixon: No.

[Government Motion 2 carried]

Committee Membership Appointments

3. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five select standing committees, one special standing committee, and three legislative policy committees:
- (1) Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Gotfried, chair; Mr. Orr, deputy chair; Mrs. Allard; Mr. Eggen; Mr. Getson; Ms Glasgow; Member Irwin; Mr. Jones; and Mr. Nielsen.
 - (2) Standing Committee on Legislative Offices: Mr. Ellis, chair; Mr. Schow, deputy chair; Ms Goodridge; Ms Gray; Ms Lovely; Mr. Jeremy Nixon; Mr. Rutherford; Mr. Schmidt; Mr. Shepherd; Mr. Sigurdson; and Ms Sweet.
 - (3) Standing Committee on Private Bills: Mr. Ellis, chair; Mr. Schow, deputy chair; Mr. Gotfried; Mr. Horner; Member Irwin; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Nielsen; Mr. Jeremy Nixon; Ms Pancholi; Ms Sigurdson; Mr. Sigurdson; vacant; vacant; vacant; and vacant.
 - (4) Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Smith, chair; Mr. Schow, deputy chair; Mr. Carson; Mr. Deol; Ms Ganley; Mr. Horner; Ms Issik; Mr. Jones; Member Loyola; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Rehn; Mr. Reid; Ms Renaud; Mr. Turton; and Mr. Yao.
 - (5) Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Ms Phillips, chair; Mr. Gotfried, deputy chair; Mr. Amery; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Dach; Mr. Feehan; Mr. Guthrie; Ms Hoffman; Ms Renaud; Ms Rosin; Mr. Rowswell; Mr. Stephan; Mr. Toor; Mr. Turton; and Mr. Walker.
 - (6) Special Standing Committee on Members' Services: Mr. Cooper, chair; Mr. Ellis, deputy chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Mr. Dang; Mr. Deol; Ms Goehring; Ms Goodridge; Mr. Gotfried; Mr. Long; Ms Sweet; and Mr. Williams.
 - (7) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future: Mr. van Dijken, chair; Ms Goehring, deputy chair; Mrs. Allard; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Bilous; Mr. Dach; Mr. Dang; Ms Gray; Mr. Horner; Ms Issik; Mr. Jones; Mr. Reid; Mr. Rowswell; Mr. Stephan; and Mr. Toor.
 - (8) Standing Committee on Families and Communities: Ms Goodridge, chair; Ms Sigurdson, deputy chair; Mr. Amery; Mr. Carson; Ms Ganley; Ms Glasgow; Mr. Guthrie; Member Irwin; Mr. Long; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Jeremy Nixon; Ms Pancholi; Mr. Rutherford; Mr. Walker; and Mr. Yao.
 - (9) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship: Mr. Hanson, chair; Member Ceci, deputy chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Mr. Feehan; Mr. Getson; Member Loyola; Mr. Rehn; Ms Rosin; Mr. Sabir; Mr. Schmidt; Mr. Sigurdson; Mr. Singh; Mr. Smith; Mr. Turton; and Mr. Yaseen.

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: I'm sorry, Government House Leader. Just a point of clarification for you. The Standing Committee on Families and Communities: I heard you call Mr. Nixon. Is that Mr. Nixon from Calgary-Klein or Mr. Nixon from Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is in fact my little brother from Calgary-Klein. Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you for the clarification.

Government Motion 3 is a debatable motion. Are there any questions, comments, or debate on the motion?

Seeing none, the Government House Leader has moved – oh. Would he like to close debate?

Mr. Jason Nixon: I'm good.

[Government Motion 3 carried]

4. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain bills on the Order Paper.

The Speaker: Any questions, comments, or debate?

[Government Motion 4 carried]

5. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Government Motion 5 carried]

3:10 Evening Sitings

7. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) commencing May 27, 2019, the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business for the duration of the First Session of the 30th Legislature 2019 spring sitting unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

The Speaker: Government Motion 7 is a nondebatable motion.

My apologies. We'll just double-check with the table. I may have called the wrong question. We are moving to Motion 7 now? We are moving to Motion 6. Do you want me to re-call the question on 6 as I called it 7? Or will we call it 6 when it was 7?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, I read Motion 7, Mr. Speaker. That's the problem. He introduced that.

The Speaker: Well, let that be a lesson to us all, Government House Leader.

Just a moment, Mr. Clerk. How would the table like to proceed?

Thank you, members. Apologies. We are going to – I called the wrong question on Motion 6; it was actually Motion 7 which the Government House Leader moved. For clarity's sake, this is the motion that deals with times of sitting and notice that may need to be given, so I'm going to re-call the question so that we are very clear on Motion 7.

All those in favour of Government Motion 7, please say aye.

Mr. Bilous: Question of clarity, Mr. Speaker. If we've jumped over Government Motion 6 and we've done Motion 7, they're now out of order. Do we not need to deal with 6 ahead of 7?

The Speaker: Thank you to the Official Opposition House Leader for your clarity. There's no requirement in numbers that we deal with them. We could be dealing with Motion 15 and then come back to Motion 3, so there's no requirement with respect to the number

of the actual government motions. The motions will remain in order, and we'll proceed.

Mr. Bilous: Question of clarification, Mr. Speaker. Motion 6 is debatable. Should the Assembly choose to debate this motion until the end of today, then we would not have gotten to Motion 7 ahead of Monday, May 27. Would that have impacted the possible evening sitting on that day?

The Speaker: Motion 6 is debatable, which we're about to move to now. If Motion 6 affects Motion 7, which it doesn't or won't, not because that's a decision of the Assembly but because Motion 6 deals with the business of private members – this is only sitting times and when they're required to provide notice. So the motions will remain in order. The process for this afternoon was always and has been to debate Motion 7 before Motion 6, so we remain in order, and we will continue to do so. For further clarity, the table is one hundred per cent certain that we are in order, and they are well equipped to provide us the guidance that is necessary, so we'll proceed.

[Government Motion 7 carried]

6. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that, notwithstanding Standing Order 8(1), the Assembly shall meet in the afternoon on Monday, May 27, 2019, for consideration of government business.

The Speaker: Government Motion 6 – and I appreciate your patience this afternoon – is a debatable motion. I see that the Member for Edmonton-City Centre is rising on debate.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to take a moment this afternoon to speak to this motion being brought forward by this government on our first day here of session. Indeed, we are probably in many senses beginning to set the tone for how this session might proceed and for how we might move forward over the next few years as we have the opportunities to work here as private members and those who have that good fortune as members of cabinet and government.

Perhaps, that being in mind, I should also take my opportunity to congratulate you, sir, on ascending to the seat of the Speaker and taking on that role. You are someone that I know is going to handle that with great aplomb. You have great knowledge in that area, and I look forward to the opportunities that are going to come with that.

Now, in regard to this particular motion it should be clear that this motion is coming forward by decision of the government. They had the opportunity to put together an early Order Paper to properly address and ensure that private members' business would be able to proceed on the first Monday afternoon of this session. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there is a good deal of work that has to be done, and I recognize that for members on that side there is a large majority who have not previously sat in government. There is a learning curve involved, and I can understand that it would take some time to learn things.

We were in a similar position when we came into government in 2015, but we managed in that first month, that first session that we had here in the Legislature, to put together that early Order Paper to allow private member business to proceed on Bill 201 the first Monday of that session. We had that respect for members of the opposition, indeed for private members in this Assembly. Of course, as you're aware, Mr. Speaker, and as I hope all are aware – I know there are many here who are new – we recognize that all members in this House who are not members of cabinet are private

members, so private members' business is for all members of the Assembly who are not part of cabinet.

Indeed, private members' business is something that I believe should approach the sacrosanct. It is something that should be treated with the utmost respect and dignity. To infringe on private members' business should be something of a last resort by the unanimous agreement of this Assembly, not something where the government decides that it wants to take over that space when it is already allotted the majority of legislative time in this House every week.

That said, Mr. Speaker, this sets a troubling tone from this government that the first place we would begin, this first opportunity for private members to exercise their voice, their privileges, their rights in this Assembly, that one of their first steps would be to take that opportunity away with no discussion. Well, I suppose we're having that discussion now. We're having that debate now, so perhaps I'll take that back.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when you sat pretty close to this specific seat, you were one of the most eloquent in this House in speaking about the importance and the respect for private members, for members' privileges, for the proper functioning of the systems of this House. You, sir, were quick to decry when you felt that our government was infringing on those privileges and opportunities. You stood up strong in this House for the opportunity for all of your colleagues to be able to go forward with private members' business and do that work to represent their constituents, again, on the one afternoon that is given each week for private members to be able to proceed.

3:20

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has spoken often about how he wants to bring back a new level of decorum and respect in this House. He's spoken on that often. He's bringing in a few changes to see this operate more in the manner that he thinks it should. Fair enough. Indeed, I personally feel that there should be a certain level of decorum and respect. There is always going to be a certain amount of theatre that takes place in this Chamber, and I enjoy partaking in that theatre: the parry, the thrust, the back and forth. There are negotiations. There are games that will be played. That is part and parcel of the opportunity we have here in making use of the systems and the privileges and the other things that are afforded to us to do our work as members of this House.

Indeed, the Premier today, I noticed, spent a good deal of time, when he could have been answering questions – instead, he chose to take time out to decry what he called “fear-and-smear” tactics as members worked to hold government to account and asked questions about government policy and past statements. Even the Member for Calgary-South East today stood in this place and before he began his question, he bemoaned the quality of debates. He stated that he felt less proud to be here, I guess feeling not happy with the quality of debate, just before, I note, lobbing a puffball across the aisle so soft that I think it barely reached the minister.

That said, we recognize that we're all starting out here, and we're all getting used to how things work and the different opportunities we have. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that if we want to have decorum, if we want to have quality of debate, then we have to have that respect between both sides of this House, and to begin this session with a motion taking away the opportunity for private members to exercise their privileges, to speak on behalf of their constituents, that limited time that is afforded to members to do so, that to me does not connote respect. That does not connote decorum. That connotes to me that though there may be a smile on their face, the government intends to use their power to throw their weight around at times if they feel it suits their agenda.

I would note again, Mr. Speaker, that when we had the opportunity to serve as government, every single session we managed to move forward private members' business. In 2015 it proceeded immediately on the Monday following the throne speech. In 2016 it proceeded immediately on the Monday following the throne speech. In 2017 we had an emergency debate that was brought forward by our former MLA for Calgary-Mountain View, Dr. David Swann. It was previously anticipated that we would have government business, but the Order Paper indicates that it was likely by unanimous consent that we moved forward and had that emergency debate that day instead and then the next Monday proceeded with private members' business. In 2018 we had a government motion on the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was, again, passed, likely by unanimous consent. We had the opportunity for that debate and proceeded the next week with private members' business. In 2019 at the beginning of the session it was not applicable as the writ for the election was dropped the day after the Speech from the Throne.

All we are asking today, Mr. Speaker, is that this government show the same respect that we did when we were in their position and allow us to have the opportunity to move forward with private members' business next Monday afternoon.

Now, indeed, I recognize that this Premier hasn't always been a fan of well-ordered democracy. He was part of a federal Conservative government that was known for being incredibly disrespectful at times toward private members and the ministers and many systems that were placed to support them in their work in the federal House of Commons, particularly on committees. I think back to 2007, when the press were able to get hold of a secret Tory handbook – and here I'm quoting from an article from CTV News – “a secret Tory handbook on obstructing and manipulating Commons committees.” It was a 200-page handbook, Mr. Speaker, that was distributed to the chairs of the committees under that Conservative government. It was a minority government at the time. I would note that the government at the time was so embarrassed by that leak that according to one source they ordered all of their committee chairs to return copies of that handbook because they wanted to try to find out who broke confidence and embarrassed them so badly and revealed their lack of respect towards the systems of democracy that they were all participating in.

That handbook, Mr. Speaker, provided advice to those chairs on how to promote the government's agenda, how to select witnesses friendly to the Conservative Party, how to coax them to give favourable testimony when they appeared before the committee. It instructed them on how to filibuster and otherwise disrupt committee proceedings and, if all else fails, how to shut committees down entirely. Of course, I note with some irony that I am going on at length about this to make the point that all members need to be given the opportunities that should be there. And private members' business, again, is something that should be trifled with as a last resort.

I can appreciate that new members of this Assembly are excited for the opportunity to make their maiden speech. I remember that when I first sat in this Assembly, I looked forward to that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be able to stand in this House and talk about the incredible constituency of Edmonton-Centre, as it was at that time, now Edmonton-City Centre, to be able to talk about the many priorities of my constituency, the work that I was looking forward to doing, the opportunities that I looked forward to having, and indeed the opportunities to exercise my privileges as a private member. But there will be ample opportunity for that debate.

Again, it is a sign of profound disrespect from this government that they feel that those maiden speeches, which can be made at any time – this government has the opportunity to negotiate the debate

of bills. They have the opportunity to work with our House leader, indeed, and find opportunities for that, and the opposition previously, when we were in government and you were in opposition, were so kind as to negotiate with them. I remember we had many excellent maiden speeches in response to Her Honour's Speech from the Throne. But at no time did our government feel the need to step over, to indeed step on, to cancel the opportunity for private members to exercise their business in this House simply to give room for our MLAs to speak at greater length.

You know, to the government MLAs who are here, to the private members who have the honour of sitting in the government in caucus, I would say to them: be aware of how we set out and how we begin in this place. I have personally endeavoured to take the opportunity to speak with as many of you as I can personally, to wish you well because I look forward to the opportunity to working with all of you. The privilege of sitting in government is a great one. You have many levers, systems at your disposal, and you can choose to use them if you wish to simply run roughshod over opposition.

Indeed, you yourselves are private members, and I believe it is a member of your caucus, Mr. Speaker, a member of their caucus – all of my remarks, of course, should be through yourself to members of the governing caucus. It is their members that have the first private members' business. It is their opportunity that is being squashed, that is being set aside unnecessarily because this government chose not to take the opportunity to prepare that early Order Paper.

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

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Jason Nixon: Under 23(h), (i), and (j). I'm enjoying the hon. member's remarks, but he's going to cause disorder in the House by saying that we could put something on the early Order Paper that you cannot put on the early Order Paper. That will cause disorder in the House, so he should stop saying that. You cannot put it on the early Order Paper.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Government House Leader. I appreciate your comments.

I'm convinced that there's no point of order. This is a matter of debate.

Debate Continued

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I will note is that this is a choice of the government. This is not something that could not be avoided. This is not something that happened by accident. I dare say that I would highly doubt that this even happened by neglect. This sounds to me like intention. If that is indeed the case, again, it sets a poor tone for how we begin in this House.

3:30

I recognize that, as I said, some members in this House were not enamoured with some of the questions that were brought forward during question period today, the tone or the substance. I would encourage them to have a look at the record of question period on the first day that we sat in this Legislature in 2015, when there were attacks on the character of the Member for Lethbridge-West.

Indeed, even after the parties were merged and we had the United Conservative Party in this House, the kinds of questions that were brought forward about pictures of who she met with when she was in Vancouver and who she talked with and who were activists and that sort of thing, that is part of the tone that was brought forward in this House during previous question periods.

That all comes back again, Mr. Speaker, to the question that we have before us today, this government motion to indeed take away the opportunity, the privilege – well, privileges have a very specific definition, so I'll take that word back – but indeed the opportunities that are afforded to us as private members, the rights of private members to bring forward business, that limited time frame, that one afternoon a week when we have the chance to have that debate. It is all part and parcel of the tone and the approach and the attitude with which we are going to begin our work together in this House. It is my hope that perhaps the Government House Leader would reconsider this motion or that perhaps, you know, enough government members would recognize the imposition that this is and want to set an amiable and collegial tone with the beginning of this session by choosing to vote this motion down.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to hearing their maiden speeches. I look forward to hearing about the many wonderful constituencies across this province, of the experience and the background, the hopes, the aspirations of those colleagues in this House, both in our caucus and in the government caucus, and there will be ample time for that debate. But I am strongly against removing the opportunity for private members in this House to take advantage of the limited time afforded to them for their business in order for those maiden speeches to take place.

I think it's probably fair to say that I've explored every possible corner of that argument and had some fairly fulsome discussion, so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll let my remarks rest. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

As a reminder to all members of the Assembly, if we make significant reference to certain documents or information in our remarks, it is customary that at the earliest opportunity you would then table those documents or items that have been referred to in your remarks. So I would expect that sometime in the first part of next week the hon. member will be happy to table the article he referred to.

Are there any others wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the members for this opportunity to rise and speak to this important matter. Having served one term prior but not as a private member, as a government member, I want to say how much I really treasured the opportunity to debate private members' business in this Chamber. Private members, each of us, were elected duly in our own ridings, and each of us owe it to our constituents to bring forward positive ideas for the Assembly to consider. However, there is a draw, and only a few select members usually get an opportunity to have their ideas debated as private members.

I know that when I was a staff member for the NDP caucus, we had one bill reach the Order Paper, but it didn't actually get debated, in the almost five years I worked there. So it is not a common practice for private members to regularly have opportunities to have their bills or motions debated, and the reason why is because there is only one-half day per week set aside. But there is a half day per week set aside for all of us, whether you be opposition members or whether you be not in the cabinet, to have your ideas, your proposals, and your recommendations brought forward.

I know that many members in this House are aware of the fact that in northern Alberta there is one cabinet minister, in southern Alberta there is one cabinet minister – south of Calgary and north of Edmonton, that is – so there isn't a lot of opportunity for good ideas from those members who are elected south of Calgary or north of Edmonton, who aren't in cabinet, other than those two individuals, to bring their ideas forward. I think that we owe it to one another to make sure that good ideas that are coming from those regions of the province are heard.

I also want to note that there are not a ton of women in cabinet. There are some but not a ton. When I looked at who Bill 201 belongs to, it's the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, north of Edmonton, a woman. These voices aren't super dominant around the cabinet table right now.

I have to say that I think the idea of postponing debate on what I imagine is a bill that's of importance to that member and that member's constituents is a difficult precedent for me to agree to because there is only half a day per week set aside for us as private members, all of us as private members, to have our voices, our opinions, and our positive ideas for how to build our province brought forward.

I know that we're all taking time to figure out our new roles and responsibilities. Even for those of us who were on the other side of the House, we have new roles and responsibilities, whether we were private members or cabinet ministers before. I do want to say that protecting the opportunity to have that half day per week – it's not a lot of time; it really isn't, but I think it's important time for regional voices, voices that are underrepresented around the cabinet table, to have their ideas, their opinions, and their bills brought forward – is something that I care deeply about.

It's troubling to me that with the first opportunity we have to hear from a private member of the government caucus, there is a motion from the Government House Leader to stop that. I think that's a difficult precedent for me to smile and agree to, and I hope that you are thinking about what precedent that sets for you as private members as well.

I think private members have an obligation to their constituents, and our Chamber has an obligation to all Albertans to hear those good ideas. The opportunities that are on the Order Paper are limited, so for us to begin our first day of regular business by taking away that opportunity I think is detrimental to the processes that we've set up in this place to ensure that all of our constituents have an opportunity to be heard. I think it's also important that we fulfill our duties to our constituents, as I've mentioned, by taking the time. It's not a lot of time.

I get it. I loved being able to deliver my maiden speech, and I did it at a time that worked with the calendar. But we definitely didn't trump private members' business because private members' business is something that's sacred and cherished.

So I think those are the main points that I wanted to raise. There are not a lot of voices north of Edmonton sitting around the cabinet table, setting the government agenda; there aren't a lot of voices south of Calgary sitting around the cabinet table, setting the agenda, but we do have a voice in this place. I ask that you consider how we honour that voice instead of continuing to ruin it and continuing to put more power in the hands of fewer members. All 87 of us are here because we owe it to our constituents to fight for them and the things they believe in, and one of the very special ways we can do that is as private members bringing forward motions or bills or resolutions.

Those are the main points I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all of my colleagues in this place. Thank you for hearing me during this time, and I look forward to having an

opportunity to make a decision about this matter of important precedence setting.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available to members for questions and comments. I see the Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for an opportunity to rise on questions and comments on this important issue. I'd like to actually seek the member's comments on a couple of things. She appears to be misinformed on a couple of process issues. The very first thing is that you can't put private members' business on early Order Papers. You can't do it. So the reality is that this upcoming Monday we have two choices. We can either come back with government business and go to maiden speeches, which is what we have proposed to the opposition, to give members an opportunity for that three-hour space to be able to give maiden speeches. If not, what will have to happen is that the House will have to adjourn until after the supper hour and come back for the night sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is this. The opposition is now attempting to filibuster in an attempt to not be able to come back and do some work for three hours in the afternoon. In our view, on this side of the House, that's a waste of important legislative time. That's their strategy. They're welcome to do that. But the reality is that there will be no private members' business on that afternoon, and we're attempting to fill that spot with some productive time for private members on all sides of the aisle as they work through their maiden speeches.

3:40

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, I have – and I will table this. I heard your instructions on that loud and clear, and I will table this tomorrow. I have in my possession an e-mail that was sent during the last session. I think this is relevant because the Government House Leader and both members who've already spoken on the government – sorry; the opposition side. It's hard to get out of that habit, isn't it? They have referred to how things worked in the last Legislative Assembly.

Now, my predecessor as the Government House Leader, Mr. Brian Mason, who was the dean of this place and I would argue was a pretty decent and very good House leader. I enjoyed working with him. At a time back then he had his staff, Blake Evans, send an e-mail to – interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, I was not the Opposition House Leader yet. You were at the time, so you were on this e-mail. I'm sure you'll be fascinated when you get an opportunity to be able to read it and take a look at what took place there. The then Government House Leader, the members' across the way from me right now House leader while they were in government, proposed the exact same solution in this e-mail to the exact same problem. The exact same problem.

The choice that we have before the House right now is that you can pass this motion. We could get this motion to a vote, and then we would be able to use the three hours' time on Monday to do productive work on behalf of Albertans. What we have proposed is that we would work on private members' new introductions to the House, their very first response to the throne speech, their maiden speeches, which we all agree are good. That was one of my favourite parts of the start of the last, 29th, Legislature. I remember the former Minister of Health's maiden speech. It was a great speech. So that's an opportunity that we could use that three hours for. If not, we can't do anything in those three hours, and we'll have to return after the supper hour as planned for the evening sitting.

I'm not quite done, hon. member. I know you're excited to get up and respond to what I have to say. Sorry, Mr. Speaker; I'm out of the habit. We've been away for a little while for an election. I was referring directly to the hon. deputy Leader of the Opposition instead of through you to her.

The reality of this, though, is this: you're watching the opposition stand up in the House over and over and try to filibuster so they don't have to do work on Monday afternoon. That's what's taking place. That doesn't surprise me, Mr. Speaker, through you to all of the hon. members of this Chamber, when you know that their leader has already indicated to the media that their main focus in this upcoming legislative session will be to filibuster standing orders to maintain their right to be able to smack their desks. Clearly, the opposition's priorities are in the wrong spot. Private members' business is very important inside this Chamber. We will continue to work to strengthen it with private members to make sure that they can participate in the process. It's a valuable time. As you pointed out, it's our members who will be the first people up on the first bill, but the reality is that this is not stopping something from taking place on Monday because it can't take place on Monday because we can't put it on the early Order Paper.

In addition to that, besides all the drama, Mr. Speaker, this opposition, when they were in government, proposed and did the exact same thing. The only difference at that time was that it looks like you as the Opposition House Leader were a little bit more co-operative and wanted to be able to use that time to be able to benefit the private members of this Chamber.

When members spend their time – look, Mr. Speaker. I know. I used to sit over on that side of the aisle. I understand how hard it is to be an Opposition House Leader. Both you and I have been an Opposition House Leader. I get it. I understand how frustrating that can be. But you have an important job to do, which is not to filibuster so you can't come to work on Monday afternoon. That is not the role of the Official Opposition, to come to this Chamber and filibuster.

The Speaker: I see the Opposition House Leader is rising to debate.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise. I need to provide some clarity to the House. I mean, I find it interesting that the Government House Leader accused us of filibustering yet used the full five minutes of 29(2)(a) to do just that, to filibuster. That's the first point that I'll make.

The second point that I'll make is that, you know, it's interesting that both in 2015 and 2016 our government ensured that the first Monday was private members' business. We respect the important work that private members do, and as the Member for Edmonton-City Centre so eloquently pointed out, private members are also government members, noncabinet, so the majority of their members are actually private members. The reason that this House a long time ago set aside Mondays for private members' business is because it would be all too easy for a government to trample the rights of private members and to ensure that they have time to bring forward bills and motions, which are critical. They also have great ideas. Although, you know, we may think that cabinet has the best ideas, I can tell you that the best ideas come from everywhere.

What's interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the Government House Leader is pointing out the fact that, well, they couldn't put private members' business on the early Order Paper. I would argue that the government and the Premier intentionally put the Speech from the Throne on a Wednesday to ensure that on the first Monday there would not be time for private members. So to accuse us of not

wanting to work on Monday – I’m sorry, but the government chose the date for the Speech from the Throne. The government knew that that would ensure that on the Monday private members don’t have an opportunity to get going on their business. You know, to say that we’re choosing to try to not do work on Monday is laughable. I mean, it is offensive, on the one hand, but laughable that the Government House Leader would even think of that. We are trying to preserve the rights of all private members in this House and, in fact, ensure that on as many Mondays as possible private members have due time to bring forward their ideas and debate.

I can tell you that I remember being an opposition member back in 2012, when we had to fight to preserve those days. I can tell you that it is absolutely critical that the government does everything that it can to ensure that these days are protected. Again, you know, to speak directly to the Government House Leader, through you, Mr. Speaker, of course, it was, in fact, the government’s actions that have put the Assembly’s back into the corner. To say, “Either we’re going to do what we want to impose on this Assembly or we’re going to adjourn” I don’t think is the only solution. In fact, we could have had an opportunity on the Monday for private members to get going on their business.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I know that a number of my colleagues also want to speak on this. I can tell you with certainty that if the shoe was on the other foot, the Government House Leader would be the first person jumping up and down and calling it the government bullying the private members, pushing through their agenda, railroading democracy of private members. I think you get the picture.

So it is our job, and I am proud to stand up not only for the private members of this side of the House, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? I’ll stand up for the private members of the other side of the House if the government won’t. That is our job, to hold the government to account. I mean, again, that’s the job of the private members on the other side of the House as well. Otherwise, I’m not sure why they have questions in question period. It is our job to hold them to account and present ideas.

I think there was a very simple solution, to ensure that every Monday is protected for private members, and the government and the Premier chose not to do that. We’ll leave that up to Albertans. Or maybe one day we’ll find out in question period if that was done intentionally in order to hijack the first Monday, that should have been for private members’ business.

Regardless, Mr. Speaker, I will proudly do my job to hold this government to account, to speak on behalf of Albertans, especially those that are underrepresented, to ensure that they have a voice in this House.

Now, if I can just push pause on this and back up, what I didn’t do when I first stood up to talk about the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, was, of course, congratulate you on your new appointment to this House. I also do want to give a sincere welcome to all new members, on both sides, in this House. It is an incredible honour that we all share in this House.

Thank you.

3:50

The Speaker: I appreciate your comments and congratulations. I would just advise the House that the Speaker is a little bit sensitive when people make an accusation that it is an appointment. Very clearly it was an election, and I would like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for her efforts in that election.

I saw that the hon. Minister of Transportation was rising under 29(2)(a).

Mr. McIver: Not under 29(2)(a). For debate.

The Speaker: Are there any members who would like to rise under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, please.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I want to reinforce the fact that you were duly elected to the position of Speaker, but I do want to remind all of the members of the House that even countries like North Korea have elections, and the outcomes of those are often determined before the votes are actually cast. I’m not saying that you bear any resemblance in character or appearance to the leader of the North Korean people, but I would suggest that there are some similarities to the elections that were conducted both there and here in this House for the position of Speaker.*

I heard with great interest the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview clarify for the people here in this Assembly that the government did in fact choose to hold the throne speech on Wednesday, which made it impossible, then, for private members to conduct their business on the following Monday afternoon. If I may, Mr. Speaker, offer a few comments on that.

I have watched, of course, Conservative politics very closely. One can’t help but do so when living in Alberta for an entire lifetime, as I have. Certainly, one of the themes in Conservative politics, at least before they’re elected to government, is the willingness or the eagerness to give their private members a voice in the Legislature and a voice in the House of Commons. I remember Preston Manning, of course, when he was leader of the Reform Party, stating that, you know, those private members would be able to have free votes on all issues.

In fact, I think various iterations of various Conservative parties here in Alberta have campaigned on those very same issues in multiple elections here in this province, and of course every time that the election is over and the ballots are cast and those Conservatives actually wind up in government in the House of Commons or in the Legislature, those promises fly out the window, and that’s one of the first promises that flies out the window. It’s interesting, and I appreciate the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview pointing out to us the fact that the members opposite have repeated a time-honoured Conservative tradition, Mr. Speaker, of promising to give their private members a voice in this Legislature and then shredding that promise – what is it now? – three days since the Legislature opened.

An Hon. Member: Grassroots guarantee.

Mr. Schmidt: Yeah. It went the way of their party bosses’ grassroots guarantee, quickly into the shredder, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I urge all of the private members, who may have been under the idea that their party bosses and the members on the treasury benches actually believed in giving their private members a free voice and a free vote in the Legislature, to stand up and demand it now. You’ve only got one whip in the House, so I would encourage private members to take this opportunity to stand up to the members of the treasury benches and assert the rights that I’m sure that they believed in. I can’t imagine how disappointed they are now, only three days after the opening of this Legislature, to have those free votes and free voices taken away from them so quickly, Mr. Speaker.

You know, if there are any old Reform or Social Credit members in this new UCP caucus who still believe in what turns out to be a fairy tale of free votes and free voices for their private members, stand up and demand it here and show the people of Alberta that

*See page 62, right column, paragraph 9

you actually believe in the principles that you ran on and were elected on.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Alberta would expect nothing less from their elected representatives than to explain to them why they're okay now, three days after the Legislature has opened, for their voices to be taken away by the members of the treasury benches and why they are cowering in the face of their whips and not standing up for their constituents, not standing up to bring forward the ideas that they ran on and were elected on and probably thought that they would get the chance to debate and possibly see passed here in this Legislature.

The Speaker: I see the Minister of Transportation is rising on debate.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the position at the front of this room, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, for the 30th session: well earned, well deserved. I'm sure you'll do a great and unbiased job for all of us, on all sides of the House. Thank you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was fascinated by some of the debate that I've heard from the other side of the House. I can assure the hon. member that just spoke that the disappointment in this House is on his side of the aisle. I'm sure of that. I would take his words, that we all just heard, as a cautionary tale for members on our side of the House on what not to do. They should probably study those words as a lesson on how not to succeed in this House.

I was also interested in several of the comments from my hon. colleagues across the way, which are even more amazing when they know that there's a document from the hon. Government House Leader that is going to be tabled where the NDP House leader from the last session essentially did the necessary procedural amendment that we're doing today through this Motion 6. Yet when that happened four short years ago, it seemed to be quite normal. I remember the opposition side accepted it as the reality of a schedule and didn't go to great pains to get three hours off work on the first Monday that they could get three hours off work but, rather, said, "Okay; let's do what we can do; let's do a throne speech, and let's get on with the business of the House," in direct contrast to what we hear from the Official Opposition today.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we heard speakers over there talking about the tone. Well, indeed, the tone works on both sides of the aisle. It seems to be starting out today to be the tone of the Official Opposition to be accusatory and say things that they know are not accurate in this way and to be inconsistent with what their behaviour was when they were in government not so long ago. It seems that their memory is short.

I'm not sure what the reason is that they're so much against the May long weekend, because, of course, that was one of the reasons why the House couldn't start on Monday. I don't know. For me, I think that celebrating Her Majesty's birthday is something that I would have thought we could all agree on in this House, Mr. Speaker, since we all swore allegiance to her ever so recently. I, for one, am in favour of celebrating Victoria Day every single year for as long as I'm blessed enough to be alive. It's something that I hope to continue doing. I hope the members across will agree with that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members across are even more inconsistent. I'll take them on a little walk down memory lane, which is pertinent to some of the debate that we heard in the House today. I agree with some of the things, in fairness, that members opposite said, that you can go through this House on a four-year

term and maybe get no members' statements or no private members' bills. In the last four years I had zero private members' bills. That was just the luck of the draw. Some people were more lucky than I, and some people were equally lucky, which is not lucky at all. Indeed, I did actually get a draw for one member's motion, and I'll remind the members opposite what they did with that when I brought a motion on choice in education, something that we believe in very strongly on this side of the House. I brought forward that motion, and the NDP government used their bully pulpit and their majority to actually amend that motion to say exactly the opposite of what I had intended.

4:00

Now, the tradition here, Mr. Speaker, is that private members can bring these things forward. There's no guarantee that they'll pass – and that's fair game – but the private members should get their day, their opportunity to express what they are saying on behalf of their constituents. Members on all sides can debate for it, debate against it, but the government actually chose – and I'm reminding you of this because they're actually trying to act like they've been completely supportive of private members' business when it comes up. They actually used their majority to put forward an amendment to make my motion mean exactly the opposite of what it did in order to take away the only motion that I would have had in the four years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for those that don't remember, it was quite a memorable day because there was a procedural problem where I ended up getting removed from the House. I will say to my NDP colleagues that I suppose in some way they helped me get into the history books that day. But what was even more remarkable was the fact that probably it was the first time in history that someone got to come back into the House without an apology. It wasn't me that made the procedural mistake and got caught red-handed; it was the members opposite, after which time they were so embarrassed at, first, being so disrespectful of private members' business, so embarrassed at being caught red-handed with a procedural – I'm trying to think of a parliamentary word – misbehaviour, procedural misbehaviour, that they ended up having to retract their amendment and vote unanimously for the motion despite the fact that they tried to not even let that piece of private members' business come to a vote, which is the most respectful thing you can do.

So it's very, very insincere, Mr. Speaker, to hear members opposite talking about these high ideals about supporting private members' business. The only thing I'll agree with them on: those are high ideals, letting private members bring their business forward. But these people across the aisle, save for the ones that were elected for the first time, actually did exactly the opposite in the last session of what they just said that they would do.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans shouldn't believe this opposition on this item. They've proven by their actions and words that they don't believe what they said. Indeed, in response to some of what was said earlier, that's the tone they're setting today. On this side of the House I'm sure we won't be perfect, but this to me is a cautionary tale that we need to do better than what we've heard from the other side this afternoon.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, for the benefit of all members, the Minister of Transportation has moved that we adjourn debate. We will not vote on the actual motion at this time. We are only voting on the hon. Minister of Transportation's desire to adjourn debate at this time on this particular motion.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading
Bill 1
An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

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

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, on behalf of the hon. Premier.

When the Premier introduced this legislation on the first day of session, he followed through on our government's number one promise to Albertans to repeal the carbon tax. I'm very proud that An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax is our government's very first piece of legislation. Repealing the carbon tax will require a number of legislative changes to several pieces of legislation: the Climate Leadership Act, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, and some other smaller pieces of legislation.

I'll briefly outline those changes. The first change will be to repeal the Climate Leadership Act. If passed, the Climate Leadership Act will be repealed effective 12:01 a.m. on May 30, 2019. That will bring an end to the provincial carbon tax once and for all. As part of the repeal we're proposing transitional provisions so fuel resellers are not paying out of pocket and people in businesses have clarity. Most notably, fuel sellers such as gas stations can apply for a refund of the carbon tax they paid on the inventory they hold at the time of repeal. That's because fuel resellers prepay the carbon tax when they buy their inventory from refineries and wholesalers.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Other transitional provisions will remove the existing spending restrictions on the remaining carbon levy revenue and ensure the levy is not charged on sales that occur following the repeal of the act. Finally, the amendments will shorten the timelines that individuals and businesses have to apply for carbon tax refunds and rebates. These timelines will be shortened from four to two years. This will encourage fuel users and resellers to avoid delays in applying for rebates and refunds. It will also give them more

certainty around carbon tax revenues and, finally, an end to the carbon tax regime.

If the bill is passed, the second significant change will be to amend the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act. The Alberta Personal Income Tax Act will be amended to end the Alberta climate leadership adjustment rebate. These consumer rebates are paid quarterly and are funded from carbon tax revenue. Given that this revenue stream will be ending, we'll need to cancel the rebate program to stop the next scheduled payment, due to be issued in July. I want to make it clear. Albertans who have received carbon tax rebates will not be asked to refund the portion of the rebate they received for May 30 through to June 29.

Finally, a number of small amendments will need to be made to other acts to remove references to the Climate Leadership Act. This includes the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act and the Fuel Tax Act.

Madam Speaker, I would like to close by repeating that repealing the carbon tax was our government's key campaign promise. This April Albertans resoundingly supported our plan to repeal. We're making good on this promise so our government can get started creating jobs and allowing more money to stay in the pockets of families, businesses, and nonprofits. I look forward to debate on Bill 1, and I hope all members of this House will lend this bill the support that Albertans have been so vocal about.

Thank you, and with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill 1.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. deputy House leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Government House Leader, actually, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you here today in the seat.

I think it's been a great day. We had some unanimous motions passed today defending our province, which is very exciting, and I'm ecstatic – I don't know about the rest of the House – to see second reading on the floor on the carbon tax. But with that said, I recognize it's Thursday, and I would like to move that we see the clock as 4:30 and we adjourn the House to return Monday at – let me just look at the table officers to make sure I got this right – 1:30.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:09 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 1st Session (2019)

Activity to Thursday, May 23, 2019

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

Bill 1 — An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax (\$) (Kenney)

First Reading — 8 (*May 22, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 44 (*May 23, 2019 aft., adjourned*)

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For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875