



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, May 28, 2019

Day 4

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good evening. Please be seated.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 2

An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 2, An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business.

This bill amends our labour legislation to restore prosperity, get people back to work, and let the world know that Alberta is open for business again. This bill will also help to restore balance in the relationship between employers and employees and further support worker rights. This legislation will amend the Employment Standards Code and the Labour Relations Code, and this proposed legislation is part of our bold plan to restore jobs and grow the economy.

These are hard times for job creators, workers, and families in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Businesses are struggling to keep their doors open and see Alberta as a high-cost, high-regulation place. Albertans are struggling to find jobs. We need to get them back to work, and the proposed changes in Bill 2 will restore fairness and balance to the workplace and help bring back the Alberta advantage.

I will begin with the proposed changes to general holiday pay under the Employment Standards Code. These changes will get Albertans back to work by reducing costs for job creators. Currently employees are eligible for general holiday pay as soon as they are hired by their employers and are paid regardless of whether they are scheduled to work on the holiday. Proposed amendments would return to an eligibility period where an employee must work 30 days in the 12 months before a general holiday to qualify for general holiday pay.

Another proposed change is to reinstate the regular and irregular workday distinction for general holiday pay. This change means that only employees who actually work or regularly work on the day of the general holiday will be entitled to receive general holiday pay. This would mean that if the general holiday is on a regular workday and the employee works, they earn their average daily wage plus 1.5 times the hourly rate of pay for all hours worked that day. If the holiday is on an irregular workday and the employee does not work, they would not be paid any general holiday pay.

Approving this proposed change will directly reduce labour costs for businesses as employers will no longer have to pay employees when the holiday falls on an irregular workday and the employee is not scheduled to work. For example, if the holiday were to fall on a Monday and the business is never open on a Monday, such as we find with many restaurants, no general holiday pay would be owing since no employees are scheduled to work that day.

If passed, these changes would take effect on September 1, 2019. I'd like to note that any general holiday pay employees earn before September 1, 2019, must be paid according to the current rules or according to the rules in an existing collective agreement. Beginning on September 1 employees will earn general holiday pay

according to the proposed rules if the legislation passes or according to the rules in an existing collective agreement.

Next I will discuss proposed changes to banked overtime. Changes to the Employment Standards Code in 2018 removed the option for employers and employees to develop straight time banked arrangements for overtime. Straight time banked arrangements reduce labour costs for businesses. They also allow employers to offer overtime hours more often and to develop more flexible schedules to accommodate employee requests. It's a win for both employees and employers. That's why we are proposing to reverse the change made in 2018 and once more allow for straight time banked arrangements for overtime.

When there is an overtime agreement, this change will provide time off with pay at straight time, or 1 to 1, instead of overtime pay. There is no change to the rate when overtime is paid out, and any paid overtime will continue to be paid at one and a half times the hourly rate. The proposed change does not affect overtime pay as the change is only for situations where there is an agreement in place to bank and use overtime in the future. Again, to be clear, this change will not result in a reduction of pay for workers.

Another aspect that will not change is that the overtime can continue to be banked for up to six months from the date it was earned when a written agreement between an employer and employee is in place. This allows for more flexibility for both employers and workers. As there is no change to the six-month time limit for banking overtime with an agreement, this is not included in Bill 2. If passed, the banked overtime changes would take effect September 1, 2019. Any overtime that employees earn up until September 1 must be banked or paid out according to the existing rules or according to the rules in an existing collective agreement. Overtime earned and banked once the new rules take effect on September 1 can be taken off with straight-time pay according to the new rules.

The proposed new rules for banking overtime mean that flexible averaging agreements will no longer be needed because employees will be able to develop straight time banked arrangements for overtime. Flexible averaging agreements were developed to allow employees and employers to agree to short-term straight overtime banking schedules. We are proposing to repeal the section on flexible averaging agreements from the employment standards regulation once the legislation is passed. This is a consequential amendment, and if passed, the changes to flexible averaging agreements would also take effect on September 1, 2019. Parties can agree to end their flexible averaging agreements as early as two weeks from the proclamation date. For a unionized employee the terms of their collective agreements will continue to apply.

Next I will discuss our proposed amendments to labour relations legislation. First, in a spirit of restoring democracy to the workplace, I am proposing changes to the Labour Relations Code that would return to a mandatory secret ballot for all union certification votes. This will allow employees to make a choice without fear of repercussion from either the union or the employer. Currently a union can be certified without a secret ballot vote if a union can demonstrate that more than 65 per cent of the employees support certification. Proposed changes would make sure employees always have the opportunity to vote on whether to join a union. With these proposed changes, a secret ballot vote will occur when 40 per cent of employees show support for union certification. A majority vote is then required for an employee group to be certified as a union. This is the same threshold of support for decertifying a union, creating fairness and consistency in the certification and decertification processes.

Other proposed changes to the Labour Relations Code would return to a time period of 90 days for unions to provide evidence of

employee support for union certification. Currently card certifications require 65 per cent support and need more time to provide evidence of that support. The proposed changes only require 40 per cent support so that less time is needed prior to proceeding with the secret ballot. The reversion to the balanced rules that were in place prior to 2017 is not only a return to the approach Albertans are most familiar with; it is also the most common approach to union certification in Canada. If passed, these changes will take effect when Bill 2 receives royal assent. Employee groups who had applied for automatic union certification before the first reading of Bill 2 will be able to continue with their applications. Any applications for union certification that were submitted after the first reading of this bill will need to have a secret ballot vote.

Bill 2 also includes proposed changes that will allow the establishment of a program that provides support and assistance to employees covered by the Labour Relations Code and other labour legislation. This support would give current union members and employees who could become union members the option of seeking information or supports to better understand and exercise their labour rights. This will be particularly beneficial to employees if appearing unrepresented before the Labour Relations Board. These supports will be available on October 1, 2019.

Other proposed changes would strengthen marshalling provisions currently available under the Labour Relations Code. Marshalling can help reduce duplication of employment-related matters in multiple forums. For example, a single workplace issue could involve the Labour Relations Board, Workers' Compensation Board, and the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Current marshalling provisions allow the Labour Relations Board to recommend these complaints be heard by a single forum. This allows complaints to be handled more efficiently and effectively than if multiple bodies carried out separate responses to the same claim. Proposed amendments will allow marshalling orders made by the Labour Relations Board to include any related investigations or inquiries. As well, a provision is being added so that newly established bodies can be included in marshalling efforts. The proposed effective date for the marshalling changes is upon royal assent.

Together, all of these proposed changes will bring balance back to our labour laws. If passed, they will reduce burdens on our job creators and restore democracy to the workplace. Bill 2 is an important part of our efforts to make Alberta the best place in North America to live, work, start a business, and raise a family. It demonstrates our government's commitment to make Alberta open for business.

Thank you.

7:40

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is rising on debate.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to this Chamber. I'm very pleased to rise to speak to second reading of Bill 2, An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business, an act that I would suggest does not make Alberta any more open for business than before it was introduced. I'm very pleased to start talking about the changes inside this bill.

Let me begin by talking a little bit about the history of employment standards and the Labour Relations Code here in this province. For nearly 30 years the Employment Standards Code in this province had not been updated. It had been left to wither. It had put us completely out of step with the rest of Canada and in a situation where many Albertans suffered dire consequences

because we didn't have up-to-date legislation. I think often about Amanda Jensen, a young mother, single mom. One of her three children received a cancer diagnosis. Because Alberta didn't have up-to-date leaves, she was actually fired when she went to take a compassionate care leave.

I do want to recognize that Bill 2 is making some very specific changes to our Employment Standards Code after a lot of work and a lot of consultation was put in through our government's Bill 17. That consultation, as we prepared to make the first changes in 30 years to employment standards, was very wide reaching. We spoke with academics, community service providers, employers, employees, groups of employees, groups of employers, disability groups, a number of people. Through that very in-depth consultation, which included everything from round-table discussions to myself going specifically to sit with groups of labour lawyers in their offices to talk about the potential changes, I learned a lot about what does and doesn't work in our province and some of the challenges that we have.

Let me get started by talking about the first piece, which is overtime pay. Mr. Speaker, when we started reviewing our work to update employment standards, overtime pay was just one of the many places where Alberta was completely out of step with the rest of the country. Alberta workers were the only workers in all of Canada that when they were doing overtime work, overtime work which we by nature recognize as more valuable because somebody has already worked their normal shift and is staying late – perhaps it's someone in oil and gas who is putting in that extra time during the busy season. Being able to bank that time and use it in the future is critically important to those workers, yet Alberta was the only place that was doing that banking at straight time.

Now, it's really important to note that employment standards are the minimum standards that Alberta workers have to protect them. Oftentimes in a unionized work environment you will find labour standards that are better than the minimum. Lots of employers – we have great employers in this province – provide better than that minimum standard. But where that minimum standard is is where those basic protections are, particularly for vulnerable workers. In Alberta for overtime, which is worked by 400,000 workers in a year, a lot of them – Mr. Speaker rightfully acknowledges that we are working overtime right now although I would note that our overtime provisions do not apply to MLAs. Please do not call employment standards. They will not help you other than to offer sympathy. The 400,000 Albertans who do work overtime in many of our various industries are doing so to earn money for their families and are taking time away from those families to do that.

Now this change to going back to straight time is picking their pockets, which is the alternative title that I have given to Bill 2, that our caucus has given to Bill 2, because it doesn't make Alberta open for business, but it does pick the pockets of working people. Making sure that workers are valued for their time and are not being shortchanged when they put in the extra work, roll up their sleeves, and get down to business is incredibly important to our province's workers. I heard that through the vast consultations that I took part in during our Bill 17 consultation process. I would suggest that that is something that this bill has lacked, which is a consultation process.

I realize that the government benches will say that they had an election. Yes, there absolutely was an election, and a lot of people made their choice clear in the government. But I can also tell you that when I talked to people about overtime, there was outrage. There was surprise. People said that that must be an NDP smear. Well, no, it's not. In this case the UCP government is coming for your banked overtime. You will get less money, you will get less time with your family if this change passes.

I've heard the Premier talk about how this is a voluntary agreement between employees and employers. Well, if you consulted with the people of Alberta, you would hear that a lot of employees felt pressured, were told they needed to sign these averaging agreements, and it put them in very difficult positions.

I would also note that when implementing Bill 17, we gave employers and employees the mechanism through which to have a straight-time agreement. Flexible averaging agreements, which the minister just referenced as a consequential amendment, were used for short-term straight overtime banking agreements. The mechanism was there. Making sure that Alberta workers are getting the overtime banking that they deserve is important, and I speak against Bill 2 because it does a disservice to our workers.

Let's talk about holiday pay. Again, employment standards is the minimum standard. A lot of employers provide much better. In fact, a lot of Albertans, probably many of the people in this Chamber, would have been very surprised to learn that Alberta was the only province to not pay all workers holiday pay, completely out of step. When we were implementing our changes to employment standards, looking at what the Canadian standard is was really important to us. Most people didn't even realize, but do you know who did know, Mr. Speaker? Vulnerable workers, people who are working in jobs where their employers are governed by the minimum standard. Every other province makes sure that people are able to enjoy the benefit of a stat holiday, whether that little bit of extra pay or that little bit of extra time with the family.

To take that away is mean spirited, Grinchlike, and I bring up the Grinch because specifically what will happen in a couple of years from now is that Christmas is going to fall on a Saturday and New Year's Day is going to fall on a Sunday. That is a Christmas holiday that for many families – they will go to work on the Friday, they will go back to work on the Monday, and they will go to work on the next Friday, back to work on the Monday. It's like the holiday didn't even happen. I know this, Mr. Speaker, because I've worked for employers who gave the bare minimum, and it didn't include holidays in Alberta if they fell on a nonregular working day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, if Christmas falls on a Saturday, for employers who give the minimum, it's like Christmas didn't even happen. They don't have to pay any extra or give somebody another day off.

It happens in this province, and the people in this Chamber who may not have worked a job where they were a vulnerable worker maybe weren't even aware. But I think it's really important that you open your eyes and pay attention to the fact that these are workers who need the money. These are workers supporting families, and they deserve to have Christmas as well. Please explain to me why Alberta workers deserve less than every other worker in Canada. Please explain to me why statutory holidays are not as important in this province as in every other province in Canada.

Overtime pay and holiday pay changes are picking the pockets of workers, and the minister has said that this is about labour costs for employers. Well, Mr. Speaker, not paying holiday pay to your employees, not letting employees bank the overtime that they earned is mean spirited. It is un-Albertan, un-Canadian. We believe in statutory holidays. Bring forward a bill to cancel stat holidays, and see how well that goes over. That's what this is, but it's clothed in an irregular, nonregular way, where most Albertans are getting these holidays – they think they're important – and they don't realize that their fellow Albertans are not. Making sure that we continue to consult with Albertans, I think, is very important.

7:50

Around the next section of the Picking Your Pockets Bill, the Labour Relations Code changes that change the certification

process, Mr. Speaker, during the consultation on Bill 17 I worked with and met with both employer side's and labour side's lawyers, stakeholders. There are different ways to approach certification, and what this bill does is return us back to the previous way that Alberta was certified. I believe that card check certification is simpler. I know from my consultations and talking to people within this space that very often when employees try to exercise their constitutionally protected right to collectively bargain, employers will resist, sometimes actively oppose and sometimes oppose to the extent that it's actually considered an unfair labour practice. By allowing, for example, a workplace where 100 per cent of the workers have agreed that they would like to be able to collectively bargain – to allow that to happen through a card check process, I think, makes sense because we know that employer interference with certification drives has happened, can be damaging.

We also heard, through my consultations, criticisms of certification votes versus a card check process. But at this point we know that there are different ways for certifications to happen. The most important thing is to make sure that it's free from undue influence by any parties, whether it be unions or employers. We need to make sure that our legislation is protecting that constitutionally granted right to collectively bargain. It's an important part of our labour relations system, and making sure that that happens is very important.

The minister also spoke to a new program to provide support and assistance to workers. As you will know, having read all the bills, Mr. Speaker, at this point it just gives him the permission to do that. There isn't a lot of detail. But anything that provides more support to workers has the opportunity to be very positive, and I hope that the implementation of that piece is a positive addition to our labour relations system.

On the marshalling of proceedings, being able to make sure that there's clear marshalling does make sense. Through Committee of the Whole I will have some questions around the implementation as well as maybe – I don't think the right word is "jurisdiction" – just when it's touching and giving powers to the Labour Relations Board that might be in conflict with the human rights commissioner. I would love to have a little bit more discussion about that, but as we are only at second reading, I will keep my remarks very high level at this point.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, at the announcement for Bill 2 the minister, the Premier, a number of lobbyists also announced a change to a new youth wage, a \$13-per-hour discriminatory age-based wage. I believe very strongly in equal pay for equal work, no matter your gender, no matter your age. Creating a second class of employee by discriminating against young people in this province is wrong-headed. In this case, we may have unintended consequences – and those are words that I've heard in this Chamber more than once, Mr. Speaker: unintended consequences – in having students quit high school because they can get a \$2-per-hour wage bump or quitting university or trade school; \$2 per hour is a significant difference.

Now, the minister mentioned and has mentioned that this is modelled after Ontario. In Ontario the difference between a youth wage and a regular minimum wage is about 6 per cent. Here we're looking at a 15 per cent difference. So during our Committee of the Whole I'll be very curious to hear if there's been any economic impact assessment about the difference, with us having nearly double of what Ontario has done.

If we're going to point to Ontario as an example of how this has to work, let's talk about that, because there are also studies in other areas, other regions that have a youth minimum wage that show that what ends up happening is that youth are employed until they hit the age where a full wage needs to be paid, and then they are let go.

They have a name for it in Australia: learn and churn. So employers will deliberately hire and train young workers, and older workers are left unemployed for longer. Are we bringing a learn-and-churn system to Alberta under the guise of job creation? I'm worried about that. I'm worried about the exploitation of young workers.

We've also seen studies showing a lack of job creation with this. The idea that this is going to be a job-creation measure: I've seen evidence and research to say that it does not. I also note that in touting this measure, the new youth minimum wage, the minister, the Premier, the supporters have pointed to the high unemployment for youth in our province. That is a thing we all rightfully need to be concerned with. Our government took it very seriously by introducing programs like STEP, which was an old program brought back again, and targeting supports to youth. But I would suggest that the cause of high youth unemployment was never the increase in the minimum wage. Our economy has gone through very tough times, and one of those impacts has been the higher youth unemployment. If we look next door, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's youth unemployment is actually higher than ours, and they haven't raised their minimum wage. Their minimum wage has been fairly stagnant, I believe, small cost-of-living changes.

Now, I have to suggest that the government also cherry-picked their data a little bit because they went out, in their news release, using the March 2019 unemployment numbers when the April 2019 unemployment numbers were already available. They're not quite as nice round numbers. The difference between March and April is that in March it shows a youth unemployment difference of 4 per cent; in April, 3. The minimum wage must have gone up or down to create that impact. It didn't. Instead, I think that the government went, looked at their labour force statistics, and picked a month where they preferred the numbers. If you look at Saskatchewan, their youth unemployment right now is 10.8 per cent. Both Saskatchewan and Alberta need to look at evidence-driven policy that will really reach those workers.

The other thing I would note is that all of this data is based on Stats Canada, which works in a range between 15- and 24-year-olds. Well, I can tell you that this policy impacts four years of that range and doesn't necessarily impact in a positive way six years of that range. Implementing this policy hoping to shift that Stats Canada number when it includes 15-year-olds through to 24-year-olds is not evidence-based policy-making.

Mr. Speaker, I just saw a story in the news about the Stampede. The Stampede is now trying to decide if they are going to cut \$2 per hour from the 500 workers they already have contracts with, direct evidence that it's not creating new jobs in that case. It just means those students aren't going to have as much money at their summer job to help pay for university, to help support their families.

We can't forget the story of that young kid from Hardisty that the Premier told over and over and over on the campaign trail, a 17-year-old helping to support his family. The lesson that the Premier took from that was that we should cut that person's wage by \$2. This does not help Alberta become open for business.

My leader and our caucus have been fighting for hard-working Albertans from the beginning. We made sure that Alberta had modern workplace laws that respected working people, set modern standards, looked across the country to make sure that Albertans were getting similar benefits to other workers in our country. After decades of inaction we finally were making good progress and advancement. Now Bill 2 wants to pick their pockets by taking overtime pay and holiday pay and is looking to make it more complicated to certify and collectively bargain and is implementing a new youth minimum wage that will have the unintended

consequences of giving young people less money and making it harder for older workers to get employed.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I do not support Bill 2, and I look forward to debating it further in Committee of the Whole.

8:00

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for her comments. I can't help but think about the youth workers who are with us in this Chamber right now and the fact that some of them are over 18, some of them are under 18, but I think that I would argue that our caucus believes that equal work deserves equal pay.

I wonder, if we cut the pay of some legislative pages, if there would be a desire to hire more legislative pages. I doubt it. I imagine we have the number of pages that it requires to do the work in this Assembly. But I can't help but think about the fact that we are sitting in this place being well served by the kind of people we are exactly talking about – young workers, people over 18, people under 18 – and I can't help but think about the direct impacts on youth in this workplace but also in other workplaces.

During the little break I ran a few errands. I stopped at an establishment that had, I think, one person probably over the age of 18, about five under the age of 18, and I wonder, too, what kind of impacts these changes might have. Would that person over 18 get fewer hours because they cost more? Would the people under 18 get the same number of hours, or would they get more or fewer hours, or would the owner take the opportunity to consider putting an extra \$2 an hour in their own pockets? I've seen trickle-down economics. It seems like the people who get soaked are the people on the bottom and not in a good way.

I am wondering if the hon. member can elaborate a little bit on her thoughts about youth employment in places, just 29(2)(a) – no? No questions or comments?

An Hon. Member: You're responding?

Ms Hoffman: Sorry. I'm responding.

The Speaker: Sounds delightful.

Ms Hoffman: So my response is that it seems concerning to me that we would be here debating something as close to home, literally, as being in this House, in this Chamber, and being surrounded by equally talented people under the age of 18 and over the age of 18 and saying that one deserves to get paid more than the other. I find that deeply troubling.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Just for clarity's sake, perhaps I didn't provide enough instruction that 29(2)(a) isn't available until the third speaker, which you were, so 29(2)(a) would be available at this time.

Ms Hoffman: For me?

The Speaker: For you.

Having said that, given the fact that I didn't provide the instruction and you still had about nine minutes left to respond, this is your only opportunity to speak to the bill at second reading. If you choose to use those additional nine minutes, I would allow you to – correction: 12 minutes. If you choose to use those 12 minutes, I'm happy to provide you the call again. If not, I'm happy to take 29(2)(a).

Ms Hoffman: Thank you. Probably it's somewhere between nine and 12 minutes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I won't commit to the full 12 minutes, but I do want to say to you thank you very much for that clarity and to the speaker just prior to me: I'm giving you a chance to reflect on some of the implications specifically as they relate to youth workers. Certainly, I have to say that I have been tremendously impressed by the dedication and calibre of youth workers.

I remember when I got my first job. It was at the curling rink. I was a concession girl. I think I made \$4.90, and it certainly wasn't something that I could use to substantially save for my future. But I'll tell you that over the years that I worked and lived at home and saved for university, my parents were really excited when I hit \$11 an hour at one of my places of employment because it meant that they were going to have to pay less out of pocket when I did go away to university down the road.

Whether we're talking about youth using their income today to support their families or whether we're talking about youth helping to alleviate some of the burdens for themselves and their families down the road – I was very fortunate to have parents who were both teachers. They would have made sure that I had the additional supports. But growing up in the riding of Lesser Slave Lake, in the village of Kinuso, in a village of 300, the opportunity to stay at home and go to university wasn't a realistic option for our family, so not only did they have to worry about tuition, which was increasing every year, they also had to worry about the cost of living when their daughter was moving to the city.

Fortunately, I was very lucky. Not many of my classmates had a vehicle and were able to drive the 50 kilometres down the highway to Slave Lake. Not many of my classmates were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to have parents who drove them for years to go to the swimming pool and get trained to become a lifeguard. I was one of the lucky ones who had that tremendous social capital that my parents, because they were fortunate to be part of the school system and had some flexibility in the evenings, were able to invest in me. I was able to earn \$11 an hour to help save for my future and reduce some of the burden that my parents would have exercised in helping me to relocate. That was lucky.

Many of our kids, particularly in rural Alberta, aren't so lucky. Many of our kids will work minimum wage jobs long beyond the time they're kids. I know many people in Kinuso who proudly work minimum wage jobs for most of their lives. They, I think, deserve to have the opportunity to take home a reasonable paycheque, pay their bills, and put food on their tables. Same with the riding I represent of Edmonton-Glenora. I know there are many people who, for a variety of reasons, end up working minimum wage jobs for a very long time, sometimes their entire lives, and they deserve to not have the nervousness of: what's going to happen to my income if there are further changes down the road?

I think the fact that the proposed changes come into effect right before Labour Day, taking away Labour Day pay from workers, is embarrassing. I think that taking away that pay for a statutory holiday about labour, about front-line workers, and implementing it on the first day prior to that holiday is something that I hope was maybe an oversight, or I hope is maybe something that will be considered. The implementation date, maybe the timing around that, could have been better.

I also think that for somebody to expect to have holiday pay because it's Christmas isn't totally unreasonable. I think a lot of people receive holiday pay on Christmas. Whether you were scheduled to work on that day or not, I don't think it's something that is unreasonable. We definitely looked at interjurisdictional comparisons and found that lots of other jurisdictions ensure that

employers pay their employees for days like Christmas. I think that that is not unreasonable.

I think that there are a number of changes that we're considering in this legislation that don't reflect, probably, what most folks would say are their values when they sit down at night and talk about why they got into this work. I know that for many of you, and for sure for everyone in our caucus, when I say, "Why did you choose to take this time in your life to do this?" it's because they feel a sense of calling to service, calling to serve your community. Whether it was literally me harassing the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to run or you feeling encouraged by your friends or family, I think that call to service and seeing a time to respond to it – we feel called to service because we want to find ways to make life better for the people that we represent in our communities. I think workers are a big part of that, and I think the youth worker piece, as my hon. colleague has highlighted so eloquently, is also an important piece for consideration.

I guess the few takeaways I want to leave are: really, we're going to make these changes right before Labour Day to take Labour Day pay away from workers? That's sort of one. Really, we don't want people to get paid on Christmas? Point number two. And do we really believe that somebody who is just under 18 is worth 15 per cent less than somebody who's just over 18? That, to me, is not a great message to be sending. I think that this could be a very good time for labour lawyers. I think that there will probably be a lot of work – actually, maybe that's the job creation strategy – for labour lawyers, constitutional lawyers, human rights lawyers because I can certainly see a lot of challenges, based on what the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and I have talked about, employment-based discrimination. The highlights that the member mentioned about Australia, I think, are worth noting.

I also happen to be related to somebody who lives in Ireland who just this year for the first time, at the age of 21, actually makes the real minimum wage working in a service industry where there are no tips. That, to me, is shocking. He's been living on his own for years and doing his best to save up for university, too. Is that really something that we aspire to get to? I sure hope not. I hope that we aspire to live in a society where everyone who puts in a full day's work can receive full pay, full benefits, and an opportunity to succeed in this province. I think many people in this room would say that fairness is something that they aspire to, and I would argue that these changes, a number of them that I've highlighted already, are particularly unfair.

8:10

Those are probably the main comments that I wanted to leave with us tonight. Definitely I believe that Bill 2 is an act to pick your pocket. I think it's an act to come after the little guy. I think it's an act to squeeze everyday Albertans, particularly young Albertans, to put more weight on the other side of the equation. I am concerned about that. Those are the questions and concerns I wanted to leave at this point. Happy to engage.

How was I on timing? Nine minutes-ish? Okay. Thank you very much, hon. members, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul . . .

Mr. Hanson: Under 29(2)(a).

The Speaker: . . . is rising on 29(2)(a), which is available because the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora was the third speaker after the introduction.

Mr. Hanson: That was very good. Thank you very much. I know you're new to the job, so we'll give you some latitude.

Anyway, it's fairly early yet. We've been in here less than an hour, and I've heard a number of buzzwords. I think we can probably expect to hear quite a few of these same words: unexpected consequences, economic impact studies, and the like. I would suggest that possibly the unexpected consequences of the 2015 election were an NDP government. That's funny.

Ms Hoffman: Zing.

Mr. Hanson: Zing.

Ms Hoffman: I got you.

Mr. Hanson: Awesome.

I'd also like to point out that the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods asked us if we had done an economic impact study when we talked about reducing the minimum wage from \$15 down to \$13 for students under 17. I would suggest that many times when we were debating her bills, we had asked if they had done an economic impact study to see what was going to happen by increasing the minimum wage to \$15. We got silence and crickets from the government on that, so I think it's a little rich that they're asking us now to do an economic impact study for this. That's something that we've campaigned on for the last year and a half.

Also under 29(2)(a) I've got a question for the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, not knowing the full context of this young 17-year-old that they like to keep marching out. Apparently, the young lady is working a job to help support her family because her father got laid off, presumably under the NDP government. My question is: wouldn't we rather get her father back to work and have parents working a good-paying job rather than relying on their students so that their students can focus more on their studies?

Thank you.

The Speaker: I might just remind the member to direct your comments through the chair.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the 17-year-old that got trotted out was by your then leader, now Premier, on election night and on the campaign trail. The 16-year-old who spoke yesterday – or was it the day before? – at an event that we had is somebody who absolutely wants her parents to have full employment. She also deserves to be fairly compensated for the work that she does.

I don't think it is A or B. I don't think that my working in high school to save for my future was something that I did because my parents took a 5 per cent pay cut. They did because teachers were under the axe at that time, for sure, but it was something that I did because I had a work ethic and because I wanted to save for my future. Not every kid is as lucky to have that opportunity, but I think that anyone who works deserves to be paid fairly. That's the message that that 16-year-old, who very bravely stood up and talked about her experiences, was trying to say. If she were two years older doing the same job – why would there be grounds for her to be discriminated against based on the age she was or the fact that she was going to school instead of the fact that if she would have, under the proposed legislation, dropped out and worked rather than going to school, she'd be worth automatically \$2 more an hour? This kind of discrimination based on situation or on age is discrimination.

You know, we certainly encourage anyone who wants to work to be able to have that choice and to be paid fairly for the work that they provide. Those are my values, and I'm happy to elaborate on

those further, but anyone who feels like magically this person might not work if the other family situations changed, I think, is making a lot of assumptions. Maybe that is the case, but I think the fact that government is making assumptions about whether or not she is worth the same rate as one of her colleagues who may drop out or one of her colleagues who may be two years early is ill conceived.

I think that you would struggle to find somebody who'd put their hand up to say: pay me less money. I think it would probably be pretty hard to find those kinds of validators or somebody who said: "Yeah. I'm fine with being discriminated against based on my circumstances in my life."

I want to say again that I'm speaking from a place of privilege, not just the place of privilege I have today but the privilege that I had when I was a 17-year-old. Because of the situation that my family was in, I definitely had a lot more opportunities than some of my classmates even growing up in the same community with the same perceived sets of opportunities. There probably weren't a lot of my classmates – I can't think of many – whose parents would have been able to drive them to the swimming pool almost every single day because of their work or because of their income.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I see the Member for Edmonton-Decore rising [interjections]. Oh, Edmonton-McClung. I care very deeply about the riding of Edmonton-McClung, so my apologies to you. You have the call.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nellie accepts that apology as well.

I rise today to speak to Bill 2. I believe I'm in order to do so, and I hope to make a few points that people remember on this day, when we get together in the evening to speak about legislation that the government wants to put through very quickly but that we would like to have some sober second thought about here this evening.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, that when you made one of your opening statements after becoming elected as Speaker, you noted to the House the various different age groups that were represented. In the decade of the 60s there were, I think, eight members in this House who were 60 years of age or older, and I will admit – I may not look like it – that I am one of those individuals who is just barely into their 60s.

As such, sir, I've seen a few things, maybe a few more things than some of the other younger members in this House may have seen. One of the things I've seen is successive Conservative governments. For most of my life, until we had a breath of fresh air and intellectual freedom for the four years while we were governing, there were many governments that I felt stifled by, and the labour legislation that we lived under, that I worked under for those many decades was stifling as well.

I'm old enough to have actually had a conversation, a telephone conversation, with former Social Credit Premier Ernest Manning, when I did a telephone interview after discovering he was still receiving calls in the 1980s asking him about the plebiscite and debate on rural electrification that I was doing a paper on in university. I managed to speak to him for about 45 minutes on the phone. I'm old enough to remember that type of situation.

I'm old enough to remember Mr. Yurko, who was then the environment minister. I did a radio debate with Mr. Yurko on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, the debate between industrial development versus recreational use and the then in its infancy science of land reclamation. So I've seen a few things in my day.

One of the things that we've seen in terms of legislation from successive Conservative governments has been really a nonchange in its view towards labour and working people. Successive

Conservative governments have shown that they don't care – they really don't care – about working people. That's not their agenda. They care about an economic system and the maintenance of that system and the people that are involved in that system. The working people in that system simply are an economic input to them.

They see no harm in cheating people out of their hard-earned income, and this is really what this bill is all about. It's cheating people – it's picking their pockets – out of their hard-earned income. I've been a victim of this over the years, and you can probably name if you've been a person in this province working for five or six decades, if you go through the successive jobs that you've had, how in many circumstances you've been cheated out of income that you have rightly earned.

Mr. McIver: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

8:20

The Speaker: Thank you. Have a seat.

We'll hear the point of order from the hon. Minister of Transportation.

**Point of Order
Imputing Motives
Language Creating Disorder**

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j) the hon. member is trying to avow a false motive to the government by saying that we want to cheat people out of money and furthermore is using language that is highly likely to cause disorder in the House.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the comments by the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung are entirely appropriate. He's discussing a bill around the wages for workers and is looking at different scenarios that come from changes that Bill 2 brings forward. The idea of (h), (i), and (j) around disorder certainly does not impinge on an individual's right to engage in debate on the subject matter, of which the Member for Edmonton-McClung is right on the money.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you for your interjections. I just might add that the use of the word "cheating" is in fact unparliamentary, or certainly has been deemed unparliamentary in certain circumstances in the past. As you know, the list of unparliamentary language mildly ebbs and flows, and no more language is being added to that list here in the province of Alberta. I would certainly caution members inside the Chamber with respect to using words like "cheating," "cheater," "cheated" as we go forward. At this point in time I'll send it out to the member as a cautionary tale and encourage you to refrain from using the word "cheated" for the rest of the evening.

Perhaps I may make some further comments with respect to this exact word in the future.

Debate Continued

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly take that advice and put it into use. I did feel that way. I felt exploited. If that's a word that might be accepted as parliamentary, let's use that word for now and say that I felt exploited by successive Conservative governments in their application of labour law that applied to me. For example, I worked at the old Marshall Wells warehouse, which

was situated on land where the old bus depot used to be, which is now part of the Ice District, so successive redevelopments took place there. At the time when I worked at the Marshall Wells warehouse, one of my first jobs – I think that was in the summer of grade 11 – I made \$2.25 an hour.

Now, that was a wage differential job. I was 16 years old at the time, and that was about 50 cents less than what workers over 18 years of age made at the time. I'll tell you what. I worked side by side with those individuals who were 18 years of age and older. Nobody who was under 16 worked any less than those people who were over 18. We felt exploited. I still feel that that was exploitative, but it had the sanction of the government.

Further on, later on, in my working life in another example of how I felt exploited by government legislation in this province, I worked as a DATS driver while going to university. The contract changed from one contractor to another, and overnight our wages went from 13 bucks an hour to nine bucks an hour. That was legal in this province. They got away with it.

I'll tell you what. I know how people felt just recently when they were told that their wages were going to go down from 15 bucks an hour to 13 bucks an hour because I've experienced that type of a rug being pulled out from underneath one's feet. That is not a good feeling. You feel exploited. You feel devalued. You feel dehumanized. You feel that the government cares nothing about you. That's how everybody in this province who is working at 15 bucks an hour, making minimum wage, is feeling about this government right now, and believe me, those people are going to be 18 years of age one of these days soon, and guess who they're going to vote for.

Mr. Speaker, other times I've felt exploited by government legislation. You know, jobs that I've had were in the oil field. I've spun my fair share of wrenches in the oil patch on service rigs. Back in the '80s jobs were plentiful in the oil patch, but the labour legislation surrounding those people who were working that patch really gave them no protection whatsoever. We were making seven bucks an hour straight time, working 17 hours a day on an oil rig right until almost dark and getting up and being on the rig again at 7 o'clock in the morning.

Seven bucks an hour straight time – I tried to explain to my co-workers – was exploitative. They were losing thousands of dollars, but they felt they had no choice. In fact, with no support from government legislation they didn't have any choice. If they wanted the job, they took the seven bucks an hour straight time without the benefit of the overtime that they were really, really rightfully entitled to. The government then, successive Conservative governments then, as now, were no ally to workers in this province of Alberta. As I said, Conservative governments do not care about people. They care about an economic system and maintaining that system.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, a \$15 minimum wage is a minimum wage is a minimum wage. That's the threshold. That's the basic wage that – it takes even more than that, actually, in Edmonton and Calgary to survive. It's not a living wage in Edmonton and Calgary. It's closer to 17, 18 bucks an hour. But 15 bucks an hour is what we set as a threshold in this province as a minimum wage, never mind what your age was.

If a person, if an employer – and I've been an employer. I've never paid anybody less than minimum wage. It's shameful to think that people would want to employ somebody at a minimum wage just because they can. I think if people want to pay somebody more experienced more, they certainly can go ahead and do so, but they should start everybody at any age at the minimum wage, and that's \$15 an hour, is what we set it at. That \$15 minimum wage is regardless of what a person's age is, is what the threshold entry

level should be, and if you want to go ahead and pay more, knock your socks off. Pay more. Pay more to an experienced worker, absolutely. But everybody is worth the minimum threshold wage.

Now, I don't pretend to try to give advice to this government, and far be it from me to tell them what to do. But I really don't think that Albertans are going to swallow for very long this unseen hand of Adam Smith and laissez-faire economics that they're attempting to regurgitate once again and spread over our province. That unseen hand just gave a smack across the face to every worker in this province who's under 18 years of age. It was a punch in the gut – a punch in the gut – by that unseen hand, that laissez-faire economic agenda that this government is so dogmatically married to, that's going to come up and slap them with the other fist four years from now. Mark my words.

I'm not telling you what to do. I'm saying, maybe: keep it up. Just keep it up. I'm sure that you'll keep talking about how you maybe had a million people vote for you. Well, guess what? We had over 600,000 people vote for us, and many more are going to do it over the next four years. So keep it up. I'd be happy to hear more of your laissez-faire Adam Smith dogma throughout the next four years because more and more people are going to realize that it doesn't hold water.

That's what I have to say for the moment. I could talk a bit more. I could maybe go ahead and talk about some of the things that – well, even back further. I mean, people wonder about the roots of people in this Legislature and will say: hey, you just elected a bunch of urbanites from Edmonton, and there's nobody to represent rural Alberta here. Well, tell you what. We've got roots in this province on this side of the House in rural Alberta in many ways. I'm one of those MLAs with rural roots as well.

My great-grandfather was a cattleman, a horseman, a farmer. He also was a school trustee and a county reeve. He passed those things on to my grandmother, and she ended up becoming the deputy mayor of her village in Thorhild. I know that she rode, in about 1916, her one-eyed pony in the Northlands – it wouldn't be Northlands at that point, but it would have been the Edmonton Exhibition. I'm not sure which. I've got a picture of that pony, actually. I've got a picture of her with a ribbon. She won a blue ribbon riding her one-eyed pony. That was 60 miles. It took them two days to get in from Thorhild to Edmonton on that one-eyed pony, and she won a second-place ribbon. She was really ticked that she didn't get first prize. But I've got pictures of her in her jodhpurs with a quirt in her hand. She loved that one-eyed pony. We heard that story many, many times over. You know, that talks to me about the roots that I've got.

8:30

I spent many, many summers in Thorhild – they were the postmasters there, my grandparents – and I've never missed a Thorhild Stampede from 1958 to 1978, for 20 years. Used to take the riggings off the animals after they were in the arena, take the bit shanks off and the saddles. That was my volunteer job. So I've done a few things in terms of my agricultural roots, and I know a little bit about working in small towns and how they operate and getting paid to work for other people or farmers who might need an afternoon's work done. I never felt exploited by them. I felt fairly paid. They looked at what an individual did, and they made sure that a person was properly compensated for it, whether it was for the county or whether it was for just a farmer on an afternoon job or for my grandfather, for that sake. They owned a few houses in town, and in his retirement he had me work for him in the summertime. We did lots of odd jobs for him. Tell you what: I never was paid a minimum wage or anything near a minimum wage by him.

It's not something that one would want to crow about, I think, if I were the government, paying somebody less or taking a shot at

somebody's income. Like, you do the calculation. I did the math in my head today. Like, you're talking 2 bucks an hour. In a 40-hour week, that's 80 bucks, 320 bucks a month. How much is that a month? It's going to be, like, times 12, about 3,600, 4,000 bucks a year. That's a lot of dough for somebody who is, you know, 17, 18 years old. That's a differential that just might cause you to quit school and try to keep that job or lie about the fact that you are a student so you'd get the \$15 an hour wage.

You take a deep, hard look at what those kinds of dollars mean to somebody of that age. It's not small potatoes. And this government just nonchalantly goes ahead and says: "You know what? We think that we're right in doing this. It's going to create jobs." I fail to catch that argument. I really, really don't understand and accept that argument in any way, shape, or form. To say that cutting somebody's wage by 2 bucks an hour is going to allow an employer the leeway to hire other people as a result, using those savings, is a false argument. It's not something that's borne out by the evidence, and the only people that I've had argue it in my office in my constituency are those that come and say that it's going to be harder for them to buy their fourth McDonald's franchise if the minimum wage goes up.

So it's disingenuous to argue that, and most people, I don't think, really get the drift that making a \$2 cut to the minimum wage is going to have this trickle-down effect, this trickle-down Reaganomic effect. It's been totally discredited, yet this government is relying time and time again on Reaganomics, on trickle-down economics, to explain the benefits of their so-called economic changeover to opening up Alberta for business. Well, I'll tell you what. They're closing it down for workers. It may be open for business. It's open season on workers is what it is. That's what I would call it: Open Season on Workers legislation. That's the act. That's another name we can call it. You know, the Pick Your Pockets Act is a pretty good one. I think Open Season on Workers is a pretty good one myself. I think we might coin that one.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, and I see the Member for Edmonton-North West rising on 29(2)(a).

Mr. Eggen: Well, I just want to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung for his breadth of analysis and coining an awesome new name for this bill. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Any other members?

Are there other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd actually just rise and request consent to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Motions

Amendments to Standing Orders

11. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

- A. Be it resolved that the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta effective December 4, 2018, be amended as follows:
 1. . . . Standing Order 3 is amended
 - (a) in suborder (1) by striking out "Subject to suborder (1.1)" and substituting "Subject to suborder (1.1) and (1.2),";
 - (b) by adding the following after suborder (1.1):
 - (1.2) The Assembly shall not meet in the morning from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, or

- 9:00 a.m. to noon on Wednesday or Thursday, if the Government House Leader, or a member of the Executive Council acting on the Government House Leader's behalf, notifies the Assembly that there shall be no morning sitting, notice having been given no later than the time of adjournment on the sitting day preceding the day on which the morning sitting will be cancelled.
- (c) by adding the following after suborder (5):
(5.1) In the period prior to, or following the commencement of, the first session of a Legislature, the Government House Leader may file a revised calendar with the Clerk, notwithstanding the deadline in suborder (5), following consultation with the Opposition House Leaders.
- (d) in suborder (6) by adding "or (5.1)" after "unless varied by the calendar provided for under suborder (5)";
- (e) by striking out suborder (7) and substituting the following:
(7) As soon as possible after January 15 each year, and following receipt of a calendar submitted under suborder (5.1), the Clerk shall publish the calendar provided for under suborder (5) or (5.1).
2. Standing Order 7 is amended
- (a) in suborder (1) by striking out "Introduction of Guests" and substituting "Introduction of School Groups";
- (b) by striking out suborder (3) and substituting the following:
(3) When Introduction of School Groups is called, brief introductions may be made by the Speaker of groups of schoolchildren in the galleries.
- (c) by adding the following after suborder (5):
(5.1) If any Member other than the mover rises to speak to a debatable motion to concur in a report of a committee on a Bill under Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees, debate on that motion shall be called under Orders of the Day
- (a) when the Government thinks fit, in the case of a report on a Government Bill,
- (b) on the next sitting day other than a Monday, in the case of a report on a private Bill, or
- (c) on Monday afternoon under Motions for Concurrence in Committee Reports on Public Bills other than Government Bills, in the case of a report on a public Bill other than a Government Bill.
3. Standing Order 8 is amended
- (a) by striking out suborder (1) and substituting the following:
8(1) On Monday afternoon, after the daily routine, the order of business for consideration of the Assembly shall be as follows:
Motions for Concurrence in Committee Reports on Public Bills Other than Government Bills
- Written Questions
Motions for Return
Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders
At 5 p.m.: Motions other than Government Motions
- (1.1) Notwithstanding suborder (1), if on a Monday afternoon prior to 5 p.m. no items of business other than Motions other than Government Motions remain on the Order Paper for consideration by the Assembly, Motions other than Government Motions shall be called and after the Assembly has decided all questions necessary to conclude debate on the motion, the Assembly shall proceed to consideration of any items of Government business provided for in suborder (2) unless unanimous consent is given to proceed to an additional Motion other than a Government Motion.
- (b) by adding the following after suborder (7)(a):
(a.1) Debate on a motion to concur in a report of a committee on a public Bill other than a Government Bill will conclude after 55 minutes of debate on the motion and 5 minutes for the mover to close debate, unless the motion is voted on sooner.
4. Standing Order 13 is amended by adding the following after suborder (5):
(5.1) No Member shall disrupt the orderly conduct of the proceedings of the Assembly by loudly or repeatedly banging on a desk.
5. Standing Order 19(1) is amended
- (a) in clause (a) and (b) by striking out "at 5:15 p.m., the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings" and substituting "the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings 15 minutes prior to the time of adjournment for the afternoon sitting", and
- (b) in clause (c) by striking out "at 5:15 p.m., unless the debate is previously concluded, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion" and substituting "unless the debate is previously concluded, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings 15 minutes prior to the time of adjournment for the afternoon sitting and immediately put every question necessary to dispose of the motion".
6. Standing Order 29(3) is amended by striking out "and motions for returns" and substituting "motions for returns and motions for concurrence in committee reports on public Bills other than Government Bills".
7. The following is added after Standing Order 31:
Confidence of the Assembly in the Government
31.1 The confidence of the Assembly in the Government may be raised by means of a vote on
- (a) a motion explicitly worded to declare that the Assembly has, or has not, confidence in the Government,
- (b) a motion by the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, "That the Assembly approve in general the business plans and fiscal policies of the Government",

- (c) a motion for the passage of an Appropriation Bill as defined in Standing Order 64,
- (d) a motion for an address in reply to the Lieutenant Governor's speech, or
- (e) any other motion that the Government has expressly declared a question of confidence.
8. Standing Order 32 is struck out and the following is substituted:
- Division**
- 32(1) A division may be called for by 3 Members rising.
- (2) When a division is called, the division bells shall be sounded at the beginning and for the last minute of a 15-minute interval.
- (3) After the first division is called during any meeting of the Committee of the Whole or Committee of Supply, the interval between division bells on all subsequent divisions during that meeting shall be reduced to one minute, except in the case of the first division called during an evening sitting that commences in Committee of the Whole or Committee of Supply pursuant to Standing Order 4(4).
- (4) When Members have been called in for a division, there shall be no further debate.
- (5) Members are not compelled to vote and those who wish to abstain should remain in their seats when asked to rise and record their vote.
- (6) The Clerk shall record the ayes and the noes and announce to the Speaker the number of votes cast for and against the motion.
- (7) The ayes and noes shall be entered in the Votes and Proceedings.
- (8) Abstentions shall not be entered in the Votes and Proceedings.
9. Standing Order 37 is amended
- (a) by striking out suborders (1) and (2) and substituting the following:
- (1) Five copies, and any additional copies required by suborder (2), must be tabled of a document presented by a Member to the Assembly for
- (a) placement of one copy in the records of the Assembly, and
- (b) distribution of
- (i) 2 copies to the Legislature Library,
- (ii) one copy to *Hansard*,
- (iii) one copy to the Government, in the case of a document tabled by the Speaker, the Official Opposition, any other party or group in opposition or an independent Member, and
- (iv) one copy to the Official Opposition, in the case of a document tabled by the Speaker, a Member of the Government caucus, any other party or group in opposition or an independent Member.
- (2) In addition to the copies required under suborder (1), one additional copy must be tabled of
- (a) responses to written questions and returns ordered by the Assembly for distribution to the Member who asked the question or moved the motion for return, and
- (b) any document presented by a Member who is neither a Member of the Government caucus nor the Official Opposition, to allow for distribution to both the Government and the Official Opposition under suborder (1).
- (b) by striking out suborder (3).
10. The following is added after Standing Order 46:
- Debate interrupted by adjournment of the Assembly**
- 46.1 When a motion to adjourn the Assembly is carried or the Assembly is adjourned for want of quorum, the matter under consideration prior to the adjournment shall be deemed to be adjourned to a future sitting day.
11. Standing Order 52(1)(c) is struck out and the following is substituted:
- (c) Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills, consisting of 11 Members,
12. Standing Order 52.01(1) is amended by striking out clauses (a), (b) and (c) and substituting the following:
- (a) Standing Committee on Families and Communities – mandate related to the areas of Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Education, Health, Justice and Solicitor General, Seniors and Housing and Service Alberta;
- (b) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future – mandate related to the areas of Advanced Education, Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Labour and Immigration and Infrastructure;
- (c) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship – mandate related to the areas of Agriculture and Forestry, Energy, Environment and Parks, Indigenous Relations, Municipal Affairs, Transportation and Treasury Board and Finance.
13. The following is added after Standing Order 52.01:
- Subcommittees**
- 52.01(1) Unless otherwise ordered, a standing or special committee shall have the power to appoint one or more subcommittees, which shall report from time to time to the committee.
- (2) Every subcommittee shall be appointed by motion of the committee specifying the terms of reference and the membership of the subcommittee.
- (3) At its first meeting of a new Legislature, every Legislative Policy Committee and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall appoint a Subcommittee on Committee Business to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair and to report to the committee on the business of the committee.

14. Standing Order 52.04 is amended by renumbering Standing Order 52.04 as Standing Order 52.04(1) and by adding the following after suborder (1):
 (2) Subject to Standing Order 59.01(11), suborder (1) does not prevent a Legislative Policy Committee from undertaking a hearing or inquiry during the same period of time that a matter stands referred to the committee by the Assembly if the hearing or inquiry does not interfere with the work of the committee on the matter referred to it.
15. Standing Order 59.01 is amended by adding the following after suborder (11):
 (12) Suborder (11) does not apply to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills.
16. Standing Order 59.02(3) is struck out and the following is substituted:
 (3) During consideration of interim, supplementary or main estimates, the following individuals may be seated at a committee or in the Assembly:
 (a) officials of the Government, to assist the Minister whose estimates are under consideration;
 (b) staff of the opposition, to assist Members who are participating in estimates consideration.
 (4) During main estimates consideration, officials of the Government may respond to questions from a committee at the request of the Minister.
17. Standing Order 64(1)(a) is amended by striking out subclause (ii).
18. Standing Order 74.1 is amended
 (a) by striking out the heading and substituting "Referral of Government Bill to a committee after first reading", and
 (b) by striking out suborder (1)(b).
19. The following is added after Standing Order 74.1:
Referral of public Bill other than Government Bill after first reading
 74.11(1) After a public Bill other than a Government Bill has been read a first time, the Bill stands referred to the Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills Committee.
 (2) The Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills Committee shall report back to the Assembly within 8 sitting days of the day on which the Bill was referred to the Committee.
20. Standing Order 74.2(2) is struck out and the following is substituted:
 (2) Upon the concurrence of a committee report that a Bill be proceeded with, the Bill shall be placed on the Order Paper for second reading and, in the case of a public Bill other than a Government Bill, the Bill shall, subject to the precedence assigned to Bills standing on the Order Paper, be taken up on the next available Monday following the day on which the Assembly concurred in the report.
21. Standing Order 89 is amended by striking out "Standing Order 3" and substituting "Standing Order 3(5)".
22. The following Standing Orders are amended by striking out "Private Bills Committee" and substituting "Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills Committee" wherever it occurs:
 Standing Order 91(4)
 Standing Order 96(2)
 Standing Order 98(1) and (3)
 Standing Order 100(1)
 Standing Order 101
 Standing Order 102
 Standing Order 103
 Standing Order 104
 Standing Order 105(1)
 Standing Order 106
23. The headings preceding Standing Orders 98, 100 and 105 are amended by striking out "Private Bills Committee" and substituting "Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills Committee".
- B. And be it further resolved that upon passage of this motion any public bills other than government bills that stand on the Order Paper for second reading are deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills in accordance with Standing Order 74.11(1) and notwithstanding Standing Order 74.11(2) the committee shall report back to the Assembly on these bills within 12 sitting days of the day this motion is passed.
- C. And be it further resolved that the amendments in this motion shall come into force on passage.

The Speaker: I will call the Government House Leader in just a brief moment. I would like to provide a little bit of context to the debate which I expect that we're about to have. For the benefit of all members Government Motion 11 is available for you in the Order Paper. That Order Paper has been circulated widely, and the entirety of Government Motion 11 is located on the Order Paper. In an effort to have a smooth debate this evening and to not require the Government House Leader to read the motion into the record, I will allow him this evening and this evening only to refer to the motion as printed in the Order Paper.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the kindness of not having to read what is a very long motion. I think that's just probably because you didn't want to listen to me read it. I don't know if that's because you attempted to be kind or that's where it was, but I will take it as an act of kindness.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us right now the motion. If I'm not reading it, a point of clarification maybe for the table officers. Do I still need to say something to make it . . .

The Speaker: If I could make a recommendation that you move Government Motion 11 as printed in the Order Paper, I think that would suffice for the table.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You've been extremely helpful today. As such, I will move Government Motion 11. Can I speak to it now? Thank you. Thank you very much. We move Government Motion 11. I do hope that all members of the Legislature will support it. It includes several standing order changes, which I know we're going to hear a lot about in the next little bit, but the biggest issues around that are to, one, restore some decorum. An increase of decorum inside the Legislature is something that we have attempted to do. This party now has the privilege of serving in government, but we attempted to do that while we were in opposition to try to raise the level of decorum in this place. We continue to call on the opposition to

match us with that and to be able to focus on civil debate and work from there.

But there's some other stuff in here, including making sure that we respect the rights of members to have free votes and their right to be able to vote on behalf of their constituents freely. We'll be able to establish what is and what is not a confidence motion.

Further than that, Mr. Speaker, one that I'm very excited about is to have a private members' bills committee be able to work on private members' business, something that, when we were in opposition, we asked for for a very long time, to be able to make sure that we could work on legislation as private members and in the Assembly private members could work on that legislation to be able to help us get more stuff passed during private members' days.

There's lots of content within these standing orders. All of them will make the process of what we have to do in this House easier. I certainly hope that we have the support of all members of the House and that we can get these passed as soon possible.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning is rising on debate.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before I proceed with the debate, I would like unanimous consent of the House to proceed to one-minute bells in regard to this Government Motion 11.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a request has been asked to revert to one-minute bells for the duration of the evening. Or on Government Motion 11?

Ms Sweet: Government Motion 11.

The Speaker: On Government Motion 11.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Sorry. Point of clarification, Mr. Speaker. Are we moving to one-minute bells on one motion or . . .

The Speaker: Just a minute. I'm just clarifying the question.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Then we will ensure that the appropriate question is asked.

For clarity's sake, hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning, would you please describe for me what you're asking unanimous consent for?

Ms Sweet: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I'm requesting unanimous consent for one-minute bells for the duration of debate on Government Motion 11.

8:40

The Speaker: To be clear, for clarification, you're asking for unanimous consent for one-minute bells, Government Motion 11, this evening only, and all divisions that may occur on Government Motion 11.

Ms Sweet: That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has the call.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members of the House for granting unanimous consent.

I would like to now request that we divide the vote on part A, sections 2, 4, 8, and 10, and then vote on the remaining part of the

motion as we continue with debate this evening. Would you like me to give my rationale? I'm requesting division of the vote on part A, sections 2, 4, 8, and 10, specifically in part 2, in response to both your comments, Mr. Speaker, as well as the hon. Government House Leader and the fact that this is such a huge Government Motion 11, so big, in fact, that we didn't read it into the record because it would take so long. Because of that, I would like to be able to divide the sections up for a more clear and robust debate.

I am requesting that we look at dividing the different sections up also just because there are so many new members in this House as well. I think, in fairness to all the private members that are in this Chamber, that they should have a good understanding of what standing orders we're actually discussing, what those standing orders mean, how it will impact them as private members, and that this is an opportunity for us to break it down and to use it actually as a teaching moment for all of us in this House to be able to learn the different operating components of the standing orders. I would request that we please divide part A, sections 2, 4, 8, and 10.

The Speaker: Thank you to the hon. member for your comments.

What I would like to do is provide some remarks with respect to whether or not this request is a reasonable request. For the record, for the benefit of all members, this isn't a decision of the Assembly; this is a decision that the Speaker would make. As well, this is not a debatable motion as the member is making a request of the chair.

Having said that, if the Government House Leader would like to provide a little bit of comments on this, I'm happy to hear them, but at the end of the day, this will be a ruling of the chair, and we will proceed from there. If you would like to provide comment, I'm happy to hear it. If not, I'm prepared to rule.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it is the decision of the chair, and I respect that. I would submit to you, though, Mr. Speaker, that this will delay the process. Lots of these standing orders are connected, and I do not see the need to separate them. They are a package deal that we brought towards the House, and we would like to talk about them all together if we could.

The Speaker: Thank you to the Government House Leader for your interjections.

For clarity's sake, I'm happy to rule on this particular request. Let me be clear. No matter what my ruling is – and I'm prepared to make it – we will debate the government motion in its entirety, and each member will have the opportunity to speak to the motion. At that time members could speak to the motion in its entirety, not sections 2, 4, 8, and 10 individually, even though it's possible that we may in fact vote individually should we arrive at a vote this evening or any other time during debate.

It is past practice of the Assembly that members from time to time would make a request of the chair, particularly in the case of a motion that is complex or deals with a wide variety of issues in a particular motion. I would refer all members of the Assembly to a decision that Speaker Kowalski made on November 21, 2001, which can be found, as you know, on page 1193 of *Hansard* for that date. In that decision Speaker Kowalski reviewed the relevant parliamentary authorities and permitted requests to that vote on the lengthy government motion that also proposed amendments to a government motion that was proposed to the standing order. On that day it proceeded in three groups.

Accordingly, I will permit the vote on Government Motion 11 to be divided. For clarity for all members we will again continue to debate Government Motion 11 in its entirety together. There will be no additional opportunity to speak specifically and individually to the clauses 2, 4, 8, and 10, but I will allow a vote to take place on

each clause, as requested by the deputy House leader from the Official Opposition.

With that said, there are 17 minutes and 46 seconds remaining in debate for the deputy House leader's comments should she wish to continue on Government Motion 11.

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm getting faster at jumping up. I'm going to begin by moving an amendment, and I'd be happy to give the requisite number of copies to the pages and then read it while it's being circulated. Member Hoffman to move that Government Motion 11 be amended as follows. Part A is amended by striking out:

that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta effective December 4, 2018, be amended as follows:

and substituting:

that the following proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing for review and that the Committee submit its report to the Assembly . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, if you could just briefly perhaps take a pause as we distribute the copies. As well, I would love to see a copy of the amendment prior to you continuing debate, so if you just give us about 15 seconds. Grab your seat.

Thank you for your patience, hon. member. Edmonton-Glenora, you have the call.

Ms Hoffman: Did you want me to start reading the amendment from the beginning?

The Speaker: No, just proceed.

Ms Hoffman: That's what I thought.

The last words are:

. . . on or before December 1, 2019

And then parts B and C are struck out.

The rationale here is that I think this is the exact purpose of this committee, that members were just named to last week, I believe, to all committees, including the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. The committee in its title itself is in charge of reviewing the standing orders. So rather than taking that responsibility away from the committee members, many of whom are government caucus members – of course, I'm confident that it's a majority – and referring it here to this Assembly tonight, I think it's totally fitting that the committee that has this as its actual job description actually have an opportunity to do this job.

I'm reasonable, I would say, in saying that the date I gave was December 1 or earlier if the committee finishes its work early. I'm not trying to stop the standing orders from ever being updated. I think that that would be unreasonable. It wouldn't behoove this House to have that be the outcome. It's important that the committee have an opportunity to do this work, that private members have an opportunity to engage with it, and that we all have an opportunity to consider its impact.

One example. I love getting to know members of this Chamber. I loved getting to know them when I was outside of this House as well. I think one of the best ways that we can get a little glimpse into who each of us are is at the beginning of the Routine, when we have the time, where we do introductions. I remember when the Government House Leader introduced his wife and twins. They sat right about where our guests are sitting tonight. I remember when other members have had opportunities. For example, this week

some of the people who have done introductions include the Member for Calgary-Klein, who earlier today introduced long-time family friends. The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat introduced school trustee Cathy Hogg, who's also the president of the Public School Boards' Association. It's nice to have an opportunity to bring in some folks and to be able to draw on that connection and help us get to know each other and some of the reasons why we're here doing this job.

8:50

The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon, last week I think it was, introduced a school group – or maybe it was Monday – something that will now be the responsibility of the Speaker rather than individual MLAs. And as you heard me say this morning, when I talk to students, I say: "You're my boss, my boss specifically. I work for you. I'm your employee." And having that opportunity to show the students who are here visiting from your ridings that you're working for them I think is something that is useful for private members and government members alike to be able to do.

[Mr. Hanson in the chair]

I feel that I would like to hear an introduction – I mentioned the Government House Leader's twins. I understand that the Member for West Yellowhead has 16-week-old twins. I'd like to have the chance for his family to be presented in this House and for him to be able to introduce them on the record. I think that that would be something nice for us to enjoy and to help frame some of the debate, potentially, for that day. Or the Member for Grande Prairie this morning in her member's statement had the opportunity to talk about her child just graduating from high school. I think that it's not unreasonable. I think we can set realistic time limits on how long they should be.

When I was Minister of Health, I brought in health stakeholders regularly so I could have 20 seconds to talk about the work that they'd done in the community, whether it was a paramedic who rose to the scene to save a life or whether it was a researcher at the university who was engaged in academic research to help push a cure for a specific type of cancer forward. I think it's very reasonable that this committee have an opportunity to consider some of these changes and what some of the impacts might be, and I think it's fair. I think that the members for Sherwood Park, Red Deer-South, Camrose, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, Drumheller-Stettler, Lethbridge-East, Leduc-Beaumont, Brooks-Medicine Hat – and I could go on – should have an opportunity to introduce some of the people that are important to them in this House. I'd love to get to know the hon. member whose parents said, you know: leave the campsite better than the way you found it. My parents did that, too. I think it'd be nice for you to have an opportunity to be able to introduce your family in this place.

I don't think it's a big question to ask. I think having an opportunity to debate this at the committee whose mandate is to review the standing orders is reasonable. Again, by putting in the date on or before December 1, 2019: I think it's a reasonable timeline. It doesn't mean it needs to take the whole time before now and December 1, but I think it says to the committee: "This is part of your job. You have an opportunity to engage in this work and update the standing orders so that you reflect the desires of all members of this Assembly."

I feel that when some members have had an opportunity to practice the existing standing orders – and the majority, or quite close to the majority on the government side anyway, haven't had an opportunity to practice them. It's not totally a fair opportunity to engage with what rules work and what rules don't work when you haven't actually had

an opportunity to practice the existing rules but you're being asked to change them on day 4 of using that set rule book.

I think it's very reasonable to update the rules. I think it's very reasonable to do it through a transparent process in the Assembly, ideally in the committee. I think it would benefit all of us to have an opportunity to actually discuss it at the committee whose mandate it is to do that work, and I also think it would be beneficial for us to have a few more weeks to use the existing rules and see how best they meet or don't meet our needs of our Assembly. Again, this is our rule book that we are setting, and to have this decision imposed on many people just four days into the formal sitting of the Legislature I think doesn't set them up for success, necessarily.

Honestly, that little piece of having an opportunity to introduce people in this House is an Alberta tradition that we have had for over a hundred years. And I get that it's not a tradition in all Legislative Assemblies. I get that it's not a tradition in all parliamentary Chambers, but it is an Alberta tradition, and we've had it for over a hundred years. If it's the committee's will after having an opportunity to reflect on it to throw that tradition out, so be it.

But I think that asking members to make that decision today, asking members to make that decision when they've been using this rule book for less than a week, when many members are first-time MLAs: I don't think it gives them the time to make the decision that they feel is in the best interest for them and their constituents, specifically the school groups one. I have great respect for the Speaker and the role of the Speaker, but the local MLA is the employee of those students, and I think it's important for them to have an opportunity.

Make a rule. Say 20 seconds. Say 10 seconds. I don't care. I think it's important for the local MLA to stand up and introduce the local school groups. And I think every member of this House who's had an opportunity to engage in that has probably really enjoyed that opportunity and probably sees some of those students and their parents in the local community when they go home and they say: "You know what? You introduced my kid in the Leg. That was really nice." That won't be something that gets to be done anymore if we pass this.

If we make the decision that we want to pass it, so be it. But let's have the opportunity to sit down with all members who are on the committee – I had the committee membership a minute ago. Thank you so much, hon. colleague from Buffalo. I think it's important for the members of that committee.

Again, the membership is a majority of government members, and that's fine. The chair is – oh. It's all first names, so I can't say those anyway. The chair is the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon. I think it's very reasonable that we have an opportunity for the committee to do its work, and this is the exact mandate of the committee, to do this type of thing. So I think it's fair and reasonable. Again, I'm trying to be fair and reasonable by saying: on or before December 1. I get that we don't want to drag this out, but I don't think that we need to rush it either.

That's my argument for bringing forward this motion to refer – and I hope that all members will have an opportunity to give it due consideration – and to hear a little bit with those introductions, potentially, a little bit about what inspires them to serve and the people that they serve. That, to me, is something that is an important tradition. It's something that's been in place in Alberta for over a hundred years, and I'd hate for us to make a rush decision to throw it out without taking a little bit of time to give due consideration to: can we tweak it to make it more effective, can we tweak it to make it more efficient, or do we actually need to throw out the more than hundred years of tradition we have in this place?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: All right. Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, I've been informed by counsel, so are there any questions for the member under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, I will recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for bringing forward the amendment. I'll talk briefly about her concerns in regard to Introduction of Guests in a moment. But specifically to this amendment, what this amendment would do is it would delay the process until December 1, 2019. It would push it off. The reality is that we have things within this standing order package that we have promised Albertans that we would bring to this Chamber if we were elected, the platform commitments. I know that they're standing orders, so it's not like it's legislation. I understand that there's a difference. But the reality is that we've made a commitment, and that's one thing about this government: we're going to honour this commitment. My colleagues, I hope, will agree with me. As such, I can't support this amendment.

Now specifically for the concerns that the hon. member raised in regard to Introduction of Guests, I would agree. I have enjoyed introducing guests in this place from time to time. But the reality is that the process was starting to be abused. I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, probably by both sides. The reality was that it was being dragged on, upwards of 20 minutes or longer a day, sometimes where we were having to extend the Routine of this place, a place whose time is valuable and expensive, quite frankly, to run our Legislature, to make sure that we're able to do that. The Premier did the math for me while I was listening to your speech, hon. member, and at 16 weeks of sitting on four days a week and 20 minutes of intros, that's 1,300 minutes, which is 2,100 hours.

Mr. Kenney: Twenty-one hours.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Twenty-one hours, yeah. Not 2,100 hours. That would be a lot of introductions.

That is 650 members' statements at two minutes. I think that all hon. members in this place could agree on how valuable a member's statement is for a private member of the Legislature to be able to give on behalf of their constituents. You would be able to still utilize members' statements to introduce a guest. So in the case, to use an example, of me introducing my wife and twins, who I was very happy to introduce inside this Chamber, you would still be able to do that with a member's statement. This will free up more members' statements. We'll be able to add members' statements to our time, and we'll be able to still introduce guests through the Speaker. [interjection] Yes, we will. That's what the standing order will do. The Speaker will handle the Introduction of Guests. We'll be able to add more members' statements and be able to have more private members' time. That's your specific concern that you used as your example, hon. member.

But, again, to your amendment, it's not satisfactory. It would delay this process until almost Christmas. The reality is that when we make a promise, we keep a promise. And that's just not acceptable for us. I see you shaking your head again. The Speaker will be allowed to introduce guests.

The Acting Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), go ahead, hon. member.

Ms Hoffman: I just want to reclarify. The amendment actually says: on or before December 1. So saying that this would delay this until at least December 1 is a completely inaccurate reading of what the actual amendment says. What I am proposing is that

it go no longer than December 1. This committee could potentially have an opportunity to debate and discuss the standing orders. Maybe it would take them a month. Maybe it would take them two months. Maybe they'd be done in three weeks. But asking members, the majority of whom are new members in government caucus, to make this decision on day 4 I don't think sets us up for success.

9:00

What it says is "on or before December 1." So if the committee itself decided that the committee wanted to refer this back to the Chamber with their recommendations before the end of this sitting, so be it. If they chose to do it on the first day of the fall sitting, so be it. If they chose to do it any time between the time they get the referral to please look at this and have their mandate to actually review this in committee, have the Member for Drayton Valley chair this, which has already been determined by this Assembly – this is part of their mandate. Give them that opportunity.

To say that this would delay it until at least December 1 isn't a reflection of what the actual referral says. Please, I just wanted to clarify that it is to say no longer than December 1. This is so that they have an opportunity to do their work that we're putting in a term limit of December 1. They could do it faster if they so chose. I think it's important that private members have an opportunity to engage with the standing orders as they stand to consider the amendments that are being proposed as a committee with more than four days, actually following the current rule book. Particularly for new members, whether they're private or government members – I don't think it matters – I think that this is the mandate of the committee and that they deserve to have some time to look at this.

I was trying to be considerate of what was being proposed. The few pieces that are in the amendment: certainly, the majority of these weren't proposed in the election platform, that's for sure, but there are some that were. I think it's fair that they have some time at this committee to review and make a decision, having actually lived with the standing orders as they are for a few days.

If the recommendation is "Let's keep introductions to 10 minutes, and let's make sure that no individual introduction is more than 30 seconds," that might be a reasonable way to find a good compromise so that people can actually have an opportunity to introduce their constituents, their stakeholders, and people who are important to this Assembly. We are borrowing this Assembly from the people we represent. They have an opportunity to be recognized in this Chamber and in *Hansard* in my opinion, and I'd like to have this committee consider that.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: In response under 29(2)(a) to the hon. member: I appreciate the question. I will actually acknowledge, after rereading it, that it is correct that a committee could send it back earlier.

I would still submit to the House that, again, the core big things within this standing order package are platform commitments. To send it to committee to in any way delay the process is not acceptable to us. We've made commitments, particularly around raising the decorum inside this Assembly as well as standing up for free votes for private members, and I'm looking forward to be able to get that through as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker: Anybody else wishing to speak to amendment A1? I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: I was seeking to speak under 29(2)(a) if there is time remaining on the matter.

The Acting Speaker: There is time left. Okay. Under 29(2)(a). Sorry.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you. I just wanted to seek clarification from the hon. Government House Leader. He indicated that by reducing the number of introductions of guests, the number of members' statements would be increased. However, I don't see in Motion 11 any provision to change Standing Order 7(4), which currently places a limit of up to six members' statements. So I'm looking to seek clarification as to whether or not the Government House Leader is actually proposing an amendment to Standing Order 7(4) to actually increase the number of members' statements.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I don't know how much time I actually have on the clock to respond to that. We have already reached out to your House leader for that conversation. If we are changing introductions, our intention is to do that, and we would do that in negotiation with your House leader on how many those should be. So our intention is to do that, but, no, it doesn't happen instantaneously.

Ms Hoffman: Do it today.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Or bring an amendment today if you like. We've already reached out.

Ms Hoffman: Or deal with it in the committee that I'm referring it to.

The Acting Speaker: Through the chair, please.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah.

The Acting Speaker: Anyone else under 29(2)(a)? There are 55 seconds left.

Ms Hoffman: Sure.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Sorry. What I was saying without my microphone on, and maybe it was hard for *Hansard* to pick up, is that we certainly have the opportunity to pass the referral and consider that in the actual committee whose job it is to determine what the standing orders are. So that sounds like a win-win. Certainly, both parties are represented on the committee itself, and that would be a way for them to have their voices heard.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: I'll recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has brought her first amendment to the House today in her second time in the Legislature, which is exciting. I would encourage her, if she's interested in amending these standing orders, to continue through the process we have. We have the greatest committee with everybody available to be able to vote on it right now. So feel free to bring forward an amendment. I've made that offer for weeks, and I look forward to seeing some reasonable amendments from the opposition. We will pass them if they're reasonable.

The Acting Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Glenora for bringing up this amendment. I think it is eminently reasonable and for a number of reasons that I will just outline here now, the first of which being that it's an interesting argument I heard from the Government House Leader around a number of these standing orders being part of their platform commitment. But not all of them are, right? Some of them are but not all of them. I think it's incumbent, again, as a teaching moment for all of the members in the House – there are many changes in here that had no mention at all in the UCP election platform. I think as a long-serving member of this Chamber that these are standing orders that have both utility and usefulness and excellent outreach opportunities and educative opportunities not just for the members here in the House but for people in the general population of the province.

The introduction section was very well outlined by my colleague here today, but there are lots of other changes in here that just kind of appear like a gopher popping out in the spring on the prairie – right? – with no indication that they were going to be there any time before.

I've asked. I've talked to a number of MLAs, and they were surprised or not understanding or having knowledge about the breadth of these standing order changes. I am the first one to get up and say, you know, that we need to make sure that the standing orders are an organic document, that we don't just have them sitting static for all time. It's good to make changes, and I think that it's good to make efficiencies, utilizing the time that we have here to debate important business of the day.

You know, I always look to make sure that there's a sense of unity in any motions or bills that we bring forward and that one part makes sense and emphasizes and supports the other parts of any given motion or bill. In this case I notice in one section of this motion that there is a movement to take private bills and move them to committees in an expeditious sort of way. The hon. member's amendment that she's put forward here this evening does that, too. So in keeping with the idea that you move private members' bills to a committee and have substantive discussion using a committee with private members, apply that same logic to this amendment that we have right here now. By golly, it's the same thing. It really is. We already have a committee, we already have a chair of the committee, and I'm sure they're all raring to go to ensure that the structure of our standing orders is best serving the needs of the House.

I'm always suspicious, as you all should be sometimes, too, in a constructively critical way, when any government brings forward motions or bills that have lots of bits and pieces that go in every which direction, and that's exactly what I see in this motion, where it's trying to cover off all sorts of things that may or may not allow for the smooth functioning of this Chamber. They're all bulked together in a sort of way that makes it very difficult to disentangle them.

So I speak in favour of this amendment. I think it's a very, very good amendment, right? I found it quite inspirational. As I say, it stimulated my thoughts around ensuring the unity of logic and purpose for this Motion 11 to make sure that we are using common sense every step of the way.

So I will support this amendment, and I will encourage all members to do so as well.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

9:10

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciated the thoughts from the Member for Edmonton-North West as he was discussing the amendment that's in front of us. In particular, I appreciated what he noted, that the Government House Leader had made the claim several times that this should be done quickly, that we should move forward with this, that we should not delay this because this was part of the UCP platform. But as the Member for Edmonton-North West noted and as I am looking at that document now, I see only one portion of all of these multiple changes to the standing orders that was indeed included in that document, that being to "amend the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly to raise the bar of civility and decorum, banning 'desk thumping' in the Legislative Assembly." That is the sum and total that I can find within that document of the commitment of this party on taking government to make changes to the standing orders.

Now, I bring that up, Mr. Speaker, because that seems to be a point of great importance to members on that side of the House and indeed to the government leader and indeed to many members who were previously in this Legislature in opposition. They feel that to try to move something when you are government that you had not indicated to the people of Alberta you were going to do is to practise deceit, is to not tell the truth to Albertans, is to hide something from Albertans. Indeed, if this was their intent before the election, according to their own logic and indeed their own repeated insistence, this is something that they should have brought forward at that time. They should have been much clearer in their intent. If they did not do so and now intend to try to move these forward, they in fact have practised deceit with Albertans. They have not told them the truth. They have misrepresented their intentions in doing this.

Now, that said, I don't personally subscribe to that narrow a definition. I recognize that government members have entertained it many times and like to use it as a club to beat their opponents, but the fact is that I don't personally agree with that. That said, I think it's perfectly reasonable if they wish to make such extensive changes to the way that we operate in this House and indeed to the opportunities for private members to practise their work in this House. I think the Member for Edmonton-Glenora said it quite well in noting that members who are new in this place, with only four days of experience, most of them never having had the opportunity to make an introduction in this House themselves, many of them not even, I'm sure, understanding or being aware of the majority of what is contained in those standing orders, are being asked to simply vote for this package. Now, perhaps they've been given some sort of briefing as a caucus. I would hope that would be the case. I think that would be the least courtesy that a government would offer to its caucus members to ensure that they were well informed and fully understanding the decisions that they were being asked to make.

That said, given all of what I've mentioned, I think this is a reasonable amendment, and I appreciate the points that the Member for Edmonton-North West has brought forward in that regard. I'm looking forward, I think, to having the opportunity to maybe discuss a bit more fully some of these specific items that are within this as we move forward. But for the time being what I would say is that this sort of an omnibus motion, as the Member for Edmonton-North West also noted, is where we are pulling bits and pieces from all over the place, again, none of which had been previously mentioned by the government as changes that they wished to make but now are all of a sudden appearing and coming up at the last minute without the opportunity for the majority of members – of course, the majority of members in this place are new this session – to have had the chance to learn about and to understand and to know what's happening. To package all of them together in a way that is

somewhat unclear and indeed to not even have had really that fulsome a discussion of this in the press briefings or other things that the government has offered, focusing instead on just one or two things, talking a little bit about the desk thumping and the introductions but not going into the meat of a lot of these other details, it will have a significant impact on the opportunities members have in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to rise and discuss this. I want to fully back this amendment presented by the Member for Edmonton-Glenora. Of course, it's really imperative in our democracy that we make informed decisions. I agree with the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. I at least hope that this government has provided some kind of briefing to the private members on the government side. You know, I don't see any confirmation. I don't see any heads nodding over there. Okay. I see one. Okay. There was a briefing. Okay. Thank goodness. Thank goodness. Thank goodness.

I do want to stress, you know, that I've been in this House for four years so far, and I've got another four, and hopefully God will grant me another four after that. But I can tell you that up to this moment I don't know all the standing orders of this Legislative Assembly. I don't know them all yet. So asking members who've only been here for four days to make these large, sweeping changes to the standing orders in one swoop through this omnibus type of bill to me just seems completely out of step with any kind of genuine, authentic approach to our democracy. I'm really going to ask and beg the members on the other side, especially the private members on the other side, to really give this a second thought. Please consider this amendment. Give us the opportunity to take this to committee.

I happened to be named to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. It's a committee that I've sat on for four years, actually. I'm glad that I'm continuing on this committee. For those of you who may not know, this committee rarely meets, right? I'm glad that we're going to have an opportunity to actually meet and discuss something, something as important as the standing orders of this Legislature, because that's exactly what this committee is supposed to do.

Members, I think that it's imperative that we take this opportunity to really delve into this more deeply. Although the members on the other side, private members on the other side, may have received a briefing from their government, we have not received such a briefing. So I would really ask, especially the private members on the other side, to give us this opportunity. Let's keep working here on addressing some of these issues.

You know, this whole thing with the banning of floor crossing: I think that's something that needs to be delved into a little bit more deeply. As people grow, people change. People are allowed to change their mind. I mean, isn't that what our democracy should be all about?

Ms Hoffman: Don't get any ideas. He's not going anywhere.

Member Loyola: Yeah. I'm not going anywhere. I enjoy being a New Democratic Party member.

But it is important that people have freedom, and I use this word specifically because the members on the other side like to use this word "freedom" a lot: you can't take my freedom. From my own observation, I would say that, you know, we understand that the

United Conservative Party, the keyword being "united," is made up entirely of members who were under a different party banner at one time – right? – and I think it's a bit ironic that this specific standing order would be introduced.

9:20

It feels like the Premier may be worried about some of the members in his own party breaking ranks, but – but – shouldn't they have the freedom to do so if they so desire? Shouldn't they? It's the freedom of every individual to decide which party banner they want to represent, right? I mean, it's just a small observation and may have some truth to it; it may not. I don't know. I'm just throwing it out there, right?

I will say, though, like the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, that we've got 24 members on this side of the House who truly do stand united. Indeed, I am not going anywhere. But, with that, I think it's very important that members in this House, especially those that have only been here for four days – I know that you were MLAs-elect for a while. I don't assume that during your time as an MLA-elect you took the standing orders home and read them from cover to cover, because I know I didn't do that. We've only been here for a short time. I even consider the time I've been here, four years, a short time compared to some of the other members in this House.

I think we owe it to ourselves to send this to committee, send it specifically to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing because that is their purpose for being. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak a little further to these proposals that have been brought forward here by the governing party. Now, the Premier, the leader of the United Conservative Party, has certainly over the years not been shy about his love of our colonial history. He knows it well. He demonstrates it on many occasions. He is a big fan of Canada's colonial history, colonial government, the monarchy. So it should be perhaps no surprise that on arriving back here in Alberta, his first step is to try, in his view, to civilize the natives, that he feels he needs to come in and bring in changes to how things have been done culturally – now, when I say that, I do refer, of course, to native people of many backgrounds who've experienced that in colonial history in many situations – that he feels the need to come in and immediately change the rules, to rearrange the furniture to suit his own liking.

Fair enough. To some extent, I suppose, that's his prerogative, at least to bring it forward, but it's our opportunity to take the chance to stand and debate this here in this place and talk about the sorts of changes he is proposing to make. Now, I can understand, you know, the Premier's discomfort or dislike of the practice of desk thumping. I think we'll have some robust discussion about the history of that and where it comes from and that sort of thing. Certainly, it is a practice that I personally find some enjoyment in. I prefer it over hand clapping. I'm all about the bass, about that bass, no treble. Hey, I recognize that that's a simple and small change: we clap; we desk thump. That really, ultimately, does not change much about my opportunity as a private member in this place to express myself, to exercise, to represent my constituents. Changes, however, like taking away introductions: that's a much more significant piece.

Now, as the Government House Leader noted earlier, absolutely there was some abuse of that practice, and to be clear, there was

abuse on both sides. There were opportunities. For those of you who were not present during the 29th Legislature, Mr. Speaker, to those individuals, through you, of course: the Official Opposition, some of whom, including yourself, of course, now sit on the government side, made extensive use of introductions, flooded the gallery with people to make a political point.

We as government at the time accepted that and recognized that that was one of the opportunities for private members in this House to make their voices heard, to represent their constituents, to bring those individuals in here to their Legislature, to be part of this process, to be recognized in this House, to have their names recorded on the eternal record of this province. I took the opportunity to introduce my own parents, to bring them here and introduce them in this place as a sign of my respect for them and appreciation for all that they'd given me that allowed me to be where I am today.

Again, I recognize that there was abuse at times, but, you know, Mr. Speaker, to just simply remove that privilege, that opportunity, not only from the members in this place but from all Albertans: that's a pretty significant step. To take that with no discussion, with no prior indication – this was not something that was put forward before the public before they cast a ballot – to make that sweeping change, I don't think it's unreasonable to think that it should go to a committee and have the opportunity to discuss that first.

As one of the members who rose before me pointed out, it would be a simple thing to place some restrictions: to allot a specific amount of time for introductions; perhaps limit the number of introductions per member, per caucus; limit the time of an introduction. Those are all possibilities here. But, instead, what we have is a sweeping, omnibus motion that just simply erases that practice altogether along with many others and other changes that have seen no discussion, no debate beyond what we're able to have at this point in time here and, again, were not in any way presented to Albertans before they cast a vote. Again, I remind government members that they are the ones who have insisted that that is of great importance, that before you introduce any such significant change in this House, you should have presented that directly to Albertans to get their opinion on that first, not simply given a broad indication of the general area you are going to work in and then make decisions based on information later.

Some of the other steps here, things like giving members the opportunity to abstain from a vote: Mr. Speaker, is that not something that government members feel they should have discussed with their constituents?

An Hon. Member: Not in the platform.

Mr. Shepherd: It certainly was not in the UCP platform. Does that mean that that platform lied to Albertans, that the United Conservative Party of Alberta lied to Albertans about their intent when they arrived in this place? I would note that I am not attributing that to any particular member in this Assembly.

Mr. Ellis: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Point of order recognized.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Ellis: Yeah, Mr. Speaker. Under 23(h), (i), (j): "imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member." I mean, he indicated that the United Conservative Party may have lied. I think that is completely disrespectful. It is something that is completely false and, I think, unbecoming of this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker: Any response?

Mr. Shepherd: No problem. I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I will withdraw that comment.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. You have seven minutes remaining.

9:30

Debate Continued

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But it is not something that these members put before their constituents. They did not provide the full truth in what their intentions were in regard to making changes to what they say is decorum in this place. Now, I fail to see, Mr. Speaker, what being accountable to your constituents and actually taking a stand on each issue that you are voted and indeed paid to be in this place on behalf of your constituents to make that decision, where that comes in with decorum. To be clear, the definition of decorum is "behaviour in keeping with good taste and propriety."

Mr. Speaker, I think it is in good taste for each of us to do the job that we were sent here to do. I think it is in good taste for us to have the guts to stand up and cast our vote when we are asked by our constituents. And I think it would certainly be in good taste, if members in this place feel that they should not be required to do so, that they have that discussion with their constituents before they attempt to give themselves that out.

Now, I recognize that some members in this place perhaps felt uncomfortable and perhaps heard quite a bit from their constituents when they chose not to be present for some particular votes in this Legislature. I can understand that that embarrassment, that uncomfortableness may therefore lead them to wanting to provide themselves with an out, but, again, that's not a discussion that was had with Albertans.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I think such a significant change, at the very least, should have the opportunity to go before a committee so that Albertans would have the chance to consider this, perhaps reach out to their members, reach out to their MLAs, the folks that represent them, provide their thoughts and their opinions so that they could then go to the committee, and the committee could discuss if this was an appropriate measure.

The ban on floor crossing, Madam Speaker, indeed is another. You know, it being brought forward with the argument that – well, the actual amendment itself says that if a member should have a change of conscience and should they wish to leave the party under which they were elected, they should have to sit as an independent and go back and talk to their constituents and run again if they wish to join a different party. Yet there is no feeling that we should actually sit down and talk to our constituents to see how they feel before we make this change in the standing orders, to see if they feel that this is the restriction that they wish to have placed on their member, on their MLA, despite the fact that we are all elected not as party members; we are elected as individual private members of this Legislature.

We have a party affiliation, but I am not here to represent the Alberta NDP; I am here to represent the constituents of Edmonton-City Centre. Should I feel that I am unable to do so as a member of the Alberta NDP, then I think it is incumbent on me to take that step to address that, indeed in discussion with my constituents. But let me be clear. You know, 66 per cent of my constituents who cast a vote were very clear that they wished me to remain with this party on this side of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I'll just remind you that we're speaking to the amendment.

Mr. Shepherd: Yes. Absolutely. These are my reasons, Madam Speaker, why I feel that it is important that this go to committee. Again, that is not something that was presented to Albertans in the UCP platform. That is not something that was indicated to anyone until we found ourselves here in this House, and then it was suddenly brought forward in this omnibus motion, which takes some time to sit down and sort through and decode and find out exactly what it is that members of government are proposing that we change. So I think it is reasonable that we would take this to committee.

Indeed, talking about banning floor crossing, that's something that members of government, when they were in opposition, twice brought forward in a private member's bill. Indeed, now one of the proposals within these changes to the standing orders is that private members' bills should all go to committee, yet this item, which was part of a private member's bill, is being brought forward in this motion. So it seems reasonable to me that something that was substantive enough to require a private member's bill should also receive discussion here when it's included amongst these motions and should be sent to committee.

I think it's only reasonable, Madam Speaker, that if these sorts of sweeping changes to the culture and the operation of this place, indeed if it is so necessary to change the rules of this game before the majority of players have even had the chance to see how they operate, I think it's reasonable that it should be taken and looked at by a committee. Then members of this House would have the opportunity to sit down and discuss this at a bit of greater length. Members would have the opportunity to consider the effects this will actually have on their opportunity to operate as private members, as independent members, in this House.

Indeed, one of the other changes to the standing orders is to give members more independence in their votes. Now, my best guess is that we're not going to see a lot of independence in government members' votes on these motions. So far I'm not seeing too many government members that are eager to rise and speak on these or bring forward their thoughts on this, in particular new members. Certainly, the Government House Leader has had quite a bit to say. But I suppose debate is still early, so there may be the opportunity yet where those members will be allowed the opportunity to speak and give their thoughts and bring forward how they feel on this, having been briefed and given the opportunity to understand the complexity and the enormity of these changes that are being made to the standing orders, to the rules of this Assembly, to the way in which we operate as a House.

The Deputy Speaker: Any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other speakers to the amendment? No?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: All right.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:38 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Ceci Feehan Pancholi

Dach Goehring Shepherd
Deol Hoffman Sweet
Eggen Loyola

9:40

Against the motion:

Barnes	McIver	Schulz
Dreeshen	Neudorf	Schweitzer
Ellis	Nixon, Jason	Sigurdson, R.J.
Glasgo	Orr	Singh
Hanson	Rehn	Smith
Horner	Rosin	Stephan
Hunter	Rowswell	Turton
Long	Rutherford	Walker
Lovely	Sawhney	Williams
Luan	Schow	Wilson
Madu		

Totals: For – 11 Against – 31

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any speakers to the motion? I recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recognize that this will be my last opportunity to speak to the motion in general. I think I laid out a good part of my considerations speaking to the amendment, but I would like to take a moment to put down a few more words on this. [laughter] It's interesting to me and apparently amusing to others. It's good that we have some levity in this House. It isn't all serious business.

But, you know, these motions are. Again, these are proposing some significant shifts and changes in the culture and operation of this Legislature, and as I noted earlier, our new Premier is a great believer in tradition. Indeed, we've already seen a shift in some of the tenor and the way that we approach things in this place since the new government has come in, and that's as it should be. It's the opportunity of every incoming government to add its own taste and flavour to how they approach things, and it's up to Albertans, I suppose, to interpret how they feel about what's being represented.

We have seen a marked shift in the type of opening meditation we have each day when we come to this Chamber, more traditional, perhaps, in some senses but, you know, perhaps less inclusive so far. I'm hoping that we may see that change, but that will be up to, I suppose, yourself and the Speaker and others to consider. We've seen how resistant many conservatives were to changing some of the words in *O Canada* from "all our sons" to "in all of us."

Mr. McIver: All thy sons.

Mr. Shepherd: All thy sons. Thank you.

Mr. McIver: You're welcome.

Mr. Shepherd: It's been a while since I sang it that way.

Obviously, there is a great respect for tradition when it is comfortable and when it is, I guess, in favour of the folks that have control. Yet what we see here now is suddenly wanting to change things in ways to make things more comfortable, perhaps, for those who exercise control but less opportunity, less privilege, less power in the hands of private members in this place, both government and opposition.

Indeed, as one of my colleagues observed, I have to wonder what the Premier fears from his caucus in needing to make some of these changes. Who is he afraid that they would introduce in this place?

What is he afraid is going to happen if they have the opportunity to choose according to their conscience how they will represent their constituents? What concerns does he have about what will be revealed about his members if they don't have the opportunity to abstain from representing their constituents in casting a vote? I can't say that it speaks very well of what he thinks about some of his own members that he feels the need to exercise that level of control.

I think about the floor-crossing bit, you know. With that logic, that we are elected to represent a party and we should not be allowed to change that party, then essentially what the Premier seems to me to be saying about his members is that none of them were elected on their own merits. Each of them owes their place in this Assembly to the fact that they ran with him and his party. They're not here because of anything they did. Their party could have run anybody on that ballot, apparently, and they would have won. Their own thoughts, their own efforts, their own values, their own consciences: they mean nothing because the people were voting for the party, not the person, not the individual, not for someone that they felt represented their values, only a figurehead, a stand-in, a human cut-out for the party banner. That, to me, Madam Speaker, is a very low opinion of the members of his caucus, but that is what this change to the standing orders says to me.

I think that what we need to have in this House is more opportunities for individuals like the former MLA Mr. Rick Fraser, whose constituency I don't recall specifically off the top of my head . . .

An Hon. Member: Calgary-South East.

Mr. Shepherd: Calgary-South East.

. . . who felt that in representing his son who is a member of the LGBTQ community, he was unable to remain as a member of the United Conservative Party and chose therefore to sit as an independent and then chose to join the Alberta Party and continued to represent his constituents well. I respect a man of that conscience and that decision that he made. Then, indeed, when the election came, his voters had the opportunity to make their decision on that, and admittedly he did not return to this place. But needing to amend the standing orders to prevent an individual who is experiencing that kind of crisis of conscience from being able to express it in the way that they see fit, again, is a level of control that saddens me. Again, it makes me wonder what it is that the Premier is afraid of from the members of his caucus.

In considering these standing orders, I was reminded of a novel by one of my favourite writers, a man named John Steinbeck, a book called *The Moon is Down*. It's about an eastern European country during World War II that is under occupation. In that book it talks about the difficulties for individuals who are acting as soldiers, who are being asked to carry out duties that they themselves may find uncomfortable, and it also talks about how an occupied people will struggle and will push back. No matter how much control you try to exercise over them, an occupied people will always find a way to break free. You can try to take away the tools they have, you can try to take away the weapons, you can try to close them in and hem them in with a bunch of rules, but in the end a free man will always be free.

9:50

A quote from that book, one of the occupied people speaking to one of the soldiers:

You're not a man any more. You are a soldier. Your comfort is of no importance . . . your life isn't of much importance . . . Most of [your] orders will be unpleasant, but that's not your business . . . They should have trained you for this, and not for

flower-strewn streets. They should have built your soul with truth, not led along with . . .

and then there is a word which is the opposite of truth and which is considered unparliamentary in this Assembly.

Another good quote from that book:

Free men cannot start a war, but once it is started, they can fight on in defeat. Herd men, followers of a leader, cannot do that, and so it is always the herd men who win battles and the free men who win wars.

I think that's as much as I need to say on this, Madam Speaker.

With that, I would like to move an amendment. I believe it's proper for me to keep a copy and send the original to Madam Speaker. I'll wait for you to receive that before I read the motion into the record.

May I proceed, Madam Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: This will be referred to as amendment A2.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that Government Motion 11 be amended in part A, in section 8, by striking out the proposed Standing Order 32(5) and (8), those being the portions referring to abstention from voting.

I believe I've said all I need to say on that particular point. I believe it's incumbent on us as members to stand in this place and cast our vote as expected by our constituents, to stand for the principles we believe in, the values that our constituents expect us to uphold. That has been the practice in this place. I see no need to change it; therefore, I bring forward this amendment, that we remove that section of these changes to the standing orders.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any speakers to the – speaking to the amendment?

Member Ceci: Standing Order 29(2)(a).

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, when I was listening to – a number of the references in the readings you were making I have not read myself, but I appreciate hearing them in this Chamber because I think they are directly related to what we are talking about in terms of decision-making and following orders and those sorts of things.

I was very interested in what you were saying with regard to, I guess, almost some internal motivation that you are supposing the Premier might have for the actions that he is, through the House leader, bringing forward here today with regard to the motion before us. Getting inside of that motivation, I'd just like to get some more views from you with regard to why that person might see it necessary to do these things that are before us today. Words like "fear" and "concern" and "level of control" were all things you talked about, and I'd appreciate you having the opportunity to explain more of that because I think it was quite incisive, quite interesting, and talked to motivation that perhaps some of us may not be considering as actions for this tonight.

Thank you.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you to the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for those thoughts in that question. Now, of course, I do want to be careful here. There are some very strict rules about

imputing motives in this House, but I think there's much to think about in this in the general sense.

I will be honest with you, Madam Speaker. These are questions I have struggled with myself as a member in this Assembly. You know, people often ask me: "What is the job like? Is it hard to be an MLA?" One of the things I say to them is, "Well, you've got to wear a lot of hats," as I'm sure you can relate. I have my constituency office and my work that I do as the nonpartisan MLA for Edmonton-City Centre, but at the same time, representing my constituents in this House and debating legislation and representing their voices, I vote. I also sit here as a member of a caucus. I have been a member of a government caucus, and I now sit as a member of an opposition caucus.

Yes, Madam Speaker, at times I have struggled with which way I should go when I am being asked to make a particular decision by my caucus versus how I may feel about that issue myself personally versus how I may feel my constituents are wanting me to represent them. This isn't an easy job in that respect, and I recognize that within caucuses and within this structure there could be a lot of variations on how that happens.

Indeed, I can also recognize that when you are new in this place, as I was back in June of 2015, the feeling, the excitement of being elected as a government member carries a lot of weight. I was willing to give a lot of trust and faith to our leader, the then Premier, to the colleagues that I was sitting with. Thankfully, looking back and considering over the years with everything that I've learned and all the other decisions I've made and now having moved from one side of this House to the other, I can say that I do not regret the trust that I had placed at that time. I was not asked to make decisions that I would now feel compromised my own personal integrity or indeed the integrity of this place.

One of the challenges that I have always personally grappled with, Madam Speaker, is where to draw some of these lines in how I engage with folks on the other side from me – when I was in government, with yourself and the other members that were in opposition; and now that I sit in opposition, with members of government – because we recognize there are some . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other speakers to the amendment? I'll recognize a member from the government, the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Yeah. To the amendment. Madam Speaker, I would just like to maybe lend some clarity to some of the understanding here with regard to this amendment, and I think some of the motivation for it is, maybe, clearly misunderstood. Some of the suggestions of why the Premier might want to suggest this, I think, need just a little bit of context and maybe some history. For those of us who came out of the Wildrose legacy party, many will remember that there was a real issue of what I'll call mass floor crossing, and I think it's only fair to say that the motivation for some of these amendments is really, more than anything else, about respecting voters and about not betraying voters. In our ridings after those floor crossings, voters . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt you. We're on Government Motion 11. I believe you're referring to Government Motion 10 in regard to changing caucuses.

Mr. Orr: Well, I'm referring to the motivation for the amendment, but I'll take your . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I hesitate to interrupt, but I'd ask that you, under standing orders, explain that ruling. The government, or the opposition – sorry; old habits die hard, I'm sure, for you, too, Madam Speaker. They have spent the last two hours referring to motions such as the floor-crossing issue in their speeches.

10:00

The hon. member is specifically addressing the comments that were brought up in debate by the opposition in response to them in regard to their amendment that they have moved. That is a position that they presented to this Chamber in defence of their amendment asking for support, and the hon. member is responding to that. I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker – and, again, I will respect your ruling, of course – that it is the opposition's choice to make that as the parameters for their amendment, and he's responding to it.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Government House Leader. To be very clear, I was not giving a ruling, just simply some advice, you know, to remember the topic of conversation that we're on, for all members of this House as we proceed with this debate.

Hon. member, I would encourage you to continue with your conversation. Just try and be on topic.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I will be brief. I cannot support the amendment, specifically because of what I'm saying here. The reality is that there is an urgent need to respect the choice and the vote of voters in our province. When voters are betrayed, people are deeply, deeply offended. This isn't about saying that members can't exercise their conscience. In fact, members can exercise their conscience by sitting independently and going back to the voters and asking for a mandate.

[The Speaker in the chair]

But when the voters have given a mandate in a vote and then a member completely ignores that, turns away from it, tramples upon it, and disrespects the voters, then I think there is a serious issue of democracy, and for that very reason I cannot support the amendment being put forward. It's about respect for the voters and honouring the vote that they have given to a member.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? Under 29(2)(a), any other members?

Seeing none, are there other members wishing to speak to A2, the amendment? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning rising.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning to adjourn debate on amendment A2, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. [interjection] I stand corrected. It's my third day.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Good thing you've got a lawyer up there.

The Speaker: I bring him everywhere I go.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has moved adjournment of debate on Government Motion 11.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1 An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

Ms Sweet moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be amended by deleting all the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment May 28]

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

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to get a chance to speak to the referral amendment for Bill 1. Yesterday I had an opportunity to speak to my concerns with regard to the First Nations communities losing the climate leadership plan because of the effect it would have on the environment, which they deeply depend upon, the world that they wish to pass on to their children. Of course, other concerns are about the loss of financial income in the communities, the ability to reduce utility bills, and the ability to provide safe and affordable food in their communities as well as provide jobs. So there are a variety of reasons why I’ve been very concerned about the introduction of Bill 1 on behalf of the indigenous communities in this province.

I’m very disappointed that the government side of the House has not found the concerns of the indigenous community to be worth taking into consideration, making the somewhat cynical comment that simply the fact that they had one election on this as part of their platform was good enough to then say: if you didn’t vote for us, if you don’t have the same concerns as us, then you don’t really matter. It’s something that I find very disturbing in a democracy.

As a result, this brings me to the referral amendment and the suggestion that rather than simply proceeding with this bill, we should actually take the time to have conversations with people who will be directly affected by this bill. In this particular case, although there are very many other people that will be affected by loss of the rebates, for example, the loss of opportunity to get support in doing renewables on their own homes such as furnaces and refrigerators and, of course, solar panels – all of those people will be affected by it.

I’m going to take this moment to speak particularly about the indigenous community. The reason why I would like to see a referral is the fact that the indigenous community has not been consulted on this. I’d like to take a moment to speak to members opposite in this House about the fact that there is a special and particular relationship with the indigenous people in this province, and that special relationship is often referred to as a nation-to-nation relationship.

It isn’t about simply going out to the community and getting the vote of the majority. It’s about honouring the system of discussion and relationship that is intrinsic to the indigenous community and telling the indigenous community that we honour them by honouring their way of decision-making and communication with those of us who are not part of the indigenous community. That’s what we’re asking for. In a nation-to-nation relationship it means that you don’t simply go out and talk to a bunch of folks and get a sense of what’s going on. You speak to the leadership that is duly authorized by the indigenous community, and you do that as the Crown, the lesser Crown in this case, directly to the leadership, the

elected, representative leadership in the indigenous community. Failing to do that will be recognized in the indigenous community as a failure in upholding the dignity of their electoral and relational system.

Now, under the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples it is very clear that the indigenous community expects to have free, prior, informed consent on major issues that affect their treaty rights. In this case there has clearly been no consultation whatsoever: zero, none, nil. I don’t know how members opposite can say that in any way they respect the indigenous community when they actually defy the very articles of the United Nations declaration, which was written largely here in the province of Alberta by individuals such as Treaty 6 Grand Chief Willie Littlechild, who said that it is ultimately important that things not happen to members of the indigenous community without their ability to speak to those issues and to have their input reflected in the outcome of those decisions, neither of which has occurred in this case. There has been no conversation. There has been no consultation.

Secondly, the outcome does not in any way reflect the needs of the indigenous community to protect the environment, to protect their children, to create economic development, to provide food security, and to provide jobs for their members. As such, I think it is extremely important that we take the time to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future so that a proper consultation can occur, so that we can together as a House sit with the members of the indigenous community and ask them: “How will this affect you? What kind of changes would make it better for you? How can we ensure that you are not more affected by this decision to withdraw goods and services from Albertans than other members of the province of Alberta?” These are the kinds of things that would demonstrate that we care what they are thinking, that we care what they have to say, and, more importantly, that we are willing to respond to the things that they tell us.

10:10

I’m very discouraged that the government is starting this term in office, first of all, by neglecting to acknowledge which treaty land they are on when they are making speeches and so on and, secondly, by neglecting the voice of indigenous people in making decisions which will obviously adversely affect them in extreme ways. Not a good way to start a relationship. It’s two slaps. We’ve only been in the House for four days, and that’s two slaps to the indigenous community already. I don’t know how you enter into a relationship by pummeling the person you want to have a relationship with before you actually enter into that relationship. I’m very concerned. I’m inviting the members opposite to think seriously about what the outcome will be if they continue to proceed in this manner.

I would ask now that all the members opposite in the House seriously consider their duty, not only their duty as representatives of their constituencies but their duties to the First Peoples of this province, to make sure that they do not start the relationship off with them in this extremely negative and reprehensible manner. As a result, I’m asking that we refer this bill to the appropriate committee so that the conversations that need to happen, both in committee and between now and the time that the committee meets, can occur, and I would be happy to facilitate those kinds of conversations if that would help the government. As a result, we can have a better bill when it comes into the House again.

I think that we have seen already reaction from the indigenous community about the way they have been treated by this government, and we have only been in the House for four days. Just today in *Alberta Native News* there was an article from Grand Chief Willie Littlechild, the writer of the United Nations declaration on

the rights of indigenous peoples, indicating that the refusal to provide treaty land acknowledgments is an insult and is disrespectful to the indigenous community. Now I'll have to go back to him and say: Grand Chief, not only are they doing that, but they are going to take away from you the very program which your community has so deeply embraced over the last four years such that every single First Nation and every single Métis settlement has received benefit from that program, all of which will be lost.

Beyond the nations and the Métis settlements, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Canadian friendship centre societies, that are scattered throughout this province, 21 of them now in the province of Alberta, have all been able to take advantage of this program and will not be able to do that. If you're the member for Hinton, for example, then you are acting against the friendship centre, which has taken the initiative to put solar panels up on their building. If you're from Athabasca, they also have put solar panels on their building. If you're from Slave Lake, they put solar panels on their building. If you're from Medicine Hat, they put solar panels on their building. All of the friendship centres in the urban areas, where more than 50 per cent of indigenous people live, have been able to take advantage of this program, and now it is gone.

So I must just summarize, with my discouragement, that this is the attitude that the government is taking toward the indigenous community, that their moves so far have been described by the indigenous community as disrespectful, and their intents are now in question in the indigenous community. I'm sorry that we've arrived at this point. Under the previous government we worked very hard to try to achieve a new relationship, a relationship of reconciliation, and I can no longer say that this government is in a place of reconciliation with the indigenous community, and it saddens me. I wish that the government would take seriously this referral motion at this time.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Questions and comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? I see that the hon. Minister of Transportation has risen.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise on the unfortunate remarks of my colleague across the way. You would think that the member, before he went on a rant such as he just did, would take a couple of minutes for personal reflection, but clearly the few days since he and his government have been sent away is not long enough for him to have any personal reflection. I'm particularly astounded by the fact that he's indicating that a piece of our platform, that was out in the public realm, is somehow an insult to our indigenous brothers and sisters. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the realm of personal reflection I would ask the hon. member to consider four years ago when they – and, of course, we're talking about us removing the carbon tax which we campaigned on for months. Our indigenous brothers and sisters are well aware that we were elected on that platform. Surely, it was a topic of discussion for months. But four years ago the government he was part of brought in that carbon tax on just about everything that indigenous people as well as all other Albertans buy, without any warning whatsoever. They did not disclose it, did not tell anybody. Yet they rolled in on almost the first day of the Legislature and imposed those extra costs on the clothing people buy, on the food people buy, the expenses.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that astounds me about what I just heard is that you would think, if you just believed everything the hon. member had said, that there is no disagreement amongst any of our indigenous brothers and sisters. Well, I can assure you that they are all freethinking and intelligent people. They don't always

agree with the government of Alberta. They don't always agree with each other. They don't necessarily all agree with their next-door neighbour, just like the rest of us. But you would think the hon. member was speaking for every single one of them if you actually heard what he just said. He's speaking about a large number of Albertans as if they only had one voice and he was the mouth of that voice.

That was about as disrespectful as anything that I have ever heard in my life. That was about as disrespectful as anything, to assume that every single indigenous person in Alberta speaks through the mouth of that hon. member. That's the way that he just addressed this Legislature. I can't think of anything less respectful towards our indigenous brothers and sisters. I can assure the hon. member that this government will be treating them with respect and with dignity and will be talking to them and finding out what's important to them.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that we never ever come to the point of arrogance where someone from this side of the House thinks that they can individually speak for every single indigenous person in Alberta. Imagine – imagine – the arrogance. Imagine the unbelievable amount of chutzpah to believe that he can speak for a whole group of indigenous nations and Métis people and First Nations and every other part of the indigenous community as if he knew every single one of their minds. That's the way he just addressed this Legislative Assembly.

10:20

I would hope that before this day ends, the hon. member would apologize to them. I'm sure that there are some people in the indigenous community that might even agree with what the hon. member said, but his absolute arrogance to say that he was speaking on behalf of every single one of them is unbelievable, shameful, sad. I would hope for better from any member of this House, particularly one that was a minister in that portfolio, that ought to know better. I'm sure that he got around to talk to many members of the community during his time, as will the current Minister of Indigenous Relations. Indeed, if he did, I'm sure that he didn't hear the same thing every day from every single member of the community because they are individual people with their own opinions, but you would have never known it if you had listened to the speech that that hon. member just delivered in this Legislature.

The Speaker: I see that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford is rising on 29(2)(a), but unfortunately there is no time remaining.

Hon. members, with your indulgence, I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to revert very, very briefly to introductions.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: I'd like to thank the House for that because in the public gallery this evening there is a very close personal friend of the Speaker who has travelled from Australia to visit Alberta and our fair land. He is a long-standing family friend. When I was just a young lad of 17, 18 years old, I resided in the home of this individual's parents, before he was a twinkle in their eye. It is a great pleasure of mine to be able to introduce to the Assembly Nathan McMaster. You may notice that we bear one thing in similarity, and that is, of course, our first name. Obviously, I would never refer to my first name because the use of names in the Chamber would be wildly inappropriate. I invite you to rise and receive the welcome of the Alberta Legislature.

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 1
An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax
(continued)

The Speaker: I see that the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung is rising on the referral motion debate.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do in fact rise to speak again this evening, this time on the referral amendment, a notice of an amendment to An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, and we're looking to refer this bill for consideration to Alberta's Economic Future Committee.

In that committee consideration can be made and strong questions should be asked, I believe, by all members of that committee, one of whom is me, to determine what the thinking is behind the government's decision to go ahead and buck the trend of pricing carbon globally. There's a movement globally towards the pricing of carbon, and it's a movement that is basically unstoppable. Why in this province we are bucking that trend and deciding that we're going to oppose the global movement towards pricing carbon is something that I think should be clearly discussed, and we can do so in the forum of Alberta's Economic Future, which is very well equipped with its members to get to the bottom of the government's thinking on this position of bucking the trend towards pricing carbon and towards their whole thinking about global warming.

Now, I know that the federal government, in the absence of the climate change program that we brought in, in the absence of a plan to price carbon in Alberta, will impose a federal carbon tax, and we will lose, of course, control over the revenues that are generated and control over the whole program. Given my critic portfolio of Agriculture and Forestry, I can think of no portfolio that is going to be more affected than this one, than the one I am the critic for, by climate change.

So it's very, very important to me that we get to the bottom of why this government is looking to move away from what is globally seen to be a necessity – that is, moving towards a transition away from fossil fuel over time but doing so with a plan in hand – rather than what seems to be the case with this government, of them simply just axing what we had in place, to transition away from fossil fuel by putting a price on carbon, which is the way the movement globally is happening, the result of which is unknown because the lack of a plan will lead to potential chaos.

We don't know for sure what the government's intentions are with respect to transitioning away from fossil fuels. This is the direction, the way of the world, and I really see that the way to deal with it is to refer this amendment to Alberta's Economic Future Committee so it can be properly dealt with.

Agriculture and forestry are going to be very, very affected by climate change. We see it already. We see good portions of Alberta on fire at the moment, right now, and we're like a tinderbox, as was described by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry just a couple of days ago, saying that the whole province is ready to light up with the right conditions. That's not something that we faced regularly over the years. It's something we now are under a great threat of on an annual basis, and now we see an evacuation of 5,000 people that is still under way in this province.

Part of the reason for this increase in natural disasters such as forest fires, the cause that has been pointed to, is that it is caused by global warming. The average mean global temperature of the province has risen, and as a result we have weather patterns that have changed, which has caused forest fires to be more prevalent

because of the dryness of the bush. This ends up being a dire consequence for the forestry industry and for the people living in communities surrounded by forest. Agriculture as well has seen some significant sways in moisture patterns, which have caused some pretty bad drought conditions in many areas across the prairies, this province not excluded.

I'm thinking that the transition away from fossil fuels is something that Alberta should show leadership in. It's something that we were showing leadership in through the climate leadership plan, where we priced carbon and followed the global movement.

In fact, we led the global movement in a way that used the climate leadership plan and the fund that was created by the pricing of carbon to transition away from fossil fuels in a measured and balanced way that cushioned the blow for those who were reliant upon fossil fuels and made sure that people were aware that if they were going to join in the leadership role that we showed as a province to transition away from fossil fuels, that they were going to be compensated for any damages that they suffered and that there were also opportunities to be taken advantage of in terms of employment if they were to participate in taking advantage of the fund that we offered through the climate leadership plan to subsidize the transition to more green energy, to put solar panels on community buildings, to reinsulate your home, to be more efficient with energy, all of these things subsidized by the climate leadership plan fund that we created by pricing carbon.

The major question of this generation globally, I think, is: how are we going to deal with the transition away from fossil fuels and do so in an orderly fashion, in a way that doesn't simply leave it to fate to determine what happens? Governments have to show leadership, and we have to make sure that the plan that we put in place is something that recognizes the reality of the global mean average temperature rising and the consequences that we're increasingly facing annually, whether it be by flood, whether it be by forest fire, or infestation of our forests. This transition away from fossil fuels is something that no government can deny. We have to actually show leadership and put a program in place to put a price on carbon, and this debate should be taken seriously. You shouldn't arbitrarily allow any government to go ahead and just simply stop a program to put a price on carbon.

10:30

I think the Alberta Economic Future Committee will be a very effective medium within which to have a clear debate to completely try to understand the government's thinking as to why they decided to buck the trend and simply go it alone. We basically go back in time to a shoot, shovel, and shut-up philosophy with respect to climate change. I think I've said what I needed to say on that.

I think we need to put in place measures where we're able to adapt to climate change, whether we be in agriculture, in forestry, or other industries. We do that by being able to pay for it through putting a price on carbon, which in fact does change people's behaviour. You know, I really am confounded by the economic geniuses on the other side of this House who will constantly tell us that putting a price on something – economics 101 – causes people to use less of it. I mean, if something costs more, they'll use less of it.

You know, they try to say this about the minimum wage bill. Minimum wage will go up; you're going to hire fewer people. Something costs more; you're going to use less of it. Well, tell you what. Use the same principle for carbon. Put a price on carbon because it does modify behaviour. If you want to apply your economics 101, go ahead. Do that. But let's find out, really, what your thinking is. Why does the theory of economics not apply to the pricing on carbon? I really would like to hear that explanation made in the committee on Alberta's Economic Future should we pass this

amendment to refer the bill to that body, and I really encourage all members to do so.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Members, on Standing Order 29(2)(a) are there any questions and comments? I see the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to 29(2)(a), I know that the former Minister of Indigenous Relations can't get up and address this thing, but I was really interested in all he had to say, and I thought it was quite unfair to hear some of the comments from the other side with regard to – and, you know, we don't take those to heart.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a few questions for the last person who was speaking with regard to 29(2)(a), and I was interested not only in your understanding of the issues around the economics around carbon pricing but, more particularly, you know, you had a breadth of understanding of all the different organizations . . .

The Speaker: If I might. Just for the benefit of *Hansard*, it makes it a little bit difficult for them if you're not speaking relatively close in the direction of the Speaker so that the microphones can pick up your voice and *Hansard* can do the very important work that they do.

Member Ceci: Thank you. I was reading *Hansard* earlier today, and they do great work and it is very clear. I want to facilitate that as well, Mr. Speaker.

What I would like the hon. member to talk about a little bit is – he was talking about all the different countries, the different media that is reporting that carbon pricing is the way to go. He was talking about recent media. I think in the *Globe and Mail* there was an editorial supporting carbon pricing and the *Edmonton Journal* supporting carbon pricing and saying that the actions of the government in not doing that, in essentially refusing to go with the flow of where this is going in the world is taking a step back. It will of course mean that we have less revenue coming in to the treasury for the very important programs that have been identified and are working, as the former Minister of Indigenous Relations talked about earlier, all across this province with regard to the – I can't remember the exact number of First Nations in Alberta.

Mr. Feehan: Forty-eight.

Member Ceci: Forty-eight. I know that Métis settlements are eight. Those groups, nations, and settlements have taken to carbon pricing using the proceeds of that pricing to ensure that they can do some long-awaited improvements to get off diesel and other kinds of things that cause great pollution.

I guess to the member back here who was talking: you know, can you just give me more of a sense of why you think the world is going in this direction and to not go in this direction, really, is taking Alberta back?

Mr. Dach: The Member for Edmonton-McClung back here who was just speaking has really listened to the global commentary. The word is out, and it's been a long time coming. If we don't take action on it, we're in big trouble, not just – I don't know – Alberta farmers or Alberta foresters, people in industries who create a huge number of jobs in this province, but the planet in general.

Now, it's the responsibility of government to show leadership where they are faced with emergent crises. I think it's fair to say that the global warming that we face as a people, as a society, as a species is something that we have to face and treat seriously. That means that we end up looking at what the cause of it is and agree

that the tipping point for the average rise in the mean global temperature is caused by human activity. Where we are able to, we must do what we can to mitigate our contribution to that, and we have to do it wherever we happen to be. In our own jurisdiction here in Alberta we have an obligation to every one of our citizens, our future citizens, and our planet, our little blue planet – it's the only one we've got – to make sure that the global climate change work is done here today.

The Speaker: Are there others who wish to comment on referral amendment REF1?

[Motion on amendment REF1 lost]

The Speaker: Are there other members wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 1? I see the Member for Edmonton-McClung rising. I'm just confirming with the table that you have yet to speak to the bill.

Please proceed.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to speak to second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, something which seems to me to be a pretty regressive piece of legislation right on the face of it. This government takes specific glee in turning back the clock. They seem to think that we were on the wrong track, but I think that in the fullness of time, which will probably be quicker than they happen to think, they'll find that they're on the wrong side of history in making this act a reality, repealing the carbon tax, inviting the federal government to replace it, as they have indicated they would, with their own carbon tax, and then, as has been projected by the Premier, engaging in what will almost certainly be a failed application to the Supreme Court to oppose the federal right to place a federal carbon tax in Alberta once we have repealed the one that we put in place ourselves as a government, when we formed the government four years ago.

I know that it was a centerpiece of our government's program to put a price on carbon. This price on carbon, as I have mentioned in previous comments, is a necessity in order to enable the population to determine that they will change certain behaviours. I mean, economics 101, as I have mentioned earlier, tells us that if you raise a price on a commodity or raise a price on a service, it will end up being used less because of the fact that its demand will go down.

10:40

There are certain rules in economics that you'll note that the members on the government side will cherry-pick and suggest that it's up to the free market to determine how indeed the public should behave, yet when it comes to pricing carbon, somehow those economic realities are out the window. Economics doesn't apply to the pricing of carbon. Behaviour won't be changed when the price of carbon is actually implemented.

We know that there is a price already on carbon. The pollution that we put into the atmosphere is causing global warming, and the tipping point is something that we're seeing now more and more in the province, whether it's in terms of forest fires that are inundating our communities, floods in our major centres, infestations in our forests. The effects of global warming are twice as prevalent in Canada as elsewhere in the world, as evidenced by our northern climate. I'm not sure if any of you have actually been to northern Canada, to the territories. I happen to have been up to Yellowknife and also into Nunavut myself, where I was at Iqaluit, and I know that the effects of global warming are being felt in northern Canada much more severely than we do see here in more southern regions of the country.

To actually know that the Dempster highway, which I've driven all the way to Inuvik, actually, now extended to Tuktoyaktuk, to the Beaufort Sea, to the Arctic Ocean – that highway, the extension portion which has recently been completed is under threat. It's falling apart because the permafrost is deteriorating and they're having trouble maintaining the roadbed that they just built. Now, in 1945, when the Alaska highway was built, the permafrost wasn't at threat and they used a similar construction technique to insulate the roadbed from the permafrost, and the road has stood in good stead in these more southern portions of that Dempster highway and the Alaska highway. But in the northern extension that permafrost is melting, and the road: they're having real trouble maintaining that piece of infrastructure in northern Canada.

So the evidence is pretty clear that we have to take seriously what's happening with climate change in Canada. And to go back and repeal the carbon tax, to not put a price on carbon is to totally stick our heads in the sand and abrogate our responsibility as leaders to make sure that our citizens are protected from the ravages of climate change and that we make sure that the province of Alberta, one of the largest energy producers in the world, shows leadership and also maintains our edge and our ability to talk to the rest of the country and the rest of the world, to say that while there is an opportunity to sell fossil fuels to the rest of the world, we do so only by selling the most responsibly produced fossil fuels that can be found on the planet. And we do that by implementing measures like putting a price on carbon, by putting a cap on emissions, by creating a fund that lowers energy uses.

It absolutely flies in the face of human history and the need for preserving this planet over time and the need to transition away from fossil fuels in an orderly fashion even while developing the fossil fuels we have here at a pace and in a manner that is consistent with lowering the carbon footprint that any producer of fossil fuels has, having the lowest carbon footprint possible in the world. Doing that is not something that is an option. Any government of Alberta has a responsibility to put a price on carbon.

It's absolutely shocking, it's sad, it's pathetic, and I think it's, well, totally wrong that this government has chosen to buck the trend towards a fossil-free future, a future that justifiably is probably three or four decades away. But the depth of the problem is so big that that kind of planning has to take place starting now. We can't wait for another generation to suffer the consequences that we're feeling right now because they'll be catastrophic. It wasn't too long ago that New York was underwater. Florida was, too. Vanuatu is disappearing. There are lots of island nations in the world that are under threat of disappearing and are actually looking for compensation from the United Nations to help them move because their land is disappearing.

This is not a fantasy that was dreamt up last week by people who were out to get people and jurisdictions that produce fossil fuels; this is actually a reality. We have to adjust to this reality that we face in the country and throughout the world and know that the production of fossil fuels and the market are something that will be granted to those jurisdictions that respect the fact that it is a transitional period that we're in and that global warming is real.

There are also opportunities to be had in this transitional phase, opportunities to look into other forms of green energy and to reward those people who transition into green energy, that lowers our carbon footprint. Mr. Speaker, we do that by doing things which we

did do ourselves as a government over the last four years and which now the new government hopes to repeal simply for some short-term gain, by telling people that they'll have their taxes lowered. Well, the lowering of taxes is something that quite often will be a popular vote-getter, but the longer term future is what we need to have in mind when we're putting forward policy with respect to climate change.

This government has certainly shortened the time frame that they seem to be playing with when they're looking at carbon policy. The time frame they're looking at is probably less than four years. It's an election cycle. That is a dangerous way of thinking, Mr. Speaker, because the heat of this planet cares not for the election cycle.

We have a responsibility to make sure that we take action here that influences others, that influences our own citizens to behave in a way that lowers our carbon footprint and takes advantage of the transitional opportunities economically that are afforded to us by the fund that we create by putting a price on carbon. Over time we will see that the new technologies that we develop and incubate here by using the investments and the investment funds created by pricing carbon – those dollars will be rewarded with returns on those investments because the markets for the products that'll be created as a result are in high demand, and the demand is growing because the world is transitioning towards more green energy.

I really encourage members opposite to think twice about what they are getting into when they talk about starting Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, as their centrepiece. This will be your centrepiece. I tell you what, as I said before, far be it from me to stand and tell you: don't do this. I should rather say: keep it up. Just keep it up. Alberta is watching.

You know what? An election won on a promise of lowering taxes is a shallow victory. The greater victory is shown in leadership, which is a longer, longer vision. In fact, "vision" is not a word I attach to this government in any way, shape, or form. They have no concept of what, indeed, they wish to implement for the province's long-term future in terms of benefiting us as a society. They simply look at the machinery of the economy and see human beings as simply an input cost. That's reflected in their policies such as the repeal of the carbon tax. I expect to see more of it, but as I say: keep it up. Alberta is watching. We'll see who actually comes out on top four years from now.

Thank you.

10:50

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any members wishing to raise questions or comments?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question on second reading.

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a second time]

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker. What a great day. How exciting it is to see the carbon tax repeal act out of second reading. As such, I think there's been lots of progress today. I thank all the hon. members of the House for their hard work today, and we'll move to adjourn the Assembly until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:51 p.m.]

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